

As part of its 10th anniversary celebration, DHC/ART Foundation for Contemporary Art is pleased to present:

L'OFFRE



Lee Mingwei, *Money For Art*, 2003.

Featuring work by:

SONNY ASSU
PHIL COLLINS
DORA GARCIA
SIMRYN GILL
FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES
EMILY JACIR
SERGEJ JENSEN
MIKE KELLEY
LEE MINGWEI

Curated by Cheryl Sim

PRESS TOUR: Tuesday, October 3, 2017, 10:30 AM

OPENING RECEPTION:

WEDNESDAY, October 4, 2017, 5:30 PM – 10 PM

EXHIBITION DATES: October 5, 2017 – March 11, 2018

Please note: This show will take place in the 451, rue St-Jean building.

How loaded is a gift? Through this age-old practice of exchange, we are confronted by a range of emotions and questions that are further complicated by a dominant system of market economy. Is it really just the thought that counts? As the giver of a gift, a deluge of concerns come into play, such as what is appropriate, what is 'too much/not enough,' or what is actually useful to the recipient. For the receiver there is also a sense of discomfort linked with indebtedness or the urgency of a reciprocal gesture. But there can also exist a sense of selflessness and joy in giving, as well as a gracious and loving acceptance of the gift that is part of the interaction. Gift exchange creates a bond between people, where gifts or, more precisely, the spirit of the gift might continue to circulate.

This exhibition features works that engage with the complex concept of 'gift' and its attendant links with notions of exchange, reciprocity, value, labour, trace, ritual, gratitude, altruism, obligation, generosity, and connection. Painting, photo, video, sculpture, and even song are all part of *L'OFFRE*.

Silence, the Burning (2011) by **Sonny Assu** speaks to the potlatch ceremonies central to the Kwakwaka'wakw cultural identity and practices that were banned by the Canadian government from 1884-1951. The potlatch ceremony has been cited by renowned sociologists such as Marcel Mauss as an important example of gift-giving through the re-distribution of wealth. For his installation, *Free Fotolab* (2009), **Phil Collins** invited people to send him their unprocessed 35mm rolls of film. He offered to develop them for free in return for the universal image rights for the photos of his choice which he then employed for this work. **Dora Garcia's Steal this book** (2009) consists of hundreds of copies of a book that documents eleven of her recent performative projects. While *Steal this Book* is presented in exhibitions as a sculpture meant to be stolen, it can also be found in selected bookstores worldwide. In *Pearls* (1999-ongoing), **Simryn Gill** asks her close friends to give her their favorite book. She then removes the pages and fashions a bead from each one to make a necklace which she then gives back to her friend. This exhibition presents the most recent work produced in this series, made for Montreal artist and professor, Erin Manning. *Entry Denied* (a concert in Jerusalem) (2003) is an installation by **Emily Jacir** that features the re-staging of a full-length concert by musicians Marwan Abado, Peter Rosmanith, and Franz Hautzinger that was meant to be performed at a festival in Jerusalem, but was cancelled when Abado was refused entry in Tel Aviv. Jacir's work becomes at once, a gift and a reminder of loss and exile for those who were deprived of its scheduled performance. **Sergej Jensen** works with old money bags as his painting surface, including the markings that are on these bags. The four paintings on display at DHC/ART underscore the concept of the artists' gift and its confounding with the art market. **Mike Kelley's** little seen work, *Love, Theft, Gifting and more Love* (2009) is an installation of items that chronicle the appropriation of a drawing he created for a friend's book of poetry. What started off as a gift to a friend became appropriated without his permission, but returned to him as a true gesture of love. Deeply engaged with human interaction and connection, **Lee Mingwei** has two works in the exhibition, *Money for Art* (1994-2010) and *Sonic Blossom* (2013). *Money for Art* is a photo series that documents the objects that were the basis of a special exchange between the artist and the strangers he met in a café. In *Sonic Blossom* Mingwei puts forth music, in particular, the Schubert lieder, as a transformative gift. On Saturdays and Sundays at DHC/ART, a singer will meander the galleries to find a visitor who, if they accept, will receive the gift of music. Placed throughout the exhibition are "*Untitled*" (*Ischia*) (1993), "*Untitled*" (*NRA*), (1991) and "*Untitled*" (*Blue Placebo*) by **Felix Gonzalez-Torres**. Featuring stacks of paper, candies wrapped in blue cellophane, and light bulbs, these works evoke the body and its slow disintegration, but also put forth a set of tenuous conditions of exchange for the visitor.

In Lewis Hyde's much beloved 1983 book *The Gift*, which serves as a central text for this exhibition, he discusses at length, the idea of the artist's gift, which when manifested in a work of art can act "as an agent of transformation". This is the moment when the artist's gift comes into being and it is with this in mind that *L'OFFRE* is presented.

A series of public events and Education program will also accompany the exhibition. Details to be announced soon.

DHC/ART Foundation for Contemporary Art

Established in 2007, DHC/ART is a non-profit organization dedicated to the presentation of contemporary art. Housed in two heritage buildings located in the heart of Old Montreal, DHC/ART's programming has met with critical acclaim both at home and around the world. Each year we offer two to three major exhibitions, a series of public events, special collaborative projects and a forward-thinking education program. International in scope while responsive to the context of the city of Montreal, all of DHC/ART's programming is offered free of charge as a way to reinforce its commitment to accessibility while fostering a discussion on how contemporary art is invested with the topics and ideas that reflect and touch our everyday lives.

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Opening hours:

Wednesday to Friday from noon to 7:00 PM
Saturday and Sunday from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Free Admission

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