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CONTACT:
jayne@civilianartprojects.com



The America Project: utopia New Work by Noelle K. Tan

REMOTE: A group photography exhibition including work by Lisa K. Blatt, Lely Constantinople, Kate MacDonnell, and E. Brady Robinson

Exhibitions on view:
October 29 – November 27, 2010

Opening Reception for the artists:
Friday, October 29, 7-9pm

Civilian Art Projects launches two new photography exhibitions of work by women artists. **The America Project: Utopia**, new work by celebrated photographer Noelle K. Tan, and **REMOTE**, a group photography exhibition featuring Lisa K. Blatt, Lely Constantinople, Kate MacDonnell, and E. Brady Robinson, open on Friday, October 29, 2010. The exhibitions will be on view through November 27th with programming throughout DC's Fotoweeek celebration (Nov. 6-13, 2010).

The America Project by Noelle K. Tan is an expansive three-part photographic series depicting historical sites and cultural markers in America. The project includes the series *utopia*, being exhibited for the first time at Civilian Art Projects; *Trace*; and *Main Street*. The work addresses the idealization of the past and the consequences of pursuing the idea of *better*.

Inspired by Robert Frank's *The Americans*, Gerard Richter's *Atlas* project, and Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man* exhibition, the thirty-six black and white images comprising *utopia* include the Biosphere II in Oracle, Arizona; Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth in St. Augustine, Florida; a duct tape "x" marking the spot of Kennedy's assassination at Dealey Plaza in Dallas, TX; and images of snow storms, decaying houses, county fairs, nuclear reactors, backyard parties, crowd shots, walks in the woods, and more.

Employing a mixture of photographic styles from straight documentary to more contextually abstract images, *The America Project* involves complementary and opposing motifs. "If this project were being explored through text, I would equate it to incorporating both encyclopedic fact and ambiguous poetry in a few lines of verse," says Tan.

In the essay accompanying the exhibition, curator and writer Larissa Leclair states: "Rather than perpetuating iconic images rooted in popular culture to achieve this individual connective to a collective past, Tan presents images that serve as starting points for individual exploration into the fiction and non-fiction of personal and shared memory. Tan's photographs do not stand as a document of visual memory or as photographic proofs but are a departure for a more personal read of the work. They evoke intrigue and nostalgia, sadness and hope. Memories are not seen in the photographs specifically but produced by them."

Noelle K. Tan earned her BFA from New York University and her MFA from California Institute of the Arts. Her work is widely collected and in permanent collections such as the Hirshhorn Museum and



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Sculpture Garden, the Albright-Knox Gallery, the Center for Photography at Woodstock, and the Corcoran Museum. She received the prestigious Creative Capital grant in 2005. Tan is represented by Civilian Art Projects.

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REMOTE is a thematic exhibition of the photographic work of four compelling women: Lisa K. Blatt (San Francisco, CA), Lely Constantinople (Washington, DC), Kate MacDonnell (Washington, DC), and E. Brady Robinson (Washington, DC & Orlando, FL). The exhibition's theme refers to desolate far reaches of the mind and the land -- places hard to reach, but rich with reward when discovered and investigated. Images of Antarctica complement hypnotic, ethereal images of the sun and sky. Mysterious pictures of Paris and romantic images of Mexico connect and entwine the desolation of the desert with the muted colors of the beach and ocean.

Snapshots are often keepsakes of a time, and an attempt to hold onto a memory. The artists in REMOTE transform the concept of holding onto time through photography and create a pause for meditation on the visual image. The work is of places visited by the artist, but the still, quiet, beauty discovered speaks of a timelessness perhaps only found in quiet reflection. The stillness of vision allows the river of time to pass, but the image lingers.



Lisa K. Blatt often works in extreme landscapes, including a camping trip in Antarctica -- spent mostly on a live volcano -- where she shot with her 4 x 5 camera. Her work explores the intersection between the still and moving image; nature and culture; perception; and how landscape may represent being and non-being, presence and absence, infinity and finality. Her work examines how landscape may be defined by what is not visible, what is memory and what is trace.

Her work has been included in international and domestic exhibitions, including: *Polar Extremes*, a solo show at the Reykjavik Museum of Photography Reykjavik, Iceland (2009), *Sound Design for Future Films*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2008), the Shanghai Biennial (2007) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai, *Paranoia* at the Freud Museum in London, England (2007) and *Proyecto Circo* at the 8th Havana Biennial in Havana, Cuba. United States' shows include: the solo show "Night Light" at Mills College Art Museum (2006), *Air Cube+ Land/Art* at the Richard Levy Gallery in New Mexico (2009), and *First Look* at the Sean Kelly Gallery in New York. She has been awarded grants and residencies by organizations including, the National Science Foundation's Antarctica Artist and Writers Program (2008), the Kitteredge Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, The Center for Land Use Interpretation (2006 and 2007), and the Djerassi Foundation (2010) among others.

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Lely Constantinople has a deft vision and a unique aesthetic harkening back to photographers Atget and Kertesz. Photographing both every day environments and places she has journeyed to, Constantinople brings her vision and experience to the landscape, creating something universal. She displays images taken in Isla Mujeres, Mexico and Paris, France.



For fifteen years, Constantinople has been working as a photographer and freelance photo-archivist/editor, exhibiting her work nationally and internationally. Her work can be found in numerous private collections, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History.

In recent years she has worked as the director of several photographic archives, including the David Fenton Collection, an archive of over 4000 images of the late 1960s counterculture; the Volkmar K. Wentzel Collection, an archive of over 12,000 negatives and prints of the late National Geographic photographer and writer Volkmar Wentzel; and the collection of Lucian Perkins, a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer for the Washington Post. She is currently working with Wade Davis, Explorer-in-Residence at the National Geographic Society, editing and managing his collection for book projects, representation with Getty Images, and other ventures.

Constantinople has edited several books, most recently *SHOTS: An American Photographer's Journal 1967-72*, by David Fenton (2005), with contributions by Norman Mailer, Tom Hayden and Chris Murray (Govinda Gallery). She recently curated "David Fenton: Eye of the Revolution" with Steven Kasher of Steven Kasher Gallery, NYC. She is currently working on the book and exhibition project "HARD ART, WASHINGTON, D.C., 1979", about Lucian Perkins' photos of the D.C. punk scene circa 1979-80, with husband Alec MacKaye and curator/gallerist Jayme McLellan of Civilian Art Projects. She teaches photography at Sidwell Friends School. *She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1993.*



Kate Macdonnell's images are from the series *the elements, or what we got*. In this series, the field of view is often floating up above the horizon, or sinking down below it. So although the landscape is the point of departure, we are arriving at a waterscape, a firescape, or in the case of these two images, an etherscape and an aircscape. The halo phenomenon is experienced partly through the blue tinted windshield, giving this natural event an unnatural hue. In *Ether*, the sky is pinned down to the earthly dimension with the three elements at the bottom of the image: tower, sun, airplane. So this smoggy, ethereal fog is only there

because of the impact of humanity on the planet -- slightly evidenced by the tower and the plane, but also in the color of the atmosphere itself. It could be viewed as a nautical version of the "glass: half full or half empty": Is this a sign of delight, or should we take warning when venturing into this landscape?

MacDonnell's work has been exhibited at the Corcoran College of Art & Design in Washington, DC; the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts in PA; Woodstock Center for Photography in NY; the Embassy of Peru in DC and the Instituto de Arte Fotografico in Lima, Peru; and Kunstlerwerkstatt in Berlin. In 2004, she received a Young Artist Grant from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. She

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has served as a visiting artist at George Washington University and artist-in-residence at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Her work has been published in The Photo Review and Photography Quarterly.

E. Brady Robinson examines her environment. Her work is informed by the technology of instant mobile image capture, landscape and color photography. New formal and conceptual relationships between disparate images are formed through careful editing and purposeful juxtapositions. She writes, "my photographic work is a deliberate recontextualization of sequential images and describes a territory where the social and cultural landscape, personal experience, and pure aesthetics meet."



Robinson received her BFA in Photography from The Maryland Institute, College of Art and her MFA in photography from Cranbrook Academy of Art. Her photographs have been exhibited nationally at the Aspen Art Museum, Cranbrook Art Museum, Corcoran Gallery of Art, and Florida State Museum. Reviews include: Afterimage, The Washington Post, DC City Paper, Dcist and HOY Santo Domingo. Select collections include: Corcoran Gallery of Art, Orlando Museum of Art and the Spanish Cultural Center in Santo Domingo, DR. Robinson's work was included in ZONES Contemporary Art Fair Miami 2007 and Art Now Miami during Art Basel Miami Beach 2008. Recent exhibits include: Scenes from Jesusland at Orlando Museum of Art. She's associate professor in the UCF School of Visual Arts and Design.

More images can be found at www.civilianartprojects.com. High-resolution JPEG images are available upon request. Exhibition hours are Wednesday, Thursday & Saturday 1-6pm, Friday 4-8pm and by appointment set up 24 hours in advance.