

Dan Hudson, *News, Weather and Sports* The Art Gallery of Calgary, September 10, 2010 to January 22, 2011



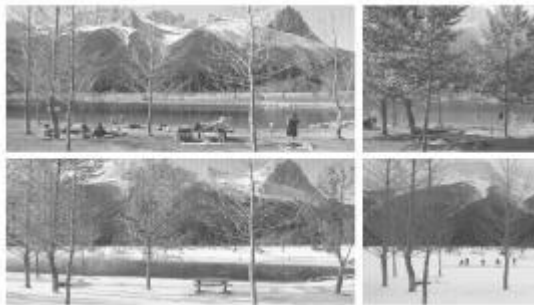
Upon walking into The Art Gallery of Calgary's (AGC) Media Gallery, one is immediately transformed into a different sense of place. The room is dark, the music is brooding, the walls are a rich burgundy red, it has a leather couch and two chairs, as well as a large flat screen television with a gold gilded frame around it on the wall. In some ways, the room has the calming effect of a yoga studio; in other ways it is like a salon room from an European museum with its dark lighting, coloured walls and gilded framed artworks. Either way, the ambience is one of contemplation - perfect for Dan Hudson's video

Dan Hudson, *NEWS, WEATHER & SPORTS*, (video still, Winter), 2010. Courtesy of the artist.

installation, *NEWS, WEATHER & SPORTS*, which documents a year in the life of a public park in the mountains.

The installation integrates three different elements – visual, verbal and audio. The visual consists of video clips of the exact same place shot at the same time of day repeatedly over an entire year. The images are clear and crisp, not blurry and jerky as is often the case with time-lapse video. The experience is like watching a painter working on a canvas that is constantly changing - one minute it is summer with families playing, fishing and picnicking at the water's edge; the next minute it is fall with people walking their dogs and jogging and then it is winter with skaters and a good old hockey game. While the seasons and people change, the scene is always idyllic.

Visually, the installation is a voyeuristic experience that reminds me of George Seurat's iconic 1884 pointillism painting, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of Grande Jatte." Seurat spent two years creating his pastoral painting of Parisians escaping their city for a Sunday afternoon of sitting and relaxing on an island in the middle of the Seine River, much like Canadians today escape to the cottage at the lake, a hike to a mountain lake or picnic at an urban park. Has the world really changed that much over the past 100 years?



Dan Hudson, *NEWS, WEATHER & SPORTS* (video stills composite), 2010. Courtesy of the artist.

Superimposed on the bucolic visual imagery is the verbal component – actual news, weather and sports clips from BBC, CBC and CNN. The snippets of information range from toxic waste stories to military updates;

from hockey scores to corporate profits; and from avalanches to typhoons. There is a wonderful juxtaposition of the local and the global, the pastoral and the struggle that exists in everyday life. Hudson successfully reminds us of how we live our lives seeking pleasure while for the most part, oblivious to the bigger world (except maybe when we surf by the evening TV news, scan a newspaper or glance at our computer's home page). And he does it without being preachy. His is a subliminal message.

The third component of the installation, the audio component, is collaboration between Hudson, bassist Chris Jennings (who created the 42 audio tracks) and David Gleeson (formerly of Abby Road Studios, London and Skywalker Light and Sound, California). Together, they successfully utilized the music like broad brushstrokes highlighting and punctuating the visual and verbal elements.

I am not usually a big fan of video installations – too often they are not very visually appealing, are overtly intellectual and/or too complex. But Hudson's installation captured and held my attention through at least three repetitions of this 9 minutes and 12 seconds long video. I encourage to you to see the video for yourself at: <http://www.danHUDSON.ca/art/news-weather-amp-sports-video-2010.php>

Marianne Elder, the Exhibition's Curator and Katie Potapoff, Manager of Visitor Services have put together a very readable exhibition brochure that provides insights into the installation and what to consider when viewing video art. Elder's statement - "This quiet, isolated experience of watching time move forward amongst the reality of the world's politics questions personal positions and the larger meaning of humanity and our own personal impact and experience. There is an opportunity to be reminded that what immediately surrounds you is minuscule compared to the larger sphere." Elder, in this one statement succinctly captures the essence of *NEWS, WEATHER & SPORTS*.