Project Team

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Acknowledgments

Front Cover Image: "Similarity Map: a temporary visualization of a complex and changing network of images"

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The Agency of Images:

A panel discussion on the future of photography

Your input is welcome. Admission is free.

March 14, 2009, 2-4pm
Surrey Art Gallery

Hosted by the **Surrey Art Gallery**
In conjunction with Glocal

Featuring guest speakers:

Dr.Ron Burnett, President, Emily Carr University
Dr. John O'Brian, Professor of Art History, UBC
Dr. Sharla Sava, Writer, Curator, Professor

About the Glocal Project

Glocal (global + local) is an immense, collaborative and multifaceted digital art project that examines the making, sharing and exhibiting of images in the 21st century. Working out of the Surrey Art Gallery's TechLab, the artists behind Glocal posed questions about the nature of photography at this point in our history: What is a photograph? What is a camera? What is a photographer?

Through its complex of online tools, strategies and communiqués (www.glocal.ca), classroom activities, and face-to-face workshops, talks and seminars, Glocal invited participants to expand ideas around digital imagery. It also asked them to add to its pool of images, which now numbers over 50,000.

In the physical context of the Surrey Art Gallery, visitors encounter the digital artwork through **an interactive exhibition prototype**. Multiple moving and changing images are projected onto a curved screen whose upper, vertical component is designated as a "view port". Through innovative computer programming, diverse images are juxtaposed or reconfigured according to their formal qualities, such as luminosity, colour, shape, and composition. Gallery visitors may interact physically with the projected artwork by using their hands to select images from the lower, horizontal part of the screen and to flick them upwards into Glocal's constantly shifting and expanding visual dialogue. Through these processes, participants reflect on the ways in which they apprehend and experience the world through image-making.

Artists:

Jer Thorp is a software artist and designer. His work, which explores the boundaries between science and art, has been exhibited internationally. He is a regular speaker at Flash conferences across North America and is currently an instructor in Langara College's Electronic Media Design program.

M. Simon Levin has been creating site-based systems that explore the aesthetics of engagement using a variety of designed forms and tools for the past 20 years. His teaching and inter-disciplinary art practice has led him to create and collaborate on numerous art projects within Canada, USA, Mexico, Australia and the United Arab Emirates.

Sylvia Grace Borda is an artist, curator and media producer interested in social histories, photography, cinema and online art. She is an Associate Researcher at Emily Carr and a Lecturer in Media Arts at Krems University, Austria. She is well known in BC for her successful media work entitled "Every Bus Stop in Surrey, BC" and has also exhibited both nationally and internationally.

About the Panel

The Surrey Art Gallery is pleased to host an informative panel discussion this coming March 14th, 2009 that will address **Glocal** - a digital art project currently in residence in the gallery's **Techlab**. Over the past 15 months, artists based at the Surrey Art Gallery have collected an astounding 50,000 digital images from contributors around the world in order to make Canada's largest digital art project.

What does such large archive of images mean for photography itself? Presentations will begin with a review of the historic uses of photography, including the role of photographs as catalogues of cultural and personal memory, moving on to the systemic use of photographs as tools that reinforce political and ideological agendas. The panel will then address how photography today is complicated by new technologies along with the implications that these changes are having on the future of fine art and visual culture. The use of photo-sharing sites such as *Photobucket* and *Flickr* provide a distinctly different environment within which to make, share and distribute digital imagery. What does the individual gain from publishing an image online, where it ends up in a multitude of images? And what is the impact culturally? In turn, how do we view and critique photographs that now number in the billions? Is photography now the largest collaborative conversation that has emerged in the internet world?

Find out more about the digital revolution in photography and hear about the research of three key scholars of the subject. Panellists will provide insight into this phenomenon and will consider Glocal in relation to these wider developments. **Admission is free. Refreshments are provided.**

Guest Speakers:

Dr John O'Brian is an art and photo historian and UBC's Brenda and David McLean Chair in Canadian Studies. He has published more than dozen books on Canadian, modernist and contemporary art. His present research concentrates on the engagement of photography with the atomic era in North America and Japan.

Sharla Sava is a writer and university educator. She has lectured, curated exhibitions, and published a variety of articles about art after modernism, discussing the work of Robert Filliou, Antonia Hirsch, Ray Johnson, N.E. Thing Co., and Jeff Wall, among others.

Dr. Ron Burnett, President, Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design is a film and video maker, photographer, web designer and writer. He has published three books, most recently, **How Images Think** (MIT Press, 2005) and over 150 articles in journals and books worldwide.