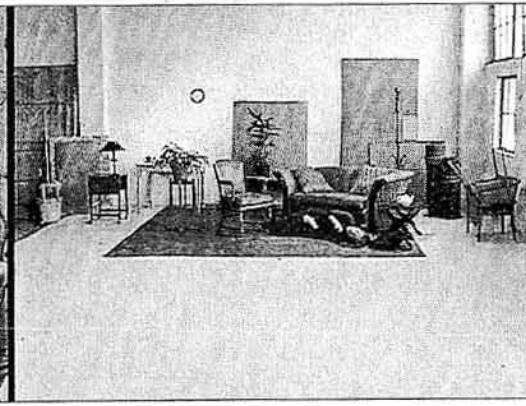
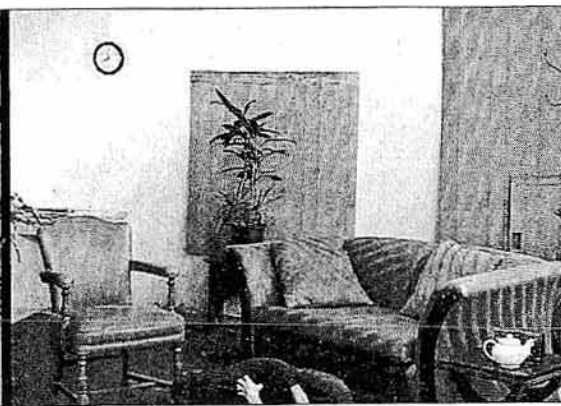
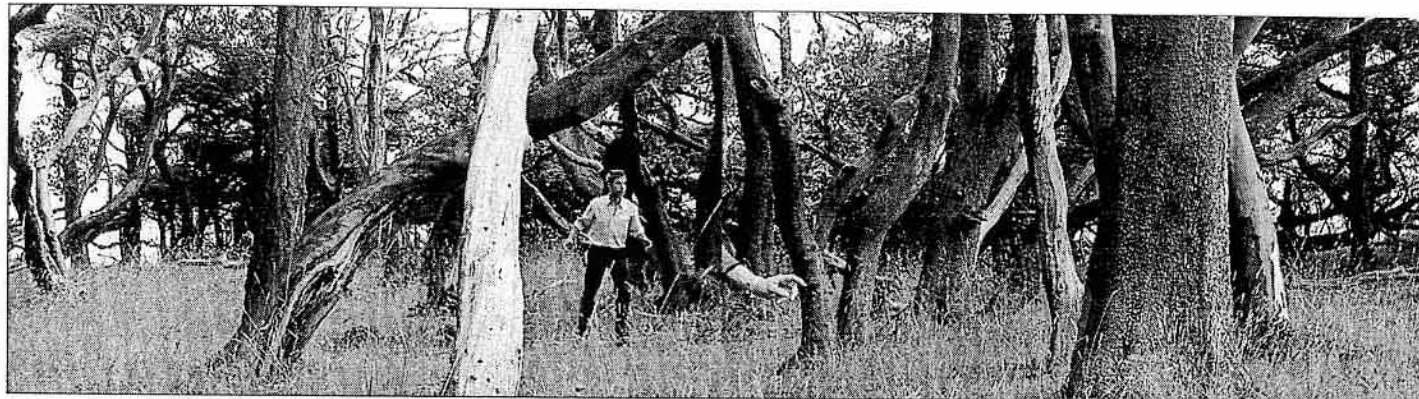


# Visual Arts





Video artist Judy Radul's *Downes Point* was shot with five video cameras in a bucolic arbutus grove on Hornby Island.

## ■ JUDY RADUL

*Downes Point* and *And So Departed (Again)*

Presentation House  
Gallery

333 Chesterfield Ave.,  
North Vancouver, to  
Oct. 30

The artist will give a talk  
Saturday at 2 p.m. at  
the gallery

# Images yield poetry in motion pictures

BY CLINT BURNHAM

Vancouver artist Judy Radul is a renaissance woman. The Simon Fraser University instructor began her career as a performance poet in the 1980s, went on to work as a curator at the Western Front gallery, has written criticism that veers from the bawdy to the laugh-out-loud hilarious, and in recent years has established herself as one of Canada's premiere video artists.

Radul has shown work at such respected galleries as YYY and the Power Plant in Toronto, the Institute for Contemporary Art in London, England, and the Kunsthhaus in Graz, Austria. She is represented in a forthcoming survey of Vancouver art in Belgium, and has two exhibitions

opening this fall in Vancouver. A collaborative project examining the role of media in the Air India trial opens at Artspeak in October. And what may be Radul's most ambitious set of work has just begun a run at the Presentation House Gallery in North Vancouver.

Radul's Presentation House show includes two video installations: *Downes Point*, made this year on Hornby Island, and *And So Departed (Again)*, made in 2002. *Downes Point* was shot with five video cameras and projected in a seamless panorama that seems to envelop the viewer. We see what appears to be a rehearsal, or casting call, in a bucolic arbutus grove. In front of us, a man in a business suit speaks. Behind us, a group of men and women step up one at a time.

It's all very ambiguous: is this a director asking actors to play certain emotions, is he describing their state of being?

So *Downes Point* plays with how we interact with each other, but in a natural setting that is suddenly theatrical, unsettling, even ghastly.

"I wanted to make a piece that was about nature in a way," said Radul, speaking to *The Sun* in her East Vancouver basement studio. "Not so much the landscape itself but something set in the landscape."

Inspired by a film that local artist Damian Moppett made a few years ago, *1815/62*, that was similarly shot on a coastal island, *Downes Point* also has that eccentric-in-the-woods sensibility that Gus Van Sant recently captured in his Kurt Cobain biopic, *Last Days*.

Radul's other work at Presentation House, *And So Departed (Again)* also offers a directorial scenario. In the video, shot over a period of 12 hours, five different directors rehearse a death scene with stage actor Nancy Palk.

Again and again Palk fakes death: a heart attack, poison, a sudden flailing of the limbs. It looks cheesy and yet hard-won at the same time. We feel uncomfortable watching — even while we know this is artifice. This is what the Romantic poet Samuel Coleridge called "the willing suspension of disbelief" and it is the highest goal, of art, even in our irony-laden age. For Radul to elicit such poetic faith via the realism of video attests all the more to her skills as an artist.

Clint Burnham is a Vancouver author and educator.