

BRINGING THE WAR HOME

By Layne Christensen

Karen Love plans to paper a bulletin board with news clippings on the war in Kosovo. Like many western observers, the curator of Presentation House Gallery is concerned about the conflict in the Balkans. But more than a tool of public awareness, the bulletin board at the rear entrance to the exhibition space will add context to the North Vancouver gallery's current show, *War Zones*.

The project also includes a book, to be released early in the year 2000. *War Zones* will also make its way to the streets, when the art of Edward Poitras (in May), Jamelie Hassan (June) and John Lennon and Yoko Ono (July) is displayed on a billboard at the corner of Georgia and Homer in Vancouver.

The exhibition series of photo- and media-based art is an ambitious project for the gallery. Love says it's the gallery's largest undertaking of the past decade -- a suitable commentary on late 20th-century conflict as we approach the new millennium.

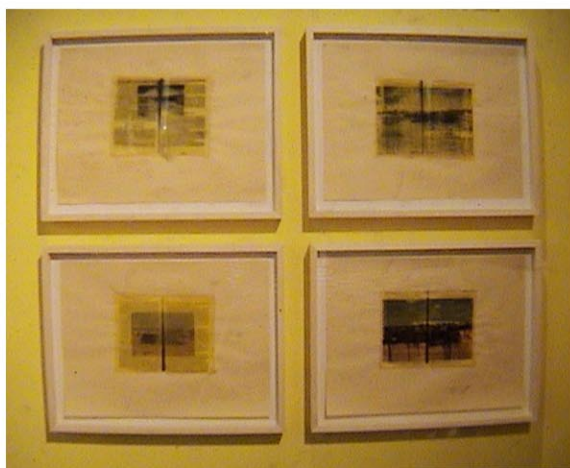
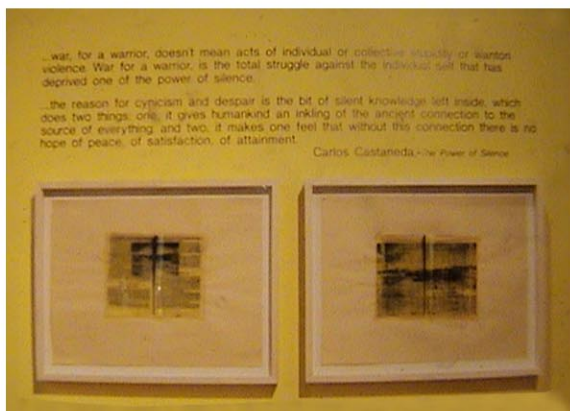
"This exhibition has felt very important to do," says Love, who curated the show with Karen Henry, a former director of the Western Front and the Burnaby Art Gallery. "Over the years, I was looking at contemporary artwork that address issues of conflict and war. As we got closer to the end of the century, it got to feel more and more important to do a project about this subject."

Love and Henry started planning the project more than a year ago. In addition to the show at Presentation House there are special events to be held in collaboration with Vancouver venues including Access Gallery, Artspeak Gallery, the Contemporary Art Gallery and the Vancouver Art Gallery. A film series will take place at Pacific Cinematheque. Veterans Against Nuclear Arms has also lent its support to the project.

Because of the enormity of the project, *War Zones* has been divided into three parts, with events and exhibitions taking place over the next six months. Opening tomorrow at the Presentation House Gallery is *Siting Conflicts*, part one of *War Zones*. The show brings together the art of five international artists, whose work is defined by its relationship to place. New York artist Martha Rosler's collages *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* evoke the horrors of the Vietnam War -- the first war fought, and lost, in real-time media, says Love. Barbara Alper's piece on the Gulf War is a direct commentary on the influence of the media in shaping public opinion.

Also included are video works by Allan Harding MacKay, Canada's official war artist in Somalia, and Willie Doherty of Northern Ireland. Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar's "peaceful" images of Rwandan landscapes "deliberately attest to the limits of the ability of photographs to represent this situation," says Love.

War Zones opens Saturday with a reception at 2 p.m. On Sunday, April 18, 2 p.m. at the Vancouver Art Gallery, a panel discussion, *In the Field: Representing Conflict*, will take place with Willie Doherty, Allan Harding MacKay, Sue Malvern and Nettie Wild. The moderator is Jerry Zaslove.



Allan Harding MacKay