

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG PRESENTS FIRST SOLO MUSEUM EXHIBITION IN THE UNITED STATES OF SHANA MOULTON'S IMAGINATIVE VIDEOS AND SCULPTURE

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St. Petersburg, Fla.--Shana Moulton explores our obsession with self-help fads and wellness therapies, as well as consumer culture as a whole. She primarily uses video, with her alter ego Cynthia, who never speaks, as the protagonist.

The MFA is featuring all nine installments of her *Whispering Pines* series, as well as other videos, sculpture, and an opera/performance piece. Though Ms. Moulton has received many solo exhibitions in galleries and has been selected for a wealth of group shows, this is her first solo museum project in the United States.

Shana Moulton: Journeys Out of the Body opens Saturday, June 18, and continues through Sunday, October 9, in the Hazel Hough Wing. This is one of the most inventive exhibitions ever presented/staged at the MFA. The *Tampa Bay Times* is the Media Sponsor.

Inspired primarily by soap operas, *Whispering Pines* will unfold, appropriately, on television sets. A life-size anatomical theater in the central gallery of the Hazel Hough Wing will display the 2008 video *Repetitive Stress Injuries*. Ms. Moulton has also created a site-specific video for this exhibition and is premiering another, *All Angles are Angels*.

On Thursday, October 6, at 7 p.m., *Whispering Pines 10*, a one-act live-performance video opera, will be presented in the Marly Room. Backed by Nick Hallett's libretto and score, Ms. Moulton will bring Cynthia to life in a contemporary take on the "mad scene." Daisy Press will be the vocalist. The opera is free with Museum admission, which is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday.

Whispering Pines, her best known video series, takes its name from the California mobile home park, chiefly comprised of seniors, where she grew up. With very few children around, she turned to her elderly neighbors for companionship and was fascinated with the knickknacks lining their shelves. Her videos are full of such objects, carefully arranged for the camera, which she views as part of the cast. She also explored the large woods next door, which fuels Cynthia's fantasies and dreams.

Television was another major influence. A soap opera fan, she was also drawn to the cult classic, *Twin Peaks*, created by Mark Frost and David Lynch of *Blue Velvet* fame. Only on the air for two seasons, *Twin Peaks* uncovered the darker side of small-town life and had supernatural elements and quirky humor. The artist notes that the serial format of *Whispering Pines* and its production quality are inspired by both soap operas and home movies.

Cynthia can be funny, as she deals with her hypochondria and follows yet another fad. At the same time, her anxiety is ever present. Her costumes embedded with medical devices,

especially a dress with a hemorrhoid pillow, are over-the-top. That dress is part of the exhibition.

Born in 1976, Ms. Moulton earned her BA in art and anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley and her MFA at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. She has been an artist-in-residence at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota, Harvestworks in New York, De Ateliers in Amsterdam, and The Sommerakademie in Berne.

Ms. Moulton has shown her work and performed around the world, including in China, and her videos have been selected for leading experimental film festivals. Curator of Contemporary Art Katherine Pill invited Ms. Moulton to bring her fantastic and fantastical work to the MFA.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

For the latest updates on public programs, please visit www.mfastpete.org.

Wednesday, June 8, Coffee Talk with Nan Colton, the MFA's performing artist-in-residence

Enjoy refreshments at 10 a.m., Nan Colton's performance at 10:30, and a general docent tour at 11:15. FREE with MFA admission. Sponsored by Westminster Communities of St. Petersburg.

Before filmmakers, there were photographers. Just as Shana Moulton is charting new ground in video and performance art, Julia Margaret Cameron pushed photography forward in nineteenth-century Britain. Women artists faced enormous challenges in that era to be recognized. Nan Colton's profile of Cameron—*In Focus*—looks at her struggles, approach, and accomplishments against the odds.

Thursday, June 9, 6:30 p.m.: Book Club at the MFA, presented by Keep St. Pete Lit. FREE with MFA admission.

The quirky agoraphobic architect Bernadette Fox in Maria Semple's *Where'd You Go, Bernadette: A Novel* will prepare you to meet Cynthia, artist Shana Moulton's alter ego. Join the conversation about the book and the artist.

Sunday, June 19, 3 p.m.: The Wayne W and Francis Knight Parrish Lecture by artist Shana Moulton on the opening weekend of the exhibition. FREE with MFA admission.

Anyone who has watched Shana Moulton describe her work online knows that she is accessible, relatable, and refreshingly honest. She will discuss her *Whispering Pines* video series, her performance pieces and operas, and her sculpture and installations. In our age of multimedia, Ms. Moulton has staked out her own territory in the art world and is gaining ever more critical attention.

Ms. Moulton has shown her work or performed at the Museum of Modern Art, The New Museum, and The Kitchen in New York; The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh; the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Tate Modern in London; and major universities across the country.

The Parrish Lecture brings outstanding scholars and artists to the community. Mr. Parrish was a successful publisher of aviation magazines, and Mrs. Parrish was Director of the U.S. Passport Office from 1955-1977. The Parrishes donated many of the Museum's pre-Columbian objects, which are displayed in a gallery named in their honor.

Thursday, October 6, 7 p.m.: Shana Moulton's opera *Whispering Pines 10*. FREE with MFA admission, which is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday, cash bar and lite bites.

This phantasmagoric opera/performance piece features video by Shana Moulton, along with her live performance and vocals by Daisy Press. Ms. Moulton on stage interacts and at times merges with the video. It is often difficult to discern where one leaves off and the other begins. Do we now spend more time in virtual reality and is it more powerful than the supposed real thing?

The work follows the efforts of her protagonist Cynthia to find meaning as an environmental activist, though she finds it impossible to leave the confines of her home. John Motley noted in his review for *The Oregonian* that "Moulton's treatment of life's most vexing questions is kitschy, trippy, and, at times, laugh-out-loud funny, but it is also genuinely heartbreaking. Moulton reminds us that...our longing for spiritual communion is still kicking."

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

The MFA at 255 Beach Drive N.E. has a world-class collection, with works by Monet, Gauguin, Renoir, Morisot, Cézanne, Rodin, O'Keeffe, Willem de Kooning, and many other great artists. Also displayed are ancient Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Asian, African, pre-Columbian, and Native American art. The photography collection is one of the largest and finest in the Southeast.

Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, until 8 p.m. on Thursday, and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. **Admission is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday.** Regular admission is \$17 for adults, \$15 for those 65 and older, and \$10 for students seven and older, including college students with current I.D. Children under seven and Museum members are admitted free. Groups of 10 or more adults pay only \$12 per person and children \$4 each with prior reservations. The MFA Café is open from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. For more information, please call 727.896.2667 or visit www.mfastpete.org.