

Jillian Mcdonald - Urban Dead
Choate House Gallery, Pace University

November 5th - November 30th, 2007
Reception: Monday, November 12, 1 - 2 pm
861 Bedford Road
Pleasantville, NY
Gallery Hours: Mon - Wed 12 - 4, Thurs 12 - 6
Information: (914) 773-3473



Zombies In Condoland



Corpse Flower: Bloom of the Triffid



Horror Make-up

Pace University Gallery is pleased to present *Urban Dead*, a solo exhibition by artist Jillian McDonald, whose recent body of work examines the horror film industry.

McDonald's previous work dealt with the cult of celebrity and the fantasy that buoys extreme fandom. In her current work, she concentrates on the "manufacturing of fear as entertainment" at work in horror films. However the work offers no extreme violence, little gore, no character development, and zero plot. These are stripped away in order to highlight the protagonists and monsters. Horror fans and viewers may find humor in the narrative precisely because the artifice is revealed.

Caitlin Jones, of Rhizome.org (October 8, 2007), wrote that McDonald's work "is distinct from many other artists also concerned with the cinematic. Not simply interested in issues of narrative, time, space, or the like, McDonald looks specifically at the genres romance and horror and how these constructions become a part of our own experiences". S.C. Squibb in Art Cal (October 25, 2007) stated that McDonald "so effectively conjures enough theoretical familiars that it is easy to miss one of its more obviously delightful aspects: it's hilarious."

Works in the exhibition:

The zombie, among other "undead" monsters, is a unique horror creature due to its abject existence - robbed of identity, neither dead nor alive, neither clever nor resourceful, and driven only by its hunger for flesh. *Zombies in Condoland*, *There Goes the Neighbourhood Here Comes the Bride*, and *Welcome to Your Worst Nightmare* form a series of animations and digital prints. A motley crew of zombies - images downloaded from internet documentation of flash mob "zombie-walks" - lumber through post-industrial Brooklyn cityscapes long gentrified and now rezoned for condo living.

The Bloom of the Triffid is an animation. McDonald tracked the bloom of Brooklyn's corpse flower during August 2006 via The Brooklyn Botanical Garden's webcam. She compiled still images from this webcam into a stop motion animation and digitally altered it to frame the strange bloom in a spotlight. This bloom made national headlines as the first of its kind to bloom in New York since 1939. Visiting it in the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens she was struck by its diva quality, all alone in the center of a greenhouse with hordes of fans, cameras snapping, and news correspondents. A triffid is a fictional carnivorous plant.

In *Horror Make-up*, a video, the artist transforms herself from normal to zombie in the midst of a daily subway commute. Instead of improving her features, like the women who steadily apply makeup en route to work, she becomes a ghastly. This work takes

cues from the legions of women who perform beauty rituals on the subway in a curious private zone where they seem unaware of anything outside their activity, and the rising cult of zombies in popular culture, where zombie gatherings and zombie lore flourish. Locating the audience physically in the subway performance space positions them as both voyeurs and potential victims.

Jillian McDonald is a Canadian born artist, living in New York. Her latest work is currently on view in the solo show *Waking the Dead* at Moti Hasson Gallery in New York City (October 11 - November 10). Other solo shows and projects include San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, Jack the Pelican Presents Gallery in New York, ArtMoving Projects in Brooklyn, and YYZ in Toronto. Her work has been featured in group exhibitions internationally. She attended numerous residencies including most recently The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Workspace residency in New York and The Western Front Media Art residency in Vancouver. McDonald teaches in the Fine Arts department at Pace University, where she also curates and co-directs the [Pace Digital Gallery](#).

Artist's website: www.jillianmcdonald.net