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Multidisciplinary artist, curator and critic Germaine Koh has been successfully involved in a number of areas of the Canadian contemporary art world over the past fifteen years. The Malaysian-born artist, who has lived in British Columbia, Ottawa and then Toronto, is becoming increasingly well known in Canada and exhibits abroad regularly.

Through interventions that are usually minimal and operate like signals, giving them a character akin to language, Koh's works attempt to convey the intangible, the immaterial, the unfathomable—in short, that which generally eludes our senses: from fluctuations in wind speed to the variable intensity of a job being performed. Koh acts discreetly, anonymously, on objects and places belonging to the culture of everyday life as defined by manners, mentalities, customs and norms. Her projects often fit into specific sites with a view to prompting minor disturbances which, subtly, surreptitiously, make the visiting or passing public become aware of what is left unsaid, of our surroundings, of nature in general, of the implications underlying the economy, and of our socialization.

Most often, Koh's work is in the order of the undetectable. It is sometimes also presented in a form rather reminiscent of an enigma, a visual puzzle, since she hides, as much as she exposes them to view, some of the components of the work. In *Personal Messages*, the excerpts from her diary that appeared in the Montréal daily newspaper *Le Devoir* during the 2002 *Biennale de Montréal*, the artist underscored the paradox of the mass media. With the installation *Floe*, Koh attempted to reveal the links and correlations between the urban landscape, human behaviours and local history. *Fair-weather forces: wind speed*, presented in the form of a turnstile rotating on its own at a variable rate depending on the changing exterior wind speed, makes the wind perceptible through a relatively simple technology connecting the object exhibited in a gallery to an anemometer; in this way, she helps us see this atmospheric phenomenon, its speed, its moods, etc., completely differently than through the

usual external signs, and without our having to stick our noses outside. *Sightings*, which takes place in spaces linked to the exhibition galleries, in this case the bookstore at the Musée, offers postcards produced from photos found in various public places, duly arranged on a display rack and available for purchase.

Sometimes, in other, performance works, Koh includes her own body, as in *Watch*, where she uses it like an ethnologist whose goal seems to be to disclose her observations to the very people she is observing. Through small, subtle interventions, the artist intrudes in our everyday actions in order to reveal the element of alienation, as well as the hidden meaning generated by the automatic reflexes related to them. Koh thus gives us the opportunity to become aware of the behavioural structures and schemes which each of our gestures fits into, and which, out of habit, we no longer see, which escape us or which we tend to disregard.

In Koh's work as a whole, the figure of the artist is vested with a social function and is in no way dissociated—quite the contrary—from the evolution of the human community. In this, Koh follows that small band of conceptual artists including Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner, Joyce Weiland and General Idea. However, avoiding the definite coldness characteristic of this art form, her interventions readily retain something spontaneous and impulsive.