

# Robin Arseneault

## BIO

Born in 1975, Arseneault received her MFA from the Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland (2005), and her BFA from the Alberta College of Art & Design, Canada (1998). She has completed residencies at the Banff Centre and has been the recipient of multiple awards and grants throughout her career from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and Alberta Heritage. She was a recipient of the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Emerging Artist Award in 2008 and a long list Nominee for the Sobey Art Award in 2007. Arseneault has exhibited internationally, including Canada, USA, Scotland, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, and Iceland. In 2011, she completed a public sculpture commission, *Hunting Blind*, in conjunction with the Art Gallery of Alberta, and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. Most recently her work was part of *Monsoon*, an exhibition at the Griffin Art Projects in Vancouver, BC, with Katie Ohe, Christian Eckart, Evan Penny and Isla Burns. A number of Robin's work can be found in the collection of Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Art Gallery of Alberta, Maison Simons Corporate Collection, the Fairmont Hotels (permanent art collection) and numerous others across North America.

## HAIRY DRAWINGS & TABLE SCULPTURES

Robin Arseneault's recent studio work includes a suite of ten *Hairy Drawings* on printed Kinwashi paper, each smudged back into with dry pigments. We are immediately aware of the materiality and tactility to these hairy surfaces. The *Hairy Drawings* conjure up a disembodied figure replete with hilarity and sensuality. This fractured sense of body continues with the intimate *Table Sculptures*, made from a variety of materials like ceramic pieces, bronze clay, found wood pieces and brass

## ONLOOKERS

Arseneault's work has become increasingly archaeological in concept referencing time as something mythical and prehistoric, while using materials that support these underpinnings. This sensibility is especially present in the work of *ONLOOKERS*, where found materials and objects are stripped of their original context and meaning only to lay bare inherent formal qualities. The result of which leaves fragmented shapes and forms transformed into what can be seen as hieroglyphics of an unknown language. It is here where the power of the fragmented image (or disruption in meaning) speaks to the subversion of power through subtle humour and curiosity.

The work lies at the intersection of sculpture, drawing and photography. For Arseneault, the photographic image has been the seeding to this intersection, resulting in what can be thought of as "topographies": where repeated shapes help form our understanding, or misunderstanding of the world. For Arseneault traced/cut/projected/layered and ultimately transformed photographic images of prehistoric artifacts into three-dimensional brass sculptures. The 30 pound objects seemingly float in front of the wall to dramatic effect. Their projected shadows, patina surfaces, and bodily shapes further play into their mystical qualities.

Perhaps a sobering reality, the sculptures are coupled with black and white photographs (reminiscent to a photogram) that document their bodily absence and ultimately, their loss. If the brass shapes are an artifact of what once 'was', the photograph is evidence of what has been forgotten.