

# ATOMIC SUITE

AN EXHIBITION BY  
**MARY KAVANAGH**

April 20 – August 25, 2012  
THE ART GALLERY OF CALGARY

The Art Gallery of Calgary is pleased to present *Atomic Suite*, a new project by artist Mary Kavanagh. Working with video, photography and painted notation, Kavanagh's incisive work reflects on atomic and nuclear history, industry and culture, through an exploration of historic sites in the American Midwest.

*Atomic Suite* evolved from an artist residency that spanned the summers of 2010-11 at the Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI) in Wendover, Utah. While there, Kavanagh was able to engage directly with the historic remnants of WWII Wendover Airfield, where the 509th Composite Group trained to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, and where the Enola Gay Hanger, that housed the Enola Gay B-29 Bomber, still rests. The Airfield, much of it unaltered since the War, has slowly fallen into a state of decay. It exists today as place-as-artifact, though continues to support a range of U.S. military activity, resulting in a complex strata of warfare residue—a legacy that connects WWII through the cold war to twenty-first century constructs of war.

Kavanagh documented U.S. Marines in parachute and artillery training for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, night raid training of Junior Rangers for a mission in Libya, and ordnance disposal at the Utah Test and Training Range. She accessed hangars, bomb loading pits, craters, bombing and shooting ranges, munitions igloos, barracks, storage vaults, etc. Following her residency she collaborated with a butoh dancer and recorded a choreographed performance on August 6, 2010 on the 65th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

## THE ART GALLERY OF CALGARY

### Exhibition Dates

April 20 – August 25, 2012

### Public Opening

April 20, 2012, 6pm – 9pm

### Artist Talks

April 19, 2012, 7pm

June 7, 2012, 6-8pm

### The Art Gallery of Calgary

117 – 8 Avenue Southwest

Calgary AB T2P 1B4

403 770-1350

### Gallery Hours

Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 5pm

First Thursday of the Month, 10 am – 9pm

The artist acknowledges the support of:



Canada Council  
for the Arts



Alberta  
Foundation  
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts  
du Canada

## ATOMIC SUITE | MARY KAVANAGH

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*Atomic Suite* evolved from an eight-week artist residency that spanned the summers of 2010-11 at the Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI) in Wendover, Utah. While there, Kavanagh was able to engage directly with the historic remnants of WWII Wendover Airfield, where the 509th Composite Group trained to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, and where the Enola Gay Hanger, that housed the Enola Gay B-29 Bomber, still rests. The Airfield, much of it unaltered since the War, has slowly fallen into a state of decay. It exists today as place-as-artifact, though continues to support a range of U.S. military activity, resulting in a complex strata of warfare residue—a legacy that connects WWII through the cold war to twenty-first century constructs of war.

Kavanagh filmed U.S. Marines in parachute and artillery training for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, night raid training of Junior Rangers for a mission in Libya, and ordnance disposal at the Utah Test and Training Range. She was granted access to historic sites including hangars, bomb loading pits, craters, bombing and shooting ranges, munitions igloos, barracks, storage vaults, etc. Following her residency she collaborated with Butoh dancer, Techan Imai, and recorded a choreographed performance at Hopi, Arizona, on August 6, 2010 on the 65th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing.

Through a set of four iterations, each focusing on questions of warfare and its fallout, the work moves from external data collecting to internal meditations that encompass a feminist response. The exhibition includes a cinematically scaled video projection; a photographic grid describing events, artifacts and architecture of Wendover Airbase and surrounds; photographic diptychs; and a series of small watercolour paintings, visual notes that function as a lyrical counterpoint to the technologies of archiving. These works offer a rarified view of powerful, central, yet largely covert and un-witnessed aspects of the calculated construction of war, conceptualizations that continue to occupy the contemporary imagination.

Kavanagh has exhibited extensively across Canada and has participated in artist residencies and exhibitions in the U.S. In the Fall 2007 she was a Visiting Professor at Hokkai-Gakuen University in Sapporo, Japan. She received an MFA from the University of Saskatchewan, an MA in Art History from the University of Western Ontario, and a BA in Fine Arts from the University of Guelph. She has recently been invited to participate in the Canadian Forces Artists Program, established and supported by the Canadian Department of Defense. Mary Kavanagh maintains her studio practice in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, and is Associate Professor in the Department of Art at the University of Lethbridge, where she served as Department Chair from 2006-2012.

ANNE EWEN  
Interim Senior Curator