



ASYLUM:

a long, last look at woodlands

1878 to 2003

the exhibition

[The artist explains] "I treat the community like an extended family. I'm not a civic activist but, as an artist, I'm looking for meaning. Woodlands is a mental health issue. People don't want to deal with mental health. You have it in your community because you have to. I was looking for a nice way to tell this story. But it's not a very pretty story."

De Courcy's project became more of a morality tale - a story of developers lining up for the prime property.

"My goal was to put a human face on this mystery that was so hidden behind the hedge," said de Courcy. "A marginalized group of people with no power are sitting ducks. They become dehumanized."

Lori Pappajohn

WOODLANDS - A LONG LAST LOOK: MEMORIES AND MORALS
The Record
Saturday, October 25, 2003

The Woodlands project isn't "ivory tower", he insists. "This is purely blue-collar artwork, it's the frontlines - collaborating with people and working on issues those people have an interest in." His low-tech, low-budget, independent way of working, without public or corporate funding, is itself a statement, consonant with the conceptual, anti-institutional, community-oriented art he has been undertaking since the 1970s. "I'm not interested in making applications to juries of architects and planners to do a piece that's going to sit in front of a building," he says. "I'm looking for meaning in the job of making art....I just can't sustain interest in something that is mechanical or where there's no emotional content, no human connection."

Robin Laurence

ASYLUM LIVES ON IN PUBLIC ART
The Georgia Straight
October 30 - November 6, 2003

What de Courcy discovered when he set out to create what he calls a "long, last look" at the institution is a complicated relationship between 64 acres of land and the thousands of people who called it home.

His large-scale photographs, as a result, create a timeline and a portrait of public attitudes toward people with mental disabilities.

The rooms of the Woodlands institute are vacated in these shots - we are left with peeling wallpaper, a bit of curtain, some loose clues to the lives of past inhabitants.

These empty rooms, lit through barred windows, juxtapose with magazine-style portraits of the residents themselves.

De Courcy has captured something important here. A volatile excommunication is underway.

Michael Harris

A HOME AND PART OF HISTORY NOW MAKES WAY FOR CONDOS
The Vancouver Sun
Monday, November 17, 2003



Third Reading installation