

o'born contemporary

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O'BORN CONTEMPORARY presents: *ROAD SHOTS*,  
new works by PUBLIC STUDIO (Elle Flanders & Tamira Sawatzky)

MARCH 17 – APRIL 21, 2012

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© Public Studio, *Old/ New Road to Jericho*, 40" x 60" laser cut archival inkjet print, 2012

DATES:

FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 2012, 6 – 9 pm

Exhibition Opening and Reception  
Show Continues to APRIL 21, 2012

SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 2012, 2 pm

In-gallery conversation with Emelie Chhangur, *assistant Director  
and Curator of the Art Gallery of York University*  
RSVP is requested: [info@oborncontemporary.com](mailto:info@oborncontemporary.com)

LOCATION:

131 Ossington Avenue, Toronto.

GALLERY HOURS:

Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6 and by appointment.

TELEPHONE:

416.413.9555

## EXHIBITION STATEMENT

*Road Shots* is a series of conceptual photographs tracing the political landscape of Israel/Palestine. While living in Ramallah in 2008-2009, we took these stills as we traveled through the West Bank, uncovering a system of segregated roads: Smaller country roads for Palestinians and superhighways for Israeli settlers.

The photographs are 'engraved' with line drawings created in Autocad (architectural software) that take their cue from Islamic architectural ornamentation. Geometry in Islamic architecture was a way in which to order the world. Derived out of a passion for the stars, the night sky was a way of navigating and understanding the earth below. The insistence of the line in these photos is also that of 'lines being drawn' into landscape-such as the 'green line' and the ever-shifting boundaries of Palestine under numerous political accords. The engravings are both reminiscent of 'security' fences and walls (that appear endlessly in the landscape) as well as an architectural history embedded in the land – a fragmentation that is at the heart of Israel's occupation of Palestine. Yet, they also offer a potential for redress-a recuperative harmony through form and geometry.

Contemporary landscape photography often looks at the massive changes in our environment. As cultures clash and become more chaotic, as wars shift territorial homelands, and landscapes change dramatically at the hands of environmental impact, a return to landscape photography in the digital era poses new questions. In the age of hyper-spectacle there is a return to the nagging question as to whether to be seduced or repelled by disaster in order to understand its impact. While often contemporary landscape photography suggests that we, the spectators, are a part of that massive destruction, we ask a somewhat different question: In the wake of disaster, can we interpret landscape as both a site of struggle and as the sublime, therefore invoking a recuperative and restorative element to landscape? We often move through landscape detaching it from its context: *Road Shots* is an attempt to reinvest the beauty we may find in landscape with its everyday political realities.

## ABOUT PUBLIC STUDIO

ELLE FLANDERS is an award-winning filmmaker and artist based in Toronto. She was raised in Montreal and Jerusalem and holds both an MA in Critical Theory and an MFA from Rutgers University. Her work has been exhibited at museums and festivals internationally, including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Berlin International Film Festival. Together with Tamira Sawatzky she founded Public Studio, with recent works including: *Kino Pravda 3G*, a multi-channel video installation, *What Isn't There*, a photo installation, and *Road Movie*, a film installation. She directed the award-winning feature documentary *Zero Degrees of Separation*, which has screened worldwide and has been broadcast on the Sundance Channel, the Documentary Channel and MTV. Flanders is a PhD candidate in the Visual Arts Studio Program at York University, where she also teaches.

TAMIRA SAWATZKY is an award-winning architect and artist working in Toronto. In addition to an ongoing architectural practice, her recent art work includes: *Kino Pravda 3G*, a video installation; *What Isn't There*, a photo installation; *Road Movie*, a film installation; and *Road Shots*, a series of still photographs. Her work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, the Art Gallery at York University (AGYU) and Flux Factory in New York.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST TALK

Emelie Chhangur will join Public Studio in an in-gallery conversation on Saturday, March 17th at 2 p.m. about their solo exhibition *Road Shots* at O'Born Contemporary. Emelie Chhangur, artist and award winning curator and writer, has previously worked with Public Studio in the winter of 2011 with the exhibition *Centre for Incidental Activisms (CIA)* at the AGYU, and her contribution to the conversation will be driven by her interest in the role of the creative institution in artistic and activist collaboration.

EMELIE CHHANGUR is an artist and award winning curator and writer based in Toronto, where she works as the Assistant Director/Curator of the AGYU. Over the past decade, she has developed an experimental curatorial practice in collaboration with artists. Recent projects (2011) include *The Awakening*, a three-year multi-faceted participatory performance with Panamanian artist Humberto Vélez and the *Centre for Incidental Activisms (CIA)*, a radical proposition of gallery "in-reach," where participatory, activist, and research-based practices were emphasized over conventional methods of exhibition display.

Chhangur is interested in how exhibitions and texts perform to create unique interpretative experiences as well as in finding ways to enact activism from within an institutional framework and believes the contemporary art gallery must serve a social as well as aesthetic function. She makes single channel videos and installations, which are shown nationally and internationally, but questioning the nature and function of a contemporary art gallery is her primary art project at the moment.

For media information:

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