



Burrard Inlet, C-print, 2000-2003.

Arni Haraldsson  
Up & Down: Downtown Eastside Architecture  
curated by Clint Burnham

March 15 to April 19, 2003

All works courtesy of the artist and Catriona  
Jeffries Gallery, Vancouver.



Vacant Lot, 100 Block West Pender Street, C-print, 2000-2003.

**Post Script** is a new initiative of Artspeak, designed to encourage the development of innovative critical writing about the visual arts by Vancouver writers, to provide critical feedback to emerging and mid-career artists and to further enhance cross fertilization of ideas between the visual art and writing community.

Information about this exhibition is available on-line at [www.artspeak.ca](http://www.artspeak.ca)

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Dominion Building (1908-10) 207 West Hastings Street; J.S. Heyler & Son, architects; and Flack Block (1899) 163 West Hastings Street; William Blackmore, architect, C-print, 2000-2003.

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# POST SCRIP T

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21/03/03 Andrew Sharpe and  
Kyla Mallett on  
Arni Haraldsson

*Up & Down: Downtown  
Eastside Architecture*



Regal Place Hotel (1909) 144-46 West Hastings Street; Gardiner & Mercer, architects, C-print,2000-2003.



Day For Night, Alley, 100 Block West Hastings Street, C-print,2000-2003.



Gastown w/ Hotel Europe (1908-09) 43 Powell Street; Parr & Fee, architects, C-print,2000-2003.



Downtown East w/ Woodward's Department Store (1908) 101 West Hastings Street; George H. Wemyss & others, architects, (diptych),C-print,2000-2003.

I move through Arni Haraldsson's exhibit: *Up and Down: Downtown Eastside Architecture* at Artspeak Gallery, with a strange sense of dislocation. The exhibit shines on DES architectural artifacts: Edwardian buildings once the pride of Vancouver, treasures such as the Europe, the Dominion, the Woodward's building, and the Regal. Haraldsson's eye has an uncanny knack for stopping time, as we see past and present at the same moment: decay and regeneration, demolition and growth, landscapes void of movement. The installation reminds us of where we are situated, and how architecture records our every movement, our collective economic conscious. A post-modern narrative by Clint Burnham situates the exhibit chronologically. Burnham reminds us of the contradictions ever apparent in an urban landscape: crime, condos, and crack houses; and, somewhat more subtly, the encroaching pension funds of the gentry, ever seeking investment potential. I feel strangely moved, also knowing that the people who move through the room are seeing the views from my window at the Regal, cocktail voyeurs in my bedroom. Haraldsson's exhibit offers two planes: *Up and Down*, yet all shots are from above save one, frame seven, *Day For Night*. This one photo

seems to be Burnham's fear of proximity, a view many in the DES see daily, far removed from Robson Street, never seeing building tops, skylines or mountains as their eyes are trained downward, always searching...searching. As a result this photo is Burnham's tunnel of desire, a Baudrillardian glimpse into Hell, a portal to society's ills, and an entrance to the dance of the damned.

**Andrew Sharpe**  
21/03/03

It's a familiar scene: movie trucks and generators are centered around that landmark triangular building on the corner of Powell and Alexander. It's nighttime, so they're using those giant movie lights that are used to make the indoors look like it's daytime. That building, which has been used in countless films, is the Hotel Europe that Haraldsson figures prominently in one of the works in the exhibition, *Gastown w/ Hotel Europe*. In Haraldsson's photograph, the building sits unadorned by film crews, poised.

Arni Haraldsson's exhibition *Up and Down: Downtown Eastside Architecture* (curated by Clint Burnham for the 100th Anniversary of the Carnegie Centre) at Artspeak, right on the border between the gentrified tourist neighbourhood of Gastown and the "down and out" Downtown Eastside, is both of and in this versatile area which is more often than not taken over by bright and noisy film sets.

While Haraldsson uses the familiarity of these urban views, he also allows the specifics of the city of Vancouver to emerge: the ever-present backdrop of the mountains, BC Place, Harbourfront Centre, and The Pan-Pacific Sails. Like the Hotel Europe photo, the other images

in this exhibition register as cityscape scenes in a film, like the opening shots leading up to a defining filmic moment. They are like backdrops waiting to be filled with dramatic action – perhaps a robbery, a drug bust, a shopping spree or a romantic encounter. Haraldsson shows the genericized views of the Downtown Eastside that have become perhaps the most marketable commodity this city has to offer; while re-locating them back within the social economy and history of Vancouver.

**Kyla Mallett**  
21/03/03