

CORKIN GALLERY

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Artist Statement

The Clementine Suite, 2004-05

The Clementine Suite of installations is inspired by a photograph that appeared in the National Post in April 2001, depicting a group of approximately twenty young men and women who are posing for the camera, appearing in good spirits and health. The byline below the image described the photograph as a group of Jewish orphans who have recently arrived from Europe to Canada in September 1947. I saved the image and kept referring back to it, questioning the contradiction between the smiling faces and the text. I wondered what the true story was behind each smiling face. It was the contradiction of the inherent joyfulness displayed in the image in relationship to the truth of government quotas and war horrors that has directed this series. It was the faces of these young people that also instigated this work.

I explored the use of standard, commercial ready-made lighting systems such as flashlights, disco lights and festive lights as modes of projection for the photographic images of the faces. These ready-made lighting devices project images of the faces onto their darkened surroundings. The projections have an ephemeral, magical, almost joyousness to them; yet, a serious intention and reading of them. The projected faces become ghostly images referring back to a history once lived. The face on the three hundred small cloth bags draws attention to the place of the individual amidst the multitudes.

I have come to regard this series of installations as a celebration of orphans, of survival and human spirit. Uniting all of the components in this suite is the use of ready-made novelty objects as means of presenting the portraits. This deliberate reference to Dada concepts emphasizes the celebration of survival, the innocence of youth and the legacy of our collective history in a contemporary context.