

### ***New Discoveries and Other Obsessions***

New Exhibition of Works from the MAC Collection

At the ideological and physical centre of this collection display is a new acquisition, Thomas Demand's *Vault* (2012). Typically, Demand works with charged, real-world events, involving social or political intrigue: in this case, the discovery of dozens of missing paintings found in a strong room.

Demand uses a newspaper image, a photograph taken by French police in the Wildenstein Institute's vault in Paris, depicting framed paintings turned towards the walls, their painted surfaces hidden from view. He built a life-size three-dimensional paper sculpture in his studio from this image, which he then carefully lit and photographed. The resulting artwork invokes a philosophical conundrum involving memory, authenticity and representation, as well as being a mesmerizing photograph of a sculpture of a photograph - triply removed from reality.

Like Demand's art, the rest of the works on display are not quite what they first appear to be, as conceptual strategies or narrative backstories confer unexpected meaning, provoke new interest and give greater resonance to the work. Nicolas Baier's *Réminiscence* (2012), a dramatic photographic image of endlessly receding clouds, may at first view seem like a Romantic celebration of untamed nature but is, in reality, a scientific rationalisation in its use of climatic data to build a computer-generated image of the weather. Other artists such as Jeff Wall also deploy a stylized realism in creating scenes that are highly constructed and referential. In *The Quarrel* (1988), Wall seems to compress the narrative of a full-length feature film into one backlit still image, frozen yet intimate, of a couple at night in bed.

The exhibition culminates in a work that offers a further paradox, for once again, much is tantalizingly hidden from view: a large, austere, minimalist trapezoidal sculpture by Geneviève Cadieux, *Broken Memory* (1995), in some ways the apogee of modernist abstraction, is *punctured* by four audio speakers and *contaminated* by a profoundly human lament.