

David Altmejd, Canada's representative at the 2007 Venice Biennale of Visual Art, to open new exhibition at Oakville Galleries in January 2007

OAKVILLE, ON – Oakville Galleries is excited to announce *Metamorphosis* – David Altmejd's first major solo exhibition in Canada outside Montréal. The exhibition will be open to the public from **27 January to 25 March 2007** at Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens.

Metamorphosis is produced by the Galerie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal and is curated by Louise Déry. David Altmejd has also been chosen to represent Canada at the 2007 Venice Biennale of Visual Art.

Montreal-born artist/sculptor David Altmejd's research is about energy and metamorphosis. Altmejd creates miniaturized architectural structures that weave a horror-movie /Gothic type of aesthetic with a reference to modern architecture and minimalist sculpture. The werewolf is Altmejd's recurring motif – its decaying flesh is bedecked with crystals and jewellery, while its habitats are sprawling platforms, box-like rooms, mirrored surfaces and Plexiglas towers, connected at different levels by flights of steps, and lit from many sources.

This exhibition is the first assessment of David Altmejd's meteoric career and investigates work produced from the late 1990's to today. It will differ from the usual traveling exhibition as Altmejd will tailor-make the exhibition to relate to the unique site of Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens.

David Altmejd: *Metamorphosis* will literally morph into a project specifically for Oakville Galleries's unique space in Gairloch Gardens. Altmejd will respond to the domestic nature of this site: to its history, its use as shelter, issues of materialism and issues of public and private. The resulting exhibition will "act-out" the social relations inherent in such a location to prompt further memory, association and imagination. Altmejd's complex labyrinthian work, populated by ghoulish entities drawn from fairy tales, Greek mythology and Hollywood B-movies, juxtaposes a Modernist architectural model with a teeming world of sensory excess. Philosophical and literary references, particularly Quignard and Borges, articulate a visual obsession with the metamorphosis of the body. Altmejd's use of materials is opulent, complex and evocatively incongruous. His idiosyncratic formal vocabulary – quasi modernist display environments sexed-up with mirrored surfaces, theatrical lighting and costume jewellery, all orchestrated to create sprawling disco sarcophagi for broken werewolf corpses – is already a riot of psychological tropes. Death and desire, the self and the other, decay and transformation – all are explicit in the forms and contexts of Altmejd's grotesqueries. Seen within the confines of a former old estate, the setting will provide a resonance not possible in a white cube-type gallery and become a site of experimentation.

David Altmejd, born in Montréal, lives and works in Montréal, Brooklyn and London. He has degrees in visual art from UQAM (BA, 1998) and Columbia University (MFA, 2001). His work has been shown in Québec, the United States and Europe. Altmejd has notably participated in the Istanbul (2003) and Whitney (2004) Biennials, and will represent Canada at the 2007 Venice Biennale in an exhibition curated by Louise Déry and produced by the Galerie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. In a few years, David Altmejd has very quickly achieved an enviable place on the North American art scene, and the exemplary individuality of his work makes him one of the most significant artists of his generation. *Metamorphosis* is his first major exhibition touring in Canada – it is his first major solo exhibition in Canada outside Montréal.

Metamorphosis is produced by the Galerie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (Galerie de l'UQAM) with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and Heritage Canada.

Exhibition opening reception: **Friday 26 January 2007** from 8:30 to 10 pm at Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens. The artist and curator will both be in attendance.

Media contact: Tony Hewer, 905.844.4402 ext. 28 or email <tony@oakvillegalleries.com>

For information on David Altmejd as Canada's official representative at the 2007 Venice Biennale of Visual Art, please visit:

<http://www.canadacouncil.ca/news/releases/2006/up127970989409375630.htm>

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Oakville galleries

Oakville Galleries has two locations:

Oakville Galleries at Centennial Square is located at 120 Navy Street in downtown Oakville. The gallery is open 12 to 9 pm Tuesday to Thursday; 12 to 5 pm Friday; 10 am to 5 pm Saturday; and 1 to 5 pm Sunday.

Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens is located at 1306 Lakeshore Road East, 2 km east of downtown Oakville. The gallery is open 1 to 5 pm Tuesday to Sunday.

Admission is free.

For further information on Oakville Galleries, our exhibitions or programmes, please call 905.844.4402 or visit <http://www.oakvillegalleries.com>

Oakville Galleries acknowledges the ongoing support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council and the Corporation of the Town of Oakville, along with our many individual, corporate and foundation partners.

High resolution images are available for the media upon request. Please contact Tony Hewer, Communications Officer at Oakville Galleries, at 905.844.4402 ext 28, or e-mail tony@oakvillegalleries.com