

MOST OF US WILL WALK PAST AND TURN AWAY. LAIDO

Office Ho

# Diamond's Daddy Dearest

...memories speak strongly of his mother's influence...

by Oosa

**P**aternity can be viewed til March 3rd at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Tucked away on the 4th floor off a side room. One can stroll in and make oneself comfortable on the living room couches upholstered with maps of N.Y.C. and rest one's head on the cotton covered cushions sprawled with

hand written childhood experiences.

Diamond's installation also includes full length window curtain from ceiling to floor scenes from different neighbourhoods in N.Y.C. at the time when herself, her parents and her grandparents were living there.

Eight monitors around the room show 300 different videos simultaneously. The entire show lasts over two hours.

Many issues are covered in this show, all seen through the video artist's family: A Jewish family living in N.Y.C. dating from pre-WWI til present day, having gone back to old neighbourhoods that were predominantly Jewish but are now multiethnic or predominantly black.

Sara's video show centres on her father recounting childhood memories about his parents and sister and what was happening in their neighbourhood and their lives at the time.

He is shown on screen, mainly his face, if not his entire body. We only see Sara Diamond in certain scenes vaguely behind her father or the two of them talking together about certain memories, where his memories seem to take more importance.

Diamond is also seen continuously on at least two monitors at a time. The focus is only on part of her body, from her neck to her waist. We see her hands mimicking her father's hand gestures while he recounts various memories.

The third visual, a video on a monitor, are mainly N.Y.C. street scenes.

Of the many issues covered, the predominant one is of great relevance to the theme, Patermity! I definitely thought the name of the show was appropriate, since the viewer comes to understand the Diamond Family and the working class scene through out the 1900's through the Artist's Father recounting his family's past through his memories. Although it is her show, her Father has centre stage. It seems clear to me that Diamond is showing us how history is taught to us through our fathers' recounting of what really happened.

Through all this family recounting, I do see some criticism of family by simply showing how families function in general. For example, Father's having centre stage (their names are carried on), but Mother's having main influence on family or main responsibility of holding family together.

Diamond's Father's memories speak strongly of his mother's influence on him, as she was a trade union activist and concerned about the community around her.

On one of the monitors there is often written commentary slowly phasing up off the screen, by various people such as wimmin in her family to Michel Foucault to admirers of Freud! The viewer must choose between the written text leaving the screen and her father's story telling.

Her father recounts many things as he explores the neighbourhood he knew as a child as his sexual experiences as a kid, his masculine feats with other boys, the importance of wimmin knitting gatherings and the need of gender identification (!!!) Much of the stuff he talks of, are hair raising issues. I encourage the viewer to have a critical ear in hearing all that her father recounts as with in any family in this society where we've all taken in our stereotypical ideas of feminine/masculine and gender identification. I expect the title of the show, Patermity, may turn many wimmin off from seeing this show. But I imagine Diamond is trying to express something of significance in exposing her family through her father.

I felt Diamond managed will in exposing her family not only in a personal way but also examining social dimensions of family and culture, although her lesbianism did not particularly bring out a unique perspective of Father/Daughter relationships.

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