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Ellen Harvey *Arcade/Arcadia*

June 1 – July 27, 2012

Artist's reception:
Friday, June 1st, 5:30–7:30pm

Gallery hours:
Tues–Sat: 10am–6pm

Our summer hours for July/August:
Mon–Fri: 10am–6pm



Exterior view, *Arcade/Arcadia*, 2011–12, mixed media installation

Locks Gallery is pleased to present *Arcade/Arcadia*, an installation by Ellen Harvey, on view June 1st through July 27th, 2012. There will be a reception for the artist on Friday, June 1st from 5:30 to 7:30pm.

Ellen Harvey is known for her use of traditional media or aesthetics to create situations that call into question our expectations and desires for art. In *Arcade/Arcadia* (2011–12) an amusement arcade collides with a gallery to create an unsettling embodiment of how easily the desire for the sublime can collapse into an acceptance of commercial spectacle.

From the outside, the viewer sees an old-fashioned aluminum fairground sign spelling out the word “ARCADIA” in six foot high lights leaning against an open framework wood shack. The inside of the structure is filled with the artist’s characteristic hand-engraved mirrors mounted on light boxes, offering a 360-degree view of a derelict seaside resort. The engravings appear as lines of light floating on the mirrored surfaces and viewers see themselves inside an endlessly mirrored drawing in light.

The town portrayed is Margate, a once famous English seaside destination, now fallen into disrepair, where the 18th Century painter J. M. W. Turner, famous for his dramatic light-filled canvases, lived with his lover Mrs. Booth for many years. The painter was maintaining a gallery in London dedicated solely to exhibiting his work, on which Harvey based the dimensions for the structure of *Arcade/Arcadia*. The size and arrangement of the mirrors recreate

[continued on reverse]

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those of the paintings shown in George Jones' two paintings of Turner laid out in his gallery after his death.

The sign on the outside of the structure references not only Turner's view of Margate as an Arcadian site but also the amusement arcade aesthetic that has come to dominate the seaside experience. The typeface of the sign is based on that of Margate's currently shuttered Dreamland Amusement Park. Similarly, the endlessly mirroring mirrors inside reference the fun-house mirror in which reality is bent. The mirrored panorama reinserts present-day Margate into the aesthetics of its more picturesque past at the same time that it stakes a claim for the melancholy beauty of the degraded present.

Ellen Harvey was born in the United Kingdom and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Program and took part in the P.S.1 National Studio Program. She has exhibited extensively in the U.S. and internationally and was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Nudist Museum Giftshop* at Dodge Gallery, New York; *The Nudist Museum* at the Bass Museum, Miami Beach, FL; *Picturesque Pictures* at Galerie Gebruder Lehmann in Berlin, Germany; *Empty Collections* at Galerie Meessen de Clercq, Brussels, Belgium; *Ruins are More Beautiful* at the Center for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, Poland; *Mirror* at the Pennsylvania Academy; and *A Whitney for the Whitney* at Philip Morris at the Whitney Museum at Altria. She has completed projects for both the New York and Chicago Transit Authorities, most recently including a mosaic for the new Metro-North Yankee Stadium Station, and is currently working on commissions for the Federal Government's Art in Architecture program, New York's Percent for Art and the Philadelphia International Airport (in collaboration with Jan Baracz). Her book, *The New York Beautification Project*, was published by Gregory Miller in 2005 and *Ellen Harvey: Mirror* was published by the Pennsylvania Academy in 2006. A monograph *Ellen Harvey: The Museum of Failure* will be published by Gregory Miller in 2013. This will be Harvey's second exhibition at Locks Gallery.

Locks Gallery is located at 600 Washington Square South in Philadelphia, PA. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 6pm. In July and August our summer hours take effect, opening Monday through Friday, 10am to 6pm. For additional information, please contact Locks Gallery at 215.629.1000 voice, 215.629.3868 fax, or info@locksgallery.com.

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