



For Immediate Release: Breathing Again After Imprisonment at Newark Airport

Exhibit: **Property and Evidence: The Whole Story**
Artist: **Edith Kollath**
Dates: **Nov 22nd – Dec 14th**
Reception: Saturday, Nov 22nd 6pm-midnight w/ readings at 9pm by
Teju Cole, Carey Wallace, Wah-Ming Chang & Madhu Kaza
& interactive creatures by Raphael Abrams
Venue: **Dam, Stuhltrager Gallery**
38 Marcy Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11211
Contact: www.damstuhltrager.com ~ edith.damstuhltrager@gmail.com
Hours: **Fri 3-8pm, Sat & Sun noon-6pm (closed Thanksgiving weekend)**

(Brooklyn, New York)

On June 19th, 2008 at 4:30 pm, a **German citizen visiting the United States on a Journalist Visa entered Newark Airport to catch a flight back to her home country. She was detained and her personal items confiscated.** Her name: Edith Kollath. The violation: Carrying books and electronic devices – artpieces in route to her studio in Germany - in her carry on luggage.

This exhibit, "Property and Evidence: The Whole Story", recounts Kollath's interrogation, retraces the steps of her personal possessions while in customs, and presents the "Breathing Books" that created the scandal. Through documents, photographs and the physical seized art (which was ultimately returned on October 3rd, 2008) Kollath fully discloses a factual and emotional exposé.

Kollath combines her agility as a journalist and her depth as an artist to present delicate sculptures at Dam, Stuhltrager Gallery through December 14th.

Excerpts from Edith Kollath's journal:

June 19th, 2008

I was detained at Newark Airport's security check. After closing the terminal to investigate my activities, bringing over a bomb expert and helicoptering in a squad, four hours had passed. I'd had my first official interrogation by TSA, Police, FBI and CIA and was released on my own recognizance. I knew I'd cleared the final CIA report when an officer stated, "We think you must be a good person 'cause now we know how often you change your underwear." This experience cost me missing my flight and having some of my luggage impounded as "Evidence". My artwork locked away in Newark International's "Evidence Room", I had to withdraw from an exhibit in Germany.

October 3rd, 2008

For over three months now, my personal items – art, computer cables, tools and books - have been incarcerated in the EVIDENCE ROOM at Newark Airport. The seizure of my belongings has been the fodder of a written letter by the Government of Georgia as well as futile emails and calls from me to the TSA. The official response yielded not my property but the clarification that, "Nothing ever leaves the Evidence Room."

Sealed away in the tombs of Newark International, an airport high in the rankings of one of the worst in the world, my effects were deemed forever imprisoned.

I mourned, accepted the fateful events and began replacing what was lost... I, of course, survived. There are much worse destinies one could meet at the airport. In looking at my loss in context, I rationalized I would be fine even if my creations were not. It is a strange way to look at art perhaps because art by theory outlives the artist.

I was astounded today by the call from Newark Police to come immediately to the airport to retrieve my belongings.

Following the directions to claim my property, I arrived at the given terminal. I was on time. The policeman was late. As described over the phone, eventually a plain clothed officer did meet me in an unmarked white car, which I was ordered to get in. Once safely enclosed in the four door, I signed a receipt to reunite with my detailed list of possessions which were handed over in a giant black trash bag. A fitting ending to the ordeal, my articles and I were dumped curbside... I walked away with my things after brushing off the suspicious looking white powder. The fire extinguisher had deployed in the officer's car while he was in route to meet me, which subsequently had made him tardy.

For more information: edith.damstuhltrager@gmail.com