



Ron Johnson

Beauty Myth be damned! Here comes The Bod Squad!

When • where

The **Bod Squad**, featuring the works of artists **Jill Price**, **Judith Purdy** and **Blayne Collins**, at the **Forest City Gallery**, April 20 - May 19. For information phone 434-5875.

Armed only with specially designed art weapons — Lipo-ass Barbie, mock-up magazines, blown-up plastic surgery contour drawings — *The Bod Squad*'s London artists **Jill Price** and **Judith Purdy**, and former Londoner **Blayne Collins**, battle the tyranny of the evil supervillain Beauty Myth.

The mastermind is mild-mannered ace-curator, **Victoria Stasiuk**, former co-director of the Forest City Gallery. "I was struck by the politically charged work of Jill Price and Judith Purdy, which presented women's bodies in a very sexual and alluring way, while simultaneously demanding the viewer recognize that beauty comes at a cost."

Stasiuk approached the dynamic duo of Price and Purdy about the idea of a group exhibition. The duo soon became a trio, adding Blayne Collins based on the strength of her 1999 installation, *Commodities* at the Palace at 4 am. Move over Charlie's Angels. *The Bod Squad* is here.

Price, codename Full-figured Barbie, on the phone from their secret hideout, says, "The exhibit deals with how the body has been altered by technology in the '90s and at the dawn of the new millennium, whether it is

cosmetic surgery, cloning, digital imaging or alteration of the figure."

According to Price, her work features the toy icon, Barbie. "I've created a colouring book called, *Barbie goes to the Plastic Surgeon*," she explains. "The irony is that she meets five other women in the waiting room for plastic surgery and they all look the same, but they are all getting different operations." Wham!

In addition, Price will create a large installation with details of preoperative contour drawings that go on people for liposuction and tummy tucks. Price will blow the

drawings up large and circular so that they are actually targets. The targets will be marked with different commodity numbers about what we will pay for self-worth. Pow!

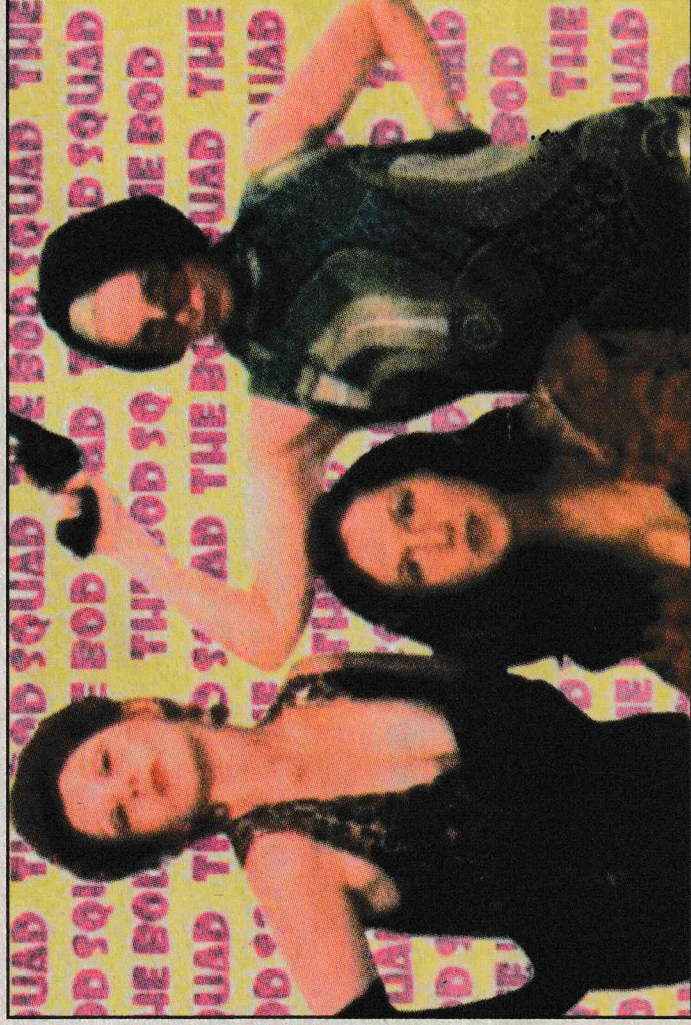
Purdy's work will feature a mock-up magazine. "She will be playing with how *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan* deal with women's issues and prescribe how a woman is suppose to look, what she is suppose to wear and the sizes they come in, that sort of thing," Price says. Bang!

Collins will use digital technology to enlarge photos of body parts that will be hanging from the ceiling that you are to walk through as they strike you in the face. Sock!

The Bod Squad exhibition is obviously a lighthearted critique of a very serious topic. "We can critique it, but we can't deny that on some levels we all buy into what culture prescribes for the ideal image of a woman," Price explains. "We need to have fun with it because we know that despite recognizing it, we also don't deny it on all levels. That's why we are poking fun. But, it is definitely a critique."

According to Price, the whimsical and ironic nature of the exhibition should also make it accessible to men. "We have made it fun and enticing so there is some point of entry for them," she says.

"They'll be able to recognize that they too are beginning to buy into the same things ... Forty per cent of plastic surgeries are performed on men." The number one plastic surgery performed on men: breast reductions.



The *Bod Squad* (from left to right) Judith Purdy, Blayne Collins and Jill Price, drop into the Forest City Gallery to battle the evil Beauty Myth.