

The Beach, 1985-1986

With excerpts, in quotations, from a 1987 artist's statement

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The Beach, “an installation in the apartment of a friend, Calvin Whyte,” a project from the final year of my BFA studies at the University of Victoria, is a precursor to several later bodies of work. Interests in the meeting place of urban and wilderness landscapes that are apparent in *Romantic Commodities* (1991-1993) and *The Sled* (1995-1996) originate in the landscape constructed in Calvin's apartment, as do the complex, diorama/shelter-like constructions of *Torhamvan/Ferryland* (Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver) and *The Kamloops Archipelago* (*Court House*, Kamloops), both from 2005 and twenty years after *The Beach*.



Fred Douglas (my BFA advisor at the University of Victoria), in *The Beach*, 1985

From 1982 to 1986 Calvin and I, together with our friend Brad Cope, made numerous camping trips to Brady's Beach, near Bamfield, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Over that time “seemingly incidental occurrences were extrapolated into a personal conception of the landscape”. Central to our experience of the landscape “was the shelter which we formed around a small rock formation that protrudes from the beach and the camp which surrounds this structure.” *The Beach* “was an elaborate tableau based on our camp and constructed in Calvin's apartment.” The “installation shifted from a monochromatic landscape backdrop through a fabrication of the rock and shelter, adorned with Bamfield objects. As real objects increasingly replaced fabricated ones the



The Beach, view from the balcony

apartment began to assert itself, until on the balcony, at the furthest extreme from the backdrop, sat two deckchairs, equally a part of Calvin's apartment and our beach camp. The apartment and *The Beach* mixed together, each taking turns at enclosing bits of the other." "The apartment and the tableau "underwent many gradual transformations as Calvin adapted to living within this installation for several months, much longer than the planned period of one or two weeks. It became increasingly difficult at certain points" to determine "whether something functioned as a representational element of *The Beach* or as a piece of furniture".



Shelter, Brady's Beach, 1985