## Art Reviews

An installation by Aiko Suzuki probes the militaristic elements of cancer treatment.

# CURE AS WEAPON

### AIKO SUZUKI TAKES ON THE MEDICAL MODEL

By KEVIN TEMPLE

**AIKO SUZUKI** at A Space Gallery (401 Richmond West, Suite 110) until June 11. 416-979-9633. Rating: **NNNN**

In Bombard/Invade/Radiate, **Aiko Suzuki** openly explores her fight against metastatic breast cancer. She offers an intensely personal response to the disease inspired by the late Susan Sontag's observation that cancer treatment "has a military flavour."

Known for her large textile "suspensions" dating back to the 1970s, Suzuki here uses three unique video and audio installations to illuminate medicine's metaphorical "war" on cancer, attacking the body it seeks to heal.

Along the wall, three white, sterile posts secrete short audio clips of her doctors discussing her diagnosis and treatment. A male voice insists chemotherapy must be an "ally, not a foe" and "a good weapon to be employed as needed."

In the corner, the rusted, barrel-like remains of a bomb casing contain a video of Second World War footage. As the short, silent narrative depicts flying bombers, falling bombs and a series of explosions, sporadically falling water droplets make a shallow puddle on the horizontally installed screen, momentarily disrupting the image.

Overshadowing these works, three hanging screens receive video projections of overcast skies and seas with flapping flags in the corners. In the centre, in a superimposed double image, a black-clad Suzuki on a beach performs in slow-motion the semaphore signals for the words "bombard," "invade" and "radiate." A minimal soundtrack provides accompaniment.

As the video proceeds, her jacket and shirt disappear, revealing her bare torso and the loss of her left breast to cancer.

In light of her starkly beautiful exposure, surrounded by water and leaden skies, the absurdity of the semaphore brilliantly mocks the coarse militaristic perspective of the medical establishment and marks it as profoundly unnatural.  ◙