

# Art Smart: New Exhibitions at Conner Contemporary

By Lauren Marie Pritchard | ModernLuxury.com | May 11, 2010



Mary Coble, *Untitled 2 (from Fall)*, 2009-10, video still

Leave it to Conner Contemporary to honor two seriously tough female artists. Don't expect any sugar-coating on the gallery's exhibitions from Janet Biggs and Mary Coble, a pair of artists who employ various mediums to tell of their challenges of personal endurance and confrontation.

In *Nobody Rides for Free*, a collection of video and photographs, Janet Biggs delves into the desire to explore remote lands, testing her own strength on a perilous journey into the high Arctic's "great white North." Biggs' film *Fade to White* shows the crew's struggle to maintain balance and purpose, focusing on one member in particular as he navigates their ship, a 1910 two-masted schooner, through iceberg-filled seas and massive glacial ice walls. Biggs explains that even though the "virgin" North has been mapped, surveyed and mined, the increase of knowledge can never replace the endless fantasies of discovery that allow her to transcend her surroundings.

In *Source*, Mary Coble presents three new videos, mixed-media work and a live endurance performance, all addressing themes of purification and water-based renewal, switching between intimate introspection and the experience of public interaction. *Stand*, *Fall*, and *Swim* are documentary videos of her experience in endurance-based activities in a secluded lake. Coble lays the foundation for an important relationship with her use of water as a recurring metaphor. Coble's performance piece (staged in the gallery courtyard during the exhibition opening) will demonstrate the inward and outward importance of water on the body. In the work, Coble will display water samples she's gathered from all of DC's eight wards, crossing demographic boundaries to emphasize that water quality has different effects across populations.

*Opening reception and performance, May 15, 6-8PM. Conner Contemporary Art, 1358 Florida Ave, NE, 202.588.8750, [connercontemporary.com](http://connercontemporary.com).*