

A MULTIPLICITY OF VOICES
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Work by Manitoba Women Artists
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March 4 - 29, 1987. Gallery 1.1.1., School of Art, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada

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This exhibition was inspired by a desire to document the current practice of Manitoba women artists. It also offers an occasion for considering their work in terms of its contribution to feminist discourse—a project that seems long overdue considering the ambitious and dynamic level of activity that characterizes the women's art community here.

Our intent necessitated a curatorial approach that was inclusive rather than exclusive, responsive rather than prescriptive. As a result, the exhibition includes a wide range of work in terms of media, approach and subject matter. It also represents the work of recent art school graduates as well as that of senior and established artists. This shifts the focus away from the role of authentication often assigned to galleries and curators. Every

Preface

effort was made to present this exhibition as an opportunity for raising questions and stimulating dialogue.

A Multiplicity of Voices: Work by Manitoba Women Artists

is a product of the cooperative spirit that predominates in Winnipeg's arts community. We sincerely thank Plug-In Gallery for generously offering to house a portion of the exhibition, for making their facilities available for Wilma Needham's lecture, and for contributing to the opening event. Thanks also to James Lam for his technical advice and assistance with installing the work at the Plug-In site. We acknowledge and appreciate M.A.W.A.'s (Manitoba Artists for Women's Art) assistance with administrative tasks, publicity and their contribution to the opening event.

I wish to thank Sheila Butler for first suggesting the idea of a women's exhibition. And I would especially like to thank Diane Whitehouse for her unwavering support and insightful advice throughout the entire curatorial process.

The financial support of the Manitoba Arts Council and the Canada Council Exhibition Assistance Program is also appreciated as the exhibition would not have been possible without their assistance.

Sigrid Dahle

A MULTIPLICITY OF VOICES:

Work by Manitoba Women Artists

"Clearly, the model of conversation can be extended into a definition of feminism... It allows us to break the customary association of coherence with consistency, uniformity and fixity—with a 'solid system' or 'rigid ideology'—and from the prescriptive spirit and the impulse toward mastery implicit in these."¹

CREDITS:

Exhibition curator:

Sigrid Dahle

Catalogue essay:

Sigrid Dahle

Advisors:

Diane Whitehouse and Sheila Butler

Catalogue photography:

Bob Talbot

Catalogue copy editor:

Larry Kusch

Catalogue design:

Leo Simoens

Installation technicians:

James Lam (Plug-In Gallery) and Tom Wood (Gallery 1.1.1.)

Funding Assistance From The Manitoba Arts Council And The Canada Council Exhibition Assistance Program

The exhibition's title raises the problematic issue of categorizing visual art solely on the basis of a producer's gender or geographic region. Resorting to either of these for explanations or as a basis for curatorial decision-making implies that "natural" circumstances can account for a specific, identifiable visual art practice. In the case of prairie region exhibitions, "wide open spaces," "harsh and unpredictable weather," and "isolation" are often held responsible for all artistic production. In the case of women's visual art practice, particularly that of early feminist artists like Judy Chicago, the definition and affirmation of femininity and female experience was expressed primarily in terms of biology or anatomy. Because "nature" is perceived as essential, existing apart from culture, it can and has been used to promote limiting stereotypes and simplistic generalizations, as in the two examples cited. Social and cultural context offers an alternate, less fixed and more illuminating framework for considering the work of Manitoba women artists.

Currently, women produce a significant portion of the province's most interesting and important visual art; a fact that is recognized by juries, visiting artists, curators and artists within the community itself. This trend is escalating as unprecedented numbers of women art school graduates choose to remain in Winnipeg after graduation, reversing an earlier trend of migration to eastern centres. This may be because studio space, and the cost of living in general, is more reasonable than in larger centres. Or it may be because a thriving and supportive downtown arts community offers an increasing number of exhibition venues, which are perceived to be accessible to beginning artists.

At the same time, the arts community is small enough to necessitate a spirit of cooperation and to discourage the factionalism and divisiveness that can occur in larger centres. This environment of acceptance invites experimentation and encour-

ages a plurality of practices—it is almost impossible to identify a dominant, characteristically “Winnipeg” practice for either male or female artists.

It is equally important to consider what is absent. While government funding (Manitoba Arts Council and Canada Council) is adequate to sustain an ambitious level of visual art production, individual and corporate buyers and collectors are few. Winnipeg’s perceived isolation and its relegation to the status of “region” also make it difficult for artists to market work in other major centres. The market place doesn’t play a major role in the community, and so is powerless to influence or direct what is produced.

Eclecticism does little to stimulate the dynamic and challenging dialogue that can occur when “camps” are clearly defined and passionately involved in their own ideological survival and promotion. Neither is there an identifiable, authoritative voice to authenticate one practice over another, so theoretically based criticism has limited influence here.

The University of Manitoba art school, the institution at which a majority of the community’s artists (and most of the artists in this exhibition) have either taught or attended, tends to emphasize practice rather than discourse. The faculty’s interests are diverse, and there is a tendency to allow students to choose their own direction.

This does not mean that Manitoba visual artists are unaware of critical dialogue and practice taking place elsewhere. (The media and accessibility of travel make it impossible to be otherwise.) But because that dialogue and practice is perceived as originating from another place, “out there,” they are only marginally influenced by it. It is a situation that will not change until the “regions” are allowed active participation in the production of art theory and criticism.

In a recent article in *Parallel-ogramme*, Sheena Gourlay discussed this situation in terms of its impact on feminist art discourse on the

prairies. “This, of course, does not mean that there are not feminist artists here; however, a discourse can only exist if there is a forum (i.e. publication, gallery, etc.) through which it can develop. Traditionally, art magazines are published in Montreal, Toronto, and/or Vancouver and most of their content originates in those communities. Neither has there been a large enough women’s art community in any one city to support a women’s art gallery. Therefore, when women artists on the prairies address a feminist art discourse, they are usually addressing or taking part in a discourse that exists elsewhere, in or outside of Canada.”²

Thus the work of the 13 artists represented in this exhibition cannot be understood as an actualization of an identifiable theory or as a response to a particular discourse, feminist or otherwise. Rather, this work has evolved out of an engagement with the material processes of lived experience and of visual art production. As this lived experience varies substantially from one individual to another, the work is necessarily diverse, and resistant to confinement by categorization or curatorial consensus. Moreover, a resistance to and fascination with the confining structures that shape experience, and our representations of it, is implicit in the form and/or content of the works themselves. The multiplicity of voices represented here are engaged in a dialogue of resistance that takes many forms and that relies on many strategies: narrative without stories, visual metaphors that resist naming, the unexpected altering of contexts, the exposure of social and economic structures, and an engagement in a searching process as a means of visual art production.

In *Moonlight* and *Look at Me*, Diane Whitehouse continues her painterly explorations of metaphorical rooms and other walled spaces, a project she began in 1985. Characteristic of her approach, the subject matter is suggested obliquely; illustration is

avoided. The structures of doorways, walls, floors and ceilings evolve through the deliberate but subtle juxtaposition of color, light and dark, and the shifting textural quality of acrylic and oil paint applied in some places as a wash and in others as oily impasto.

In *Look at Me*, the room’s architecture is emphasized by an even, unwavering charcoal outline. The carefully constructed, rigid structure restricts and contains, and unlike the spaces in Whitehouse’s other paintings in this series, it does not offer a rear exit to allow escape. The image functions to visually entrap the viewer, re-creating the psychological claustrophobia of the Anita Brookner novel after which this painting was entitled.

The objects placed inside or outside of these spaces (a broken bed, a suggestion of a vessel) seem potentially symbolic. But their depiction is so ambiguous and unstable that they resist captivity by any one interpretation. The intent of these works is not to persuade or inform in the specific and immediate manner customary in a verbally-oriented and media-saturated culture. Rather, the viewer is invited to participate in a contemplative act, to engage in the exploration of the work and the process of its production—a process that is never disguised but always apparent in the work’s painterliness, in the transparency of overpainted areas and in the gradual layering used to develop each image. It is the sensual quality of Whitehouse’s paint that first seduces the viewer into participating in this act. And it is in the paint—in its physicality and in its potential for incarnations of unlimited variety—that the significance of these works can be found.

Sheila Butler’s *The Blond and the Black Sedan* incorporates elements that have appeared in several of her previous bodies of work: metaphorical swimmers, a margin at the edge of the painting symbolic of the semi-conscious or unconscious state, and a newsworthy melodrama exploding in a flurry of anxious, frantic activity.

In this work, the seemingly disparate states of private, dream-like reverie (suggested by the loosely rendered swimmers in the margin) and violent, potentially public activity (suggested by the drama enacted in the black sedan) occur simultaneously. Butler does not privilege one over the other, but offers as a point of connection the leaping swimmer, who exists in both realities.

For Butler, meaning is not produced or experienced only in the narrative content of a work; the formal elements of line, textural quality, color, and spatial relationships must support the imagery. For example, the disturbing nature of the images and the unsettling ambiguity of the connections between them is echoed in the work's visually discordant color relationships. The predominant, purple-hued space rests uncomfortably beside the pool-green margin, and the brown atmosphere seems uneasy in its relationship to both of these areas.

Begun before Butler's six month sojourn to Paris, this work was completed upon her return to Winnipeg. Thrown into a totally foreign environment, Butler was forced to make meaning from a multitude of new experiences: language, food, customs, social conventions. So, too, the viewer must make meaning out of the seemingly unrelated narrative and formal "events" that occur in this painting—and in day-to-day existence itself. This work reveals that meaning is not fixed but exists in the shifting relationship between form and content; a work and its viewers.

Like Whitehouse and Butler, Susan Chafe prefers to actively engage the viewer in the slow process of visually "reading" her work. Chafe's paintings within paintings are developed by a layering, not only of pigment, but of a variety of materials: found objects, painted canvas and plywood. Each layer functions simultaneously as image and as frame. The outermost paintings, margins of lushly-rendered abstraction or decorative patterning, progressively give way to a representational image at the

works' centre. (In **Falling into the Lake**, a portrait of a tearful woman, cut-out from a magazine, is crudely framed with strips of painted wood. In **The Face of a Fox**, a vague but readable image of a fox-faced hand puppet is painted on a small piece of unstretched canvas.) Meaning seems to reside in the central image, deemed significant by the outermost layers that serve to channel and focus attention upon it. This is a strategy that has iconic associations and one that is used in contemporary greeting cards as well. However, the image of the distressed woman, the cheerfully painted sailboats and the child's hand-puppet are ambiguous symbols alluding to deeply felt emotions and memory (sentimentality), but in and of themselves offering little information. Thus, the tunnel-vision promoted by the work's rigid structure is effectively subverted; metaphorically, the light of meaning is not revealed at the end of the tunnel. Rather, each layer and every aspect of the work functions as a signifier—meaning must be determined by carefully considering each element in relationship to the others.

Louise Jonasson's three small paintings function as intimate illustrations of metaphorical narratives. Crowns, flags, robes, peaked hats and spears situate these untold stories in the world of fairy tale and myth, but for completion these works, like Butler's, rely on the context provided by the viewer.

The textural quality of the surfaces, the formal strength of the works, and tiny images "hidden" in unexpected places invite and sustain the involved examination required to draw meaning from these paintings. These qualities and the artist's deliberate avoidance of specific, verbal associations (they do not have titles but are identified by date only) suggest that meaning is to be found by responding intuitively, a response that reflects the process of the works' production. Jonasson does not begin with a specific idea, but covers the paper with random marks and areas of color out of which the images are slowly pulled. Through an additive

and subtractive process that may continue for several months, the layers of images evolve from formless confusion into clearly delineated shapes and figures.

The directness and unpretentiousness of Wanda Koop's 16 drawings (selected from the 260 preliminary drawings for the **Fracture Series**) belie their sophistication and complexity. Like many advertising images, they are easily recognizable and accessible—some are veritable clichés. But despite their striking immediacy and simplicity, these hieroglyphic works elude easy interpretation. Consumer products, public signs, personally-significant and conventional symbols are presented with an equal and unvarying intensity that pushes at the boundaries imposed by their modest scale; an awe-inspiring intensity that requires a non-verbal, visceral response. The works' iconic quality is reinforced by the reduction of the central images to their essential components, by their luminous color and by their spatial ambiguity.

The enigma of these works resides in their paradoxical reliance on two opposing visual languages. Their sensationalistic quality and easy readability ensure that a rational, verbally-oriented and media-conditioned audience will have no trouble approaching them. But, as images executed with gestural brushstrokes and a conscious and confident avoidance of artifice, they reject the slickness of media illusions; as powerful icons that resist specific, literal interpretations, these works also enter the sphere of the magical, the spiritual and the mysterious. As such, they offer a contemporary audience a rare opportunity to glimpse the awe and wonder that might have been experienced by our ancestors in another mythological time and place.

In Eleanor Bond's **IV Converting the Powell River Mill to a Recreation and Retirement Centre**, a fictitious, imaginary, depeopled work site is executed with intense, enticing color and an almost obsessive attention to detail. The brooding, surreal environment depicts a time (which is already here) when technology will have

eliminated the need for workers. The precarious position of the unemployed, in a culture that virtually defines personal identity by what a person "does," is implied by the seductive yet disturbing quality of this image; a quality engendered by the work's overwhelming scale and by the skewed, bird's eye view perspective. We need our jobs for physical and psychological survival; we rely on the security provided by routine and, at the same time, we resent its imposition.

Bond's material engagement in the laborious production of detailed illustration identifies the artist as a "worker" whose position as a "producer" of images is vulnerable in a society that mass produces images at an alarmingly accelerated rate.

While Eleanor Bond is concerned with the anxiety produced by unemployment, Donnelly Smallwood draws attention to the alienation that characterizes the day-to-day existence of the employed worker. At the time of this writing, Smallwood had begun work on a site-specific installation to be completed at Plug-In Gallery just prior to the opening of this exhibition. Entitled **Survey**, the intent, as with her previous installations, is to deconstruct her place of employment. (Smallwood currently works for a company that conducts telephone interviews aimed at gathering market research material for a variety of clients.) Smallwood plans to re-create the physical work site and to explore the multiple layers of language that exist there. The technological language of the telephone's operations, the cajoling recitation of the interviewers' carefully-prepared questions, the interviewers' day dreams, the unceasing cacophony of the office environment, and the responses elicited from within the unknown "private" context of the interviewee's home (now invaded) merge, discordant and perplexing.

Survey simulates a microcosm of the information-saturated, vertigo-inducing mediascape that is our current culture. And it underscores the forced complicity of the worker

in the perpetuation of her own alienating work and cultural environment.

Joanne Jackson Johnson is also fascinated by industrial work sites. While Bond paints fictitious sites, Johnson is currently photographing the hydro-electric power industry in Manitoba, the people who work for the utility and the interiors and exteriors of the generating stations. Johnson is not only interested in power stations as work sites, but as structures that direct and shape the daily activities, attitudes and visual environments of the generations of workers and their families who have chosen to live and work there.

Because of their geographic and cultural isolation, these remote, northern industrial towns invite inspection from those "outside." They seem to be mere simulations of the larger society from which they originate—environments artificially produced and sustained with great effort, like a fish bowl or a submarine. In contemplating these seemingly bizarre environments, it is revealed that the predominant society and culture of the south is equally constructed, a fabrication rather than a natural inevitability.

The works' titles indicate that these photographs were taken at a particular site, that they are representations of a "real" place. But their open-endedness refutes the closure invoked by this specificity—we do not know the purpose of the dark, enclosing hallway or the destination of the smiling men in the rail bus.

As with Butler and Whitehouse, formal concerns play a major role in Johnson's decision-making. Indeed, her images are so visually arresting and complex that they function to undermine the photograph's role as objective document. Their formal strength and the ambiguity of the subject matter raise questions about the "truth" value our culture so unquestioningly assigns to the photograph.

Aganetha Dyck's work, **Cabbages**, also addresses the issue of labour and production. Typically, her works are constructed from found objects

and processes borrowed from the labour and language of domestic activity. In this instance, the process of sewing and the material of dress-maker's shoulder pads are employed. Dyck subverts this language—transforms it. By fulfilling the accepted role of traditional homemaker in the context of the studio, Dyck produces the unexpected: cabbages that will not provide sustenance and dress-maker's shoulder pads that will never be sewn into a wearable garment. Domestic labour, that which traditionally signifies drudgery, now signifies a creative act; the unrecognized and unacknowledged activity of the private home is now historically and publicly documented in slides and exhibition catalogue; the consumables of food and clothing have now become the objects of visual contemplation. The limitations and obsessiveness implied by **Cabbages**'s structure of repetition and serialization, a metaphorical description of housework, are denied.

But **Cabbages** is multi-dimensional, open to many meanings and responses. It speaks not only of the confinement imposed by gender-assigned roles, but the numerous entrapments, internal and external, real and imaginary, that shape the lived experience of both genders.

Kim Ouellette's **Untitled** work is heroic both in scale and execution. An actual spotlight unabashedly zeros in on a face that is twisted into an expression of intense emotion (agony or ecstasy?). Balanced between a pile of bricks precariously stacked on a small stool and a yellow post teetering on a rocker, the fractured and fragmented torso seems caught in a valiant struggle to maintain its unity and its equilibrium. The painting, which provides a backdrop for the figure, is also fraught with exploding energy that speaks of containment: a fiery column erupts from a rectangular structure; a magazine image of a rose is caged in wire. Formally, the disparate units that comprise this work also

Continued on page 32

EDUCATION

- 1966-68 Faculty of Interior Design,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
- 1969-71 English and Religious
Studies, Faculty of Arts,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
- 1976 B.F.A. Honors
(printmaking), School of
Art, University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1984 Brian Melnychenko
Gallery, Winnipeg
- 1985 Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg
A.K.A. Gallery, Saskatoon
- 1986 Off Centre Centre, Calgary

Eleanor Bond

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1977 Manitoba Arts Council
Exhibition, Provincial
Archives Building,
Winnipeg
- 1981 Staff Show, Gallery 1.1.1.,
School of Art, University
of Manitoba, Winnipeg
- 1981-82 **The Artist's Proof**, organized by The Winnipeg Art
Gallery, Winnipeg,
traveling exhibition
- 1982 **Women in Perspective**,
Janet Ian Cameron Gallery,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
- 1983 **Moosehead Press Show**,
The Nickle Arts Museum,
Calgary
- 1984 **Do you take this seriously?**
Irony, Wit and Humour
from the Prairies, Glenbow
Museum, Calgary
- 1985 **Conscious Objections**,
Gallery 1.1.1., School of
Art, University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg
- Labour Day Show**,
Provincial Legislative
Building, Winnipeg

- 1986 **Another Prairies**, The Art
Gallery at Harbourfront,
Toronto
- Cold Front/Warm Front**,
Main/Access Gallery,
Artspace, Winnipeg

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

IV Converting the Powell River Mill to a Recreation and Retirement Centre

oil on canvas
250 x 360

1985

Courtesy of the Canada Council
Art Bank

STATEMENT

This painting is from my current
"Work Station" project. Originally
conceived as future fiction, but
increasingly close to present
reality, the narrative series depicts
massive unemployment and dis-
location, and subsequent changes
in social and economic structures.



IV Converting the Powell River Mill to a Recreation and Retirement Centre

EDUCATION

- 1960 B.F.A. Honors (painting and printmaking), Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS *(since 1977)*

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|
| 1977 | The Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg | 1984 | The Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg |
| 1978 | Arthur Street Gallery, Winnipeg | 1985 | Evelyn Aimis Gallery, Toronto |
| 1980 | Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton
The Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg | 1986 | Evelyn Aimis Gallery, Toronto
The Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, travelling exhibition: The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg; The Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor; Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey
Galerie Graff, Montreal, Quebec |
| 1981 | The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg | | |
| 1982 | Gallery Quan, Toronto
The Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg | | |
| 1983 | Optica Centre for Contemporary Art, Montreal | | |

Sheila Butler

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS *(since 1977)*

- 1979 **Moosehead Press Show**, Gallery Graphics, Ottawa
- 1981 **Linear Variables**, The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg
Two Person Show, Norman Mackenzie Gallery, University of Regina, Regina
Printmaker's 82, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
- 1983 Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre School of Fine Arts, Banff, Alberta
Moosehead Press Show, The Nickle Arts Museum, University of Calgary, Calgary
Drawing—A Canadian Survey 1977-1982, Saidye Bronfman Centre, Montreal, travelling exhibition
- 1984 Burlington Cultural Centre, Burlington, Ontario, travelling exhibition
- 1984-85 **Manitoba Artists Overseas**, The Manitoba Arts Council, Winnipeg, travelling exhibition: Canadian Cultural Centres in London, Brussels, Paris
- 1985-86 Galerie Graff, Montreal

- 1986 **Eighth Dalhousie Drawing Show**, University of Dalhousie, Halifax
Canadian Drawing, Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris, France
Performances by Ace Art and Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg
Plus Project, Plug-In Gallery and Video Pool, Winnipeg
International Exhibition of Graphic Art, Frechen, Germany

WORK IN THE EXHIBITION

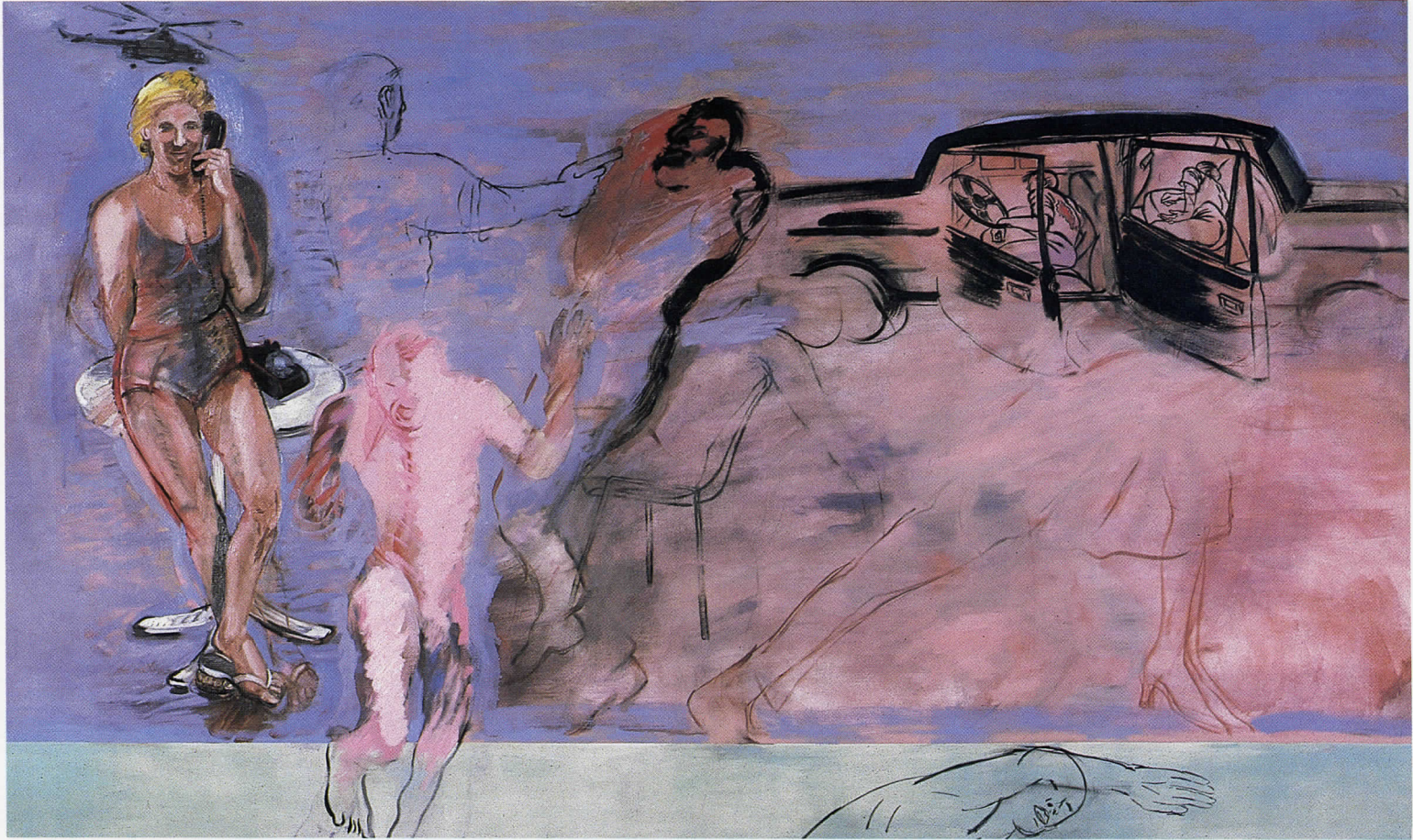
The Blonde and the Black Sedan
oil and charcoal on canvas
162.6 x 271.8
1986

STATEMENT

This painting comes from a body of work which seems to represent a turning point for me. The turning point results to a great extent from a change in my attitude to the use of narrative. Although I have previously professed a lack of interest in narrative elements, the work led

me through a natural evolution to a concern for narrative, until I had to recognize just where the work was headed. In **The Blonde and the Black Sedan** I attempted to suggest a rather specific narrative, but without reference to a verbal plot line or a linear progression. I suggested relationships which each viewer may deal with individually.

In another departure from previous practice, visual sources were extended. Photographs from a news magazine provided some elements, to a large extent altered by adaptation. Other aspects of the image came from memory and imagination. It seems to me that this collective approach consolidates individual experiences, originally separated by time, and offers new insights into content. As an experience, rather than a story, the painting poses questions, suggests some answers, at the same time leaving loose ends to unravel over time in the viewers' minds.



The Blonde and the Black Sedan

EDUCATION

1981-84 B.F.A. program,
School of Art
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg

Susan Chafe

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 **The Demolition Show**,
Winnipeg
1986 **MAWA Juried Members'**
Exhibition, Winnipeg
Warm Front/Cold Front,
Main/Access Gallery,
Artspace, Winnipeg

PERFORMANCE

(in collab. with John Gurdebeke)

- 1985 **First Aid**, Shared Stage,
Winnipeg
Greeek, The Winnipeg
Art Gallery, Winnipeg
1986 **Omerta**, Gas Station
Theatre, Winnipeg
R&R, International
Performance Festival,
Warehouse Theatre,
Winnipeg

VIDEO

(in collab. with John Gurdebeke)

1986-87 **Generatune**

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Falling into the Lake
mixed media
182.9 x 243.8
1986
The Face of a Fox
oil on canvas and plywood
173.3 x 122
1986



Falling into the Lake

EDUCATION

- 1974-76 Prince Albert Community College, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
1980-82 Art History, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1978 **Aganetha Dyck**, Arts Centre, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
1979 **Changes**, The Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina
A Prairie Artist Series travelling exhibition: throughout Saskatchewan under the Community

Programme of the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina

Sizes 8-46, Arthur Street Gallery, Winnipeg

- 1983 **23 Suitcases**, A.K.A. Gallery, Saskatoon
1984 **Aganetha Dyck: Recent Work**, The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg
This Summer's Canned Buttons, The Upstairs Gallery, Winnipeg
1985 **Aganetha Dyck**, Susan Whitney Gallery, Regina
1986 **Cradles**, Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg
1987 **Suitcases**, Oseredok Gallery, Winnipeg

Aganetha Dyck

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS *(since 1977)*

- 1977 **Manitoba Decorative Arts**, Oseredok Gallery, Winnipeg
1978 **Fibres**, Fibre Arts Associates Juried Show, Fleet Gallery, Winnipeg
Twelve Manitoba Artists, Leonard Marcoe Gallery, Winnipeg
1982 **Under Construction**, The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg
1983 **Contact One**, Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff
1986 **Footnotes**, Canada Pavillion, Expo '86, Vancouver
Another Prairies, The Art Gallery at Harbourfront, Toronto
1986 **Convergence '86**, John Black Aird Gallery, Toronto
1987 **Hard Hats and Dresses**, Centre des Arts Visuels, Montreal

WORK IN THE EXHIBITION

Cabbages
sewn from dressmaker's shoulder pads
each approximately 15 x 43 x 43
1978



Cabbages

EDUCATION

- 1960-61 University of British Columbia, Vancouver
1965 B.Sc., University of Manitoba, Winnipeg
1972 M.F.A. (film and photography), University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

SELECTED SOLO

EXHIBITIONS (since 1977)

- 1980 Arthur Street Gallery, Winnipeg
WARM Gallery, Minneapolis, Minnesota
1981 **Sunday Afternoon**, Photographers Gallery, Saskatoon
1983 **Midstream in Mainstreet**, Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg
Ungava, Winnipeg Photographers Group/
Floating Gallery, Winnipeg
1984 **Metaphors Metamorphs and just Pictures**, Gallery 1.1.1., School of Art, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg

Joanne Jackson Johnson

SELECTED GROUP

EXHIBITIONS (since 1977)

- 1977 **Photography: Clayton Bailey, Joanne Jackson Johnson, David McMillan**, The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg
1978 **Developments/7 Photographers**, Janet Ian Cameron Gallery, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg
Manitoba Saskatchewan Alberta, National Film Board of Canada, Stills Division, Ottawa
Manitoba Photographers: The Interlake Festival Gallery, Winnipeg Beach, Manitoba
1982 Manitoba Juried Photography Exhibit, Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg
1984 **A Sense of Prairie**, Alberta College of Art, Calgary
1984-85 **Gallery in Transit**, travelling exhibition on transit buses in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver
1985 **Conscious Objections**, Gallery 1.1.1., School of Art, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg

- 1985-86 **Photography in Winnipeg, Midcontinental Vision**, travelling exhibition: Salon Fotografie, Belgrade; Galerya, Studentskog Centre, Zagreb; Fotogalerija, Novi Sad, all in Yugoslavia

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Slave Falls Generating Station (rail bus), Winnipeg Hydro, June 1986
Slave Falls Generating Station, Winnipeg Hydro, June 1986
Grand Rapids Generating Station, Manitoba Hydro, May 1986
Grand Rapids Generating Station, Manitoba Hydro, May 1986
Pointe du Bois Generating Station, Winnipeg Hydro, June 1986
Pointe du Bois Generating Station, Winnipeg Hydro, June 1986
all six: color photographs
image: 23.5 x 28.6
framed size: 39.3 x 43.8

STATEMENT

Words seem to be the most direct, accurate way of communicating something. Yes. No. Maybe. I like to travel, and look, and photograph things. I'm curious about what will be caught, what will escape.

My head is full of images; stories I was told about life in the bush, survey crews, hydro construction, development, opportunity.

I was born on October 17; same day, different year that magneto electricity was invented.

Photographs seem to be the most direct, accurate way of showing something. Maybe.

Thoughts on Hydro in Manitoba (work in progress)
January 1987



Slave Falls Generating Station (rail bus), Winnipeg Hydro, June 1986

EDUCATION

1980-85 B.F.A. Honors program,
(painting, photography),
School of Art, University
of Manitoba, Winnipeg

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1986 **G.N. Louise Jonasson:
Recent Oilstick Drawings,**
Brian Melnychenko
Gallery, Winnipeg

G.N. Louise Jonasson

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1985 **Thesis Show #2**, Janet Ian
Cameron Gallery, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg
Women's Work, The
Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg
The Demolition Show,
Winnipeg
1986 **Ceramics Drawings and
Prints**, Janet Ian Cameron
Gallery, University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

28/6/86
oil stick, graphite, gouache
on Arches paper
55.9 x 76.2
11/7/86
oil stick, graphite, gouache
on Arches paper
55.9 x 76.2
25/7/86
oil stick, graphite, gouache
on Arches paper
55.9 x 76.2

STATEMENT

The art of vision possesses a myriad of metalanguages. Literal and verbal statements explicating visual images can undermine the very essence of those images. A visual artist's reticence (to verbally explain their work) does not necessarily imply elitism. It may merely underline the inability of words to enhance the image's expressiveness. It may also limit the viewer's ability to explore his or her personal insights.



11/7/86

EDUCATION

- 1973 Diploma of Fine Art, School of Art, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS *(since 1977)*

- 1981 The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg
S.U.B. Gallery, University of Alberta, Edmonton
- 1982 London Regional Art Gallery, London, Ontario
- 1983 **Nine Signs**, Glenbow Museum, Calgary
Building in the Pool of the Black Star, Legislative Building, Winnipeg
- 1984 **Preliminary Drawings**, Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg
Fracture Series, Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto
- 1985 **Train Series**, Olga Korper Gallery, Toronto

- 1985-86 **Airplanes and the Wall**, The Winnipeg Art Gallery, travelling exhibition: Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton; The Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor; The Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon

Wanda Koop

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS *(since 1977)*

- 1977 **New Abstract Art**, Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton
- 1979 **Form and Performance**, The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg
- 1980 **Twelve Canadian Artists**, Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Ontario and Pauline Gibbon Centre, Toronto
Young Contemporaries, London Regional Art Gallery, London
- 1983 **Contemporary Canadian Art—the Younger Generation**, Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton
New Perceptions Landscapes, The Art Gallery at Harbourfront, Toronto
- 1985 **Interiors**, Burlington Cultural Centre, Burlington Ontario
- 1986 **Songs of Experience**, National Gallery, Ottawa
Eighth Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition, Halifax
Another Prairies, The Art Gallery at Harbourfront, Toronto

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Some preliminary drawings from the **Fracture Series**, left to right, top to bottom:

1. The Earth
2. Skull
3. Abacus
4. Bird
5. Mosquito
6. Shadow Man With Wreath
7. Pope
8. Rock
9. In Good Hands
10. Albert Angel
11. Spinning Bottles
12. Computer Graphics
13. Ghetto Blaster
14. Skyscraper
15. Yin-Yang
16. Oil Well

all sixteen: acrylic on Stonehenge paper, 55.9 x 76.2, 1984

STATEMENT

From late May through to the end of September in 1984 I travelled, first in Northern Manitoba for five weeks and then through Saskatchewan, Alberta and the British Columbia interior and the West Coast. On this trip, I made drawings from what I saw or thought about, meditations on visual notes. I worked outside using acrylic paint on paper 22 by 30 inches. I would lay each completed work to dry on the grass or in the woods. Each day I would set out the previous day's work and add new work as though I were making and completing sentences.

When I returned to my studio in the fall, I tacked up all the drawings I had done while on the road together with the drawings done between February and May. There were 260 drawings.

Although these drawings were the preliminary work for my paintings, I realized in studying them as a whole that they became one complete statement.

For the exhibition "A Multiplicity of Voices" I chose sixteen images that communicate the spirit of the original larger body of work.



Some preliminary drawings from the Fracture Series

EDUCATION

- 1966 Forum Art Institute,
Winnipeg
1974 Banff School of Fine Art,
University of Calgary,
Calgary
1975 B.F.A. Honors, School of
Art, University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg
1980 Emma Lake Workshop,
University of Saskatchewan
1986 Resident, Leighton Artist's
Colony, Banff Centre, Banff

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1976 **R. S. Kowalsky: Paintings,
Drawings, and Prints,**
Janet Ian Cameron Gallery,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg

- 1979 **The Soul Catcher,**
St. John's College,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
1981 **Paintings, Prints and
Drawings,** The Upstairs
Gallery, Winnipeg
Rosemary Kowalsky,
Arthur Street Gallery,
Winnipeg
Rosemary Kowalsky,
Portage and District Arts
Council Art Centre,
Portage la Prairie, Manitoba
1982 **Recent Paintings,**
Gallery 1.1.1., School of
Art, University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg

- 1983 **Paintings and Drawings,
1977-83,** Ukrainian Cultural
and Educational Centre,
Winnipeg
1984 **Rosemary Kowalsky,
Recent Works,** Winnipeg
Art Gallery, Winnipeg
**Rosemary Kowalsky,
Paintings and Works on
Paper,** Brian Melnychenko
Gallery, Winnipeg
1985 **Rosemary Kowalsky, The
Flower Show,** Brian
Melnychenko Gallery,
Winnipeg
**Rosemary Kowalsky,
Works on Paper,** Ace Art,
Winnipeg

Rosemary Kowalsky

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1976 **Contemporary Women
Artists, Jury Show,**
Brandon Allied Arts
Centre, Brandon, Manitoba
1977 **Twenty Seven Artists and
the Manitoba Arts Council,**
Manitoba Archives
Building, Winnipeg
1979 **Moosehead Press Print
Show,** Ottawa
Three Images, Janet Ian
Cameron Gallery, Uni-
versity of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
1980 **Printmakers Council of
England Juried Show,**
Beak Street Gallery,
London, England
1982 **Perspectives on Women in
the 80's,** Janet Ian Cameron
Gallery, University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg
1984 **Food in Art,** Ace Art Inc.,
Winnipeg
1985 **Conscious Objections,**
Gallery 1.1.1., School of
Art, University of Manitoba

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

- Spade and Flower—2**
pastel on paper
106.7 x 76.2
1985
Cultivator and Flower I
pastel on paper
76.2 x 106.2
1985
Fork and Flower
pastel on paper
106.7 x 76.2
1985

STATEMENT

A metaphorical proposition for garden tools and garden flowers, using inanimate and organic objects as a comment on the human condition.

The menacing technology of gardening—denotes imminent violence and human vulnerability.

Drawings and paintings on paper and canvas are a series of works entitled "Les Fleurs du Mal." They are not literal translations of Baudelaire's poems of the same name; the poems are used merely as a reference point. I found a common empathy with Baudelaire's concern with the sickness of modern cities and human malaise.

The works also envision my past experience of war into the present reality: that of possible annihilation and our vulnerability as human beings.

The paradoxical images of sharp objects and tender fleshlike flowers have divided into a parallel series of equally powerful challenging images, which venture not only into nature but also into the human psyche.



Spade and Flower—2

EDUCATION

- 1980-81 Faculty of Interior Design,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
- 1986 B.F.A. Honors (photog-
raphy), School of Art,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 Floating Gallery, Winnipeg

Laura Letinsky

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1984 **1984 Labour Day Festival,
MAWA Members'
Exhibition**, Kildonan Park,
Winnipeg
- 1985 **Under 30 Juried
Exhibition**, Janet Ian
Cameron Gallery, Univer-
sity of Manitoba, Winnipeg
Members' Work, Floating
Gallery, Winnipeg
Rooms, Painting House #2
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
**Advanced Photography
Students' Exhibition**,
Floating Gallery, Winnipeg
Recent Acquisitions,
Portage la Prairie Art
Centre, Portage la Prairie,
Manitoba
Women's Work, The
Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg
- 1986 **Thesis Show**, Gallery
1.1.1., School of Art,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
**Piano Nobile Juried
Exhibition**, Concert Hall,
Winnipeg; travelling
exhibition
Thesis Show, Janet Ian
Cameron Gallery, Univer-
sity of Manitoba, Winnipeg

Juried Thesis Exhibition,
Ace Art, Winnipeg
**MAWA Juried Members'
Exhibition**, Winnipeg
**Juried Members' Exhibi-
tion**, Floating Gallery,
Winnipeg, travelling
exhibition

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Untitled, (Baby Olympics, Grant
Park Mall), 1985
Untitled, (Christmas, Garden City
Mall), 1985/86
Untitled, (Mr. Universe, Polo Park
Mall), 1985/86
Untitled, (Mr. Universe, Polo Park
Mall), 1985/6
Untitled, (Miss Nude Contest), 1986
Untitled, (Mr. Nude Contest),
1985/86
Untitled, (Mr. Nude Contest),
1985/86

all seven: black and white
photographs
image size: 26.6 x 26.6
frame size: 50.8 x 40.6

STATEMENT

I feel that our society, through the superfluous use of the photographic medium in magazines, billboards, and video, has defined a set of aesthetics based on two dimensions. With the advertisement as model, our culture has made for itself very specific boundaries and guidelines of how we should look. These definitions perpetuate the society that designs them; we are both spectators of and spectacles in this process.

I am bewildered and fascinated with public face. I like to photograph where the medium has promoted the ideals and ideas of the event. My photographs upset our preconceptions; what becomes apparent is somewhere between what we mean to look like and what we can't help but look like. With the camera, I wish to focus on the relative validity of how we see others and see ourselves.



Untitled, (Christmas, Garden City Mall), 1985/86

EDUCATION

- 1982-84 School of Art, University
of Manitoba, Winnipeg
1985 MAWA Mentor Program

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1984 The Lithium Cafe,
Winnipeg
1985 The Lithium Cafe,
Winnipeg
Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg
1987 Off Centre Centre, Calgary

Kim Ouellette

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 **MAWA Mentor
Program Exhibition**,
Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg
1986 **The Black Board Project**,
Ace Art, Winnipeg
Plus Project, Video Pool
and Plug-In Gallery,
Winnipeg

STATEMENT

I start from purely internal forces—
fear; desire; pain; beauty—and I
try to capture these in the figurative
work. But it becomes a conflict with
the material and form. The work
will change constantly, until I feel
it has a beautiful ending.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Untitled
mixed media
274 x 304.8
1986



Untitled

EDUCATION

- 1979 Summer Session French
Immersion Course
1979-80 Faculty of Arts, University
of Manitoba, Winnipeg
1985 B.F.A. Honors (painting),
School of Art, University
of Manitoba, Winnipeg

Donnelly Smallwood

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1983 **The Goodbye Show**, Praxis
Gallery, Winnipeg
1985 **Thesis Show**, Janet Ian
Cameron Gallery, Uni-
versity of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
Rooms, Painting House
#2, University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
Thesis Show, Ace Art,
Winnipeg
Women's Work, The
Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg
The Demolition Show,
Winnipeg
Nu-Art, University of
Winnipeg, Winnipeg
1986 **25 Young Artists**, Or
Gallery, Vancouver
Project Plus, Video Pool
and Plug-In Gallery,
Winnipeg
Cold Front/Warm Front,
Main/Access Gallery,
Artspace, Winnipeg

STATEMENT

I work as a telephone interviewer
at a market research company.
The job is most fascinating to me
in that I talk to so many strangers
so intimately on the telephone;
asking questions about the most
bizarre and personal subjects. It is
this invasion of privacy that I find
so disturbing.

WORK IN THE EXHIBITION

Survey
mixed media installation
1987



Preliminary drawing for Survey installation

EDUCATION

- 1968 B.A., University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg
1985 B.F.A. Honors, School of
Art, University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg

Reva Stone

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1984 **1984: A Juried Exhibition**,
Janet Ian Cameron Gallery,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
1984 Labour Day Festival,
MAWA Members'
Exhibition, Kildonan Park,
Winnipeg
Women '84—Today's
View, International Inn,
Winnipeg
1985 **MAWA Mentor Program**
Exhibition, Plug-In
Gallery, Winnipeg
Women in the Arts,
Women's Directorate,
Winnipeg
Women's Work, The
Thomas Gallery, Winnipeg
Thesis Show, Gallery
1.1.1., School of Art, Uni-
versity of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
The Tip of the Iceberg,
Ace Art, Winnipeg
Thesis Show, Janet Ian
Cameron Gallery,
University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
1986 Manitoba Society of Artists
juried exhibition, Winnipeg

WORK IN THE EXHIBITION

Document
mixed media
247 x 167.6 x 127
1986

STATEMENT

This piece is one of seven full scale pieces that I am constructing. Each piece reflects my interest in the use of traditional portrait conventions. I portray my subject through a calculatingly staged and constructed environment to give the viewer a sense of "knowing" something about the individual portrayed.



Document

EDUCATION

- 1957-61 Birmingham College of Art,
Birmingham, England
1965-67 Post graduate work, Bergen
Kunsthåndverkskole,
Bergen, Norway

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS *(since 1977)*

- 1977 Gallery 1.1.1., School of
Art, University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg
1978 Latitude 53 Gallery,
Edmonton
1980 Arthur Street Gallery,
Edmonton
1982 The Winnipeg Art Gallery,
Winnipeg
1984 Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg
1985 Anna Leowens Gallery,
Nova Scotia College of Art
and Design, Halifax
1986 Gallery 1.1.1., School of
Art, University of
Manitoba, Winnipeg
Stride Gallery, Calgary

Diane Whitehouse

SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

(since 1977)

- 1977 **Artists Working in Water-
color**, travelling exhibition:
Calgary, Vancouver,
Saskatoon, Edmonton
1978 **Savage, Sinclair,
Whitehouse**, S.U.B.
Gallery, University of
Alberta, Edmonton
1980 **Clarke, Funnell,
Whitehouse**, Medicine Hat
College, Medicine Hat,
Alberta
1986 **Plus Project**, Video Pool
and Plug-In Gallery,
Winnipeg

STATEMENT

"I have never been interested in
things that seem fixed — experiences
that are static. I'm not interested
in making a painting that has only
one read."

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Look at Me

172.7 x 213.4

acrylic and oil on canvas

1986

Moonlight

152.4 x 228.6

acrylic and oil on canvas

1986



Look at Me

seem bent on disintegration, their uncertain relationship held in balance only by an effort of will on the part of the viewer—a viewer who is implicated as a voyeur of a sensationalistic performance, a spectator of a visual melodrama.

Ouellette's constructions undergo a series of transitions—paintings are painted over paintings, objects are added then removed—a process that will continue until shortly before the work is delivered to the exhibition site, and which often resumes once the piece returns to the studio. Thus the closure imposed by the work's imminent completion and the limits set by the exhibition catalogue are refused. The image reproduced in this publication and the work displayed in the gallery must be regarded as moments in the history of an ongoing process.

Rosemary Kowalsky's poetic drawings of flowers and garden tools speak of struggles between forces and of acts of dominance and destruction. The passion and pain implicit in these events is sublimated in the modest means of their expression—a minimum of powerful charcoal lines sweep and undulate over the paper's white surface; color is used sparingly to stress points of tension and points of contact. While the statement is executed with conviction, the images are ambiguous. The struggle inherent in the dichotomies of nature and technology, growth and destruction, female and male, power and vulnerability offer starting points for contemplation. But the fixedness of these dichotomies is called into question—the images of flower and tool are executed with shared lines, marks and areas of color. Formally, and by implication existentially, these conflicting entities are dependent on one another.

A sensational theatricality is evident in Laura Letinsky's seven black and white photographs. This is not surprising considering the images were taken during orchestrated public spectacles (Miss Nude Contest, Baby Olympics). Her subjects seem unaware of the appearance

they project—a startled, almost cross-eyed baby is proudly presented by its mother, a strutting body builder sticks out his tongue in the effort of posing, a pornographic nude confidently displays her body as prize or object. This is all the more poignant because they are posing for the photographer—becoming a “photographic stereotype” is their intent and motivation. Their confidence and aggressiveness is heightened by the camera angle, which tends to look up at them—identifying them as subjects (a strategy used in propaganda portraits and posters)—rather than down at them (a device used in pornography). The viewer is made to feel uneasy, confronted by this flagrant display and by the forced intimacy of the photographer's confrontational inspections. The viewers' voyeurism is twice exposed: by the photographer who makes the spectacle's audience the subject of her work, and by those who view the photographs in the context of the gallery.

The dichotomous structure in which viewer and viewed, voyeur and exhibitionist are positioned with unambiguous moralism is called into question—the photographer, the photographed performers and their audience, and the exhibition viewers are all presented as accomplices in the photographic act.

Reva Stone is also fascinated by the conventions that shape representation. While Letinsky addresses photographic practice, Stone deconstructs the conventions of historical portraiture, isolating and defining them, and then translating them into three-dimensional multi-media constructions. In *Document*, the orchestrated illusions of a constructed stage set (complete with windows opened to reveal additional scenes or sets, a shadow, a vague image resting on the surface of the plexiglass “skin”) attempt to document and portray the reality of the subject. Unlike historical or mythological portraits, the meaning of the attributes chosen by Stone to accompany her subjects remains ambiguous; there

is no iconographic dictionary to provide interpretation. Each aspect, as in Chafe's work, must be considered in relation to the other elements of the work if meaning is to be determined.

Stone's act of portraying (and the practice of portraiture itself) functions as a metonymic reference to the social and cultural conventions that shape our perceptions of each other and ourselves. It becomes difficult, in this work (and in our interactions with each other), to locate the individual in the multiple layers of illusion, artifice, and stereotypical attributes.

As a conversation among a multiplicity of diverse female voices, the work in this exhibition has much to offer contemporary feminist discourse. Collectively and individually, these works function as occasions for resisting the structures of representation (visual and verbal) that position “woman” as a uniform and undifferentiated category. The structures of verbal language and visual image-making that silence women by positioning them as passive objects, that seek to “pin them down” with the power granted to the word, are avoided through ambiguity; multiple layers of meaning refuse the stasis imposed by specific imagery or narratives. These works reveal that the feminine and feminism is much broader, more elusive and more plural than our limited expectations might lead us to believe.

Sigrid Dahle

1. Patrocínio Schweickart, “What Are We Doing, Really?—Feminist Criticism and the Problem of Theory,” in *Feminism now: theory and practice* (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1985), pp. 161-162.
2. Sheena Gourlay, “Women's Art Programmes on the Prairies,” *Parallel-ogramme*, 11, 3 (February-March 1986), p. 11.

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A MULTIPLICITY OF VOICES

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Work by Manitoba Women Artists

A MULTIPLICITY OF VOICES

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