

Volume 24 Number 1 \$5.50 A magazine about issues of art and culture

FUSE

MAGAZINE

IT'S VERY REWARDING IF IT
WORKS: JAMES LUNA AND REBECCA
BELMORE TALK TO RICHARD WILLIAM HILL

www.fusemagazine.org

REPRESENTATION

BANFF

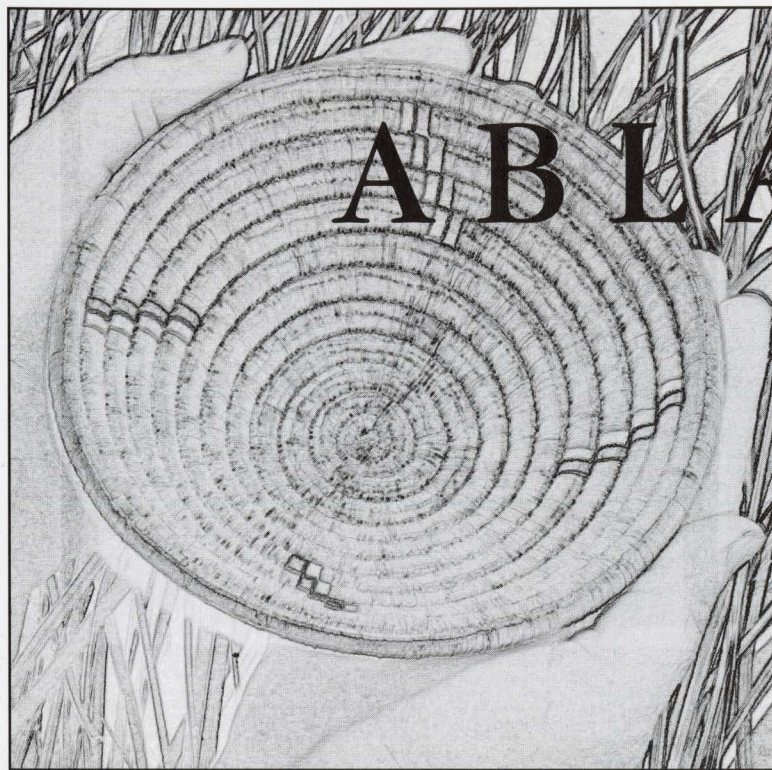
1933-2???

Utopian Memeplex Machine
Making the Invisible Visible

by Oliver Hockenhull

A BUM DEAL
Julie Fiala on
The Starving Artist
Paradigm





ABLAKELA

CD/CD ROM

a performance work by
Dana Claxton
 winner of the 2001 VIVA Award
 music by
 peyote singers
Verdell Primeaux
 and **Johnny Mike**
 text by Lakota elder
 and anthropologist
Dr. Bea Medicine

\$20 plus \$2 s&h

grunt

grunt gallery, 604-875-9516, grunt@telus.net, www.grunt.bc.ca

401 RICHMOND STREET WEST #110
 TORONTO ONTARIO M5V 3A8
 416-979 9633 WWW.ASPAGEALLERY.ORG

+

SPACE GALLERY

The
 Young
 and the
 Restless

JUNE 23 - JULY 28
 OPENING SAT JUN 23, 4 - 6 PM

Kym Pruesse/Tonik Wojtyra
 Barbara McGill Balfour/Michelle Kasprzak
 Nina Levitt/Joey Dubuc
 Tanya Mars/Andrew Mallis

EXHIBITIONS!!!

Vice Squad
David Grenier + Johannes Zits
 June 20 - July 21
 Opening Friday, June 22, 8 - 10PM

*I want to know who you'd be
 in the best of all possible worlds*
Michael Campbell
 June 20 - July 21
 Opening Friday, June 22, 8 - 10PM

BOOKS!!!

Available NOW!
Money Value Art
State Funding, Free Markets, Big Pictures
 Edited by Sally McKay and Andrew J. Paterson
 \$22.95

YYZ Artists' Outlet
 401 Richmond St. West Suite 140
 Toronto, Ontario M5V 3A8
 tel/416.598.4546 fax/416.598.2282
 yyz@interlog.com
 www.interlog.com/~yyz



YYZ acknowledges the support of its membership; the Canada Council for the Arts; the Ontario Arts Council; and the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

AURORA

Contemporary Art from Finland

Veli Granö
Helena Hietanen
Jaakko Niemelä
Jyrki Parantainen

Curated by Bill Huffman

3 August - 3 September 2001
 Opening: Friday 3 August at 5:30pm

Art Gallery of Sudbury
 251 John Street
 Sudbury (Canada) P3E 1P9
 705-675-4871 phone
 705-674-3065 fax
 gallery@artsudbury.org

www.artsudbury.org

from the FIRE series, Jyrki Parantainen (2000)

The Paradise Institute

JANET CARDIFF & GEORGE BURES MILLER

OFFICIAL CANADIAN REPRESENTATION
 49TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION OF
THE VENICE BIENNALE
 CO-PRODUCED BY PLUG IN AND
 THE BANFF CENTRE'S WALTER PHILLIPS GALLERY
www.theparadiseinstitute.com

SITE

TEMPORARY ART CONTEMPORARY ART CO
 MPORARY ART CONTEMPORARY ART CONTE

<SITE>

GALLERY

55 ARTHUR ST., WINNIPEG, MB R3B 1H1 PH/FAX (204) 942-1618
 OPEN TUES.-SAT. 11AM-4PM www.pangea.ca/site

25.08.01

• 28.10.01

DANIEL OLSON
Philosophical Moments
 Curated
 by Marnie Fleming
 at Centennial Square

01.09.01

• 04.11.01

SHUI-BO WANG
Sunrise Over Tiananmen Square
 Curated
 by Marnie Fleming
 in Gairloch Gardens

17.11.01

• 20.01.02

CONSTRUCTION COMPULSION
**Reconfiguring the
 Permanent Collection**
 Curated by Shannon Anderson
 at both locations

oakville galleries

Centennial Square T: 905.844.4402
 120 Navy Street F: 905.844.7968
 Gairloch Gardens oakvillegalleries.com
 1306 Lakeshore Road East oakgalleries@direct.com

FUSE

MAGAZINE

Volume 24 Number 1 June 2001

Editorial Board

Janice Andrae, R. William Hill, Michelle Jacques, Marilyn Jung, Francine Périnet, Meera Sethi, Renuka Sooknandan, Shawn Syms, Rinaldo Walcott

Contributing Editors

Joane Cardinal-Schubert (Calgary), Robin Curtis (Berlin), Allan deSouza (Los Angeles), Cliff Eyland (Winnipeg), Andrea Fatona (Peterborough), Sylvie Fortin (Ottawa), Richard Fung (Toronto), Anne Golden (Montreal), Tere Badia (De Calor Magazine, Barcelona), Ashok Mathur (Calgary), Ian Rashid (London), Clive Robertson (Montreal), Nell Tenhaaf (Toronto), Reggie Woolery (New York)

Staff

Christina Starr (Managing Editor)
Suzanne Noga (Design)
Patti Kim (Webzine Intern)
Milada Kováčová (Advertising Coordinator)
J. Baines Pollard (Circulation Coordinator)
vashti (Production Coordinator)

Special thanks to Janice Andrae, Richard Hill, Michelle Jacques, Marilyn Jung, Meera Sethi, Renuka Sooknandan, and Rinaldo Walcott for copy editing. Thanks also to Shawn Syms for proofreading, and to Janice Andrae for image research.

FUSE is published four times a year by Artans Cultural Affairs Society and Publishing Inc., a non-profit artists' organization. Our offices are located at 401 Richmond Street West, suite 454, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 3A8. E-mail: fuse@interlog.com, website: www.fusemagazine.org, tel. (416) 340-8026, fax: (416) 340-0494. All newsstand inquiries should be sent to this address. PAP Registration No. 8623.

Copyright © 2001 Artans Publishing Inc. All rights reserved under International Copyright Union. Any reproduction without permission is prohibited. Send permission requests to CANCOPY, (416) 868-1620. Artans Publishing purchases First North American Serial Rights and copyright reverts to the writer after publication. Artans Publishing assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts. Manuscripts not accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope will not be returned. A copy of our Writers' Guidelines is available on request. Publication of an advertisement in FUSE does not include endorsement of the advertiser by the magazine. Opinions expressed outside of specifically marked editorials are not necessarily held by members of the Editorial Board.

Subscription rates: \$20 per year; Institutions \$32 per year (in Canada only). Outside Canada \$24 U.S. per year; Institutions \$38 U.S. Decisions regarding who qualifies as an individual subscriber remain the right of the publisher. Printed in Canada on recycled, acid-free paper.

ISSN 0838-603X

FUSE is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and is distributed by, and a member of, the Canadian Magazine Publisher's Association, 130 Spadina Ave., suite 202, Toronto, Ontario M5V 2L4, tel. (416) 504-0274, fax: (416) 504-0437. FUSE is a member of the Independent Press Association, San Francisco. FUSE acknowledges financial assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the Cultural Human Resources Council and the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Publications Assistance Program, in addition to the many hours of volunteer and partially paid labour that are provided by everyone listed on our masthead.



Conseil des Arts du Canada
The Canada Council



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

6 Editorial

13 Column

**You say you want to fund the revolution?
Oh well...**

by Robin Pacific

17 Feature

**BANFF: Utopian Memplex Machine
Making the Invisible Visible**

by Oliver Hockenull

28 Interview

**It's Very Rewarding if it Works: James Luna and
Rebecca Belmore talk to Richard William Hill**

interview with Richard William Hill



J.W.G. Madonald and painting students at Vermillion Lakes - 1953 (CROPPED)
Photographer: Malak. See feature *Banff: Utopian Memplex Machine* on page 17.

26 Artist Project

Will Munro

46 Short Fuse

**A Bum Deal
The Starving Artist Paradigm**

by Julie Fiala

Reviews

VISUAL ART

34 Sympathetic Magic

Review by Patrick Mahon

36 c/o La Ciudad: working in Mexico City

Review by Luis Jacob

BOOKS

38 Live at the End of the Century

Aspects of Performance Art in Vancouver

Review by Johanna Householder

40 Practice Practise Praxis

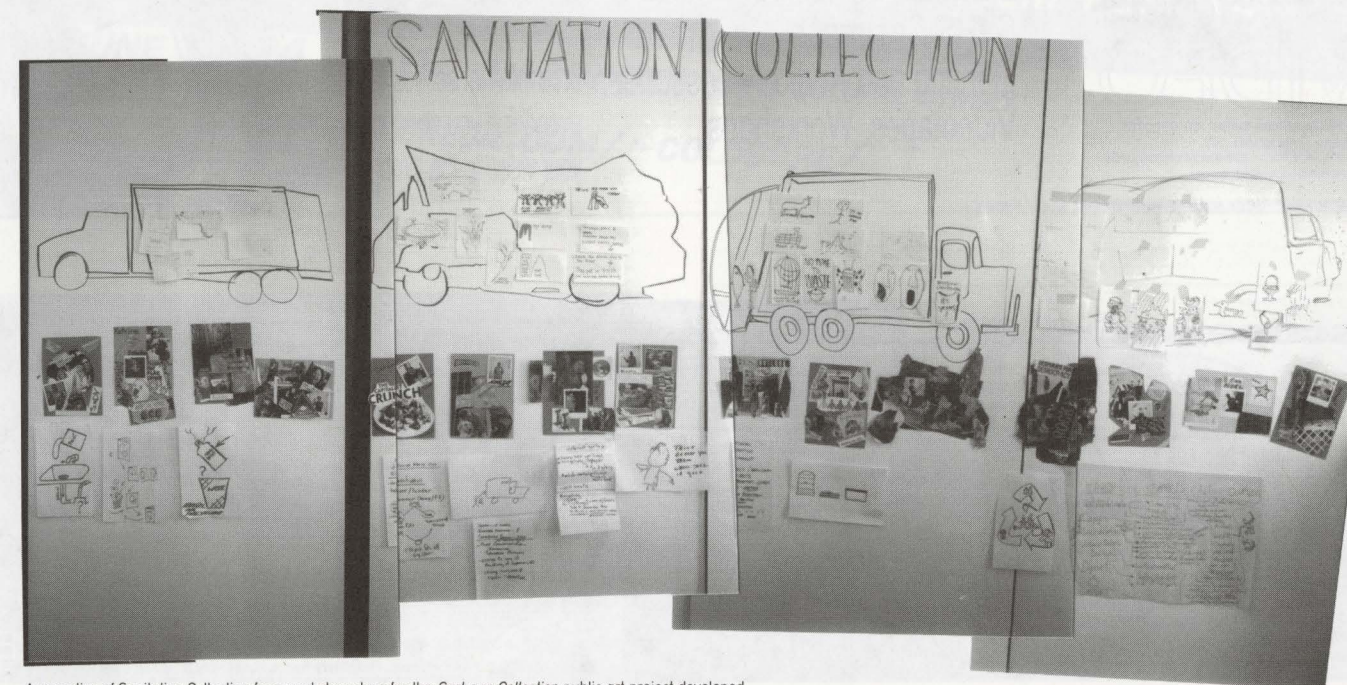
**Serial Reception, Organizational Behaviour, and
Strategic Action in Architecture**

Review by Emily Andrae and Janice Andrae

44 Magnetic North

Experimental Canadian Video

Review by John McCullough



A narrative of Sanitation Collection from workshop days for the *Garbage Collection* public art project developed through collaborative process by environmentalists, sanitation workers and community artists. Courtesy Deborah Barndt. See column *You say you want to fund the revolution?* on page 13.

Cover: Student in Photography Lab 1960
Photographer - Unknown

contents



**Fairy Tales for Grown-ups:
The Photographs of Diane Arbus**
July 5 – August 12, 2001

Known for her provocative images, Arbus has influenced a generation of photographers. The exhibition features 35 works and is organized and circulated by the National Gallery of Canada.

Art Gallery of Peel
Peel Heritage Complex
9 Wellington St. E. • Brampton, ON L6W 1Y1
Tel: 905-791-4055 • Fax: 905-451-4931
www.region.peel.on.ca/heritage



TOM THOMSON ART GALLERY

**ROLY FENWICK:
From Big Bay**

June 8 to September 9, 2001

840 First Avenue West, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 4K4
(519) 376-1932 • www.tomthomson.org

Influences

Arnold James Isbister

September 7- October 13, 2001

URBAN SHAMAN INC. Artist-Run Centre

Lower Level, 91 Albert Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1G5
ushaman@escape.ca, tel 204.942.2674, fax 204.944.9577
www.urbanshaman.org



saskatchewan filmpool cooperative (since 1977)
301-1822 scarth street
regina, saskatchewan, canada | S4P 2G3

Interaction
human.(306) 757 8818 | fax.(306) 757 3622
email.filmpool@web.ca | web.www.filmpool.ca

SASKATCHEWAN
FILMPOOL
COOPERATIVE

16mm film
workshops
screenings
super 8 film
visiting artists
memberships available

The Saskatchewan FilmPool Cooperative is proud to acknowledge our membership and our funders for their continued assistance and support.

Edmonton
AR
Saskatchewan Arts Board
Regina
SMA
IA

Latitude 53 Society of Artists
presents

VISUALEYEZ
... a
festival of
performance
and
time
based
art.

3-11
August
2001

For information contact:
Todd Janes
Latitude 53 Society of Artists
Phone: (780) 423-5353
Fax: (780) 424-9117
email:visualeyez@interbaun.com

Edmonton
AR
Saskatchewan Arts Board
Regina
SMA
IA

10137 - 104 STREET EDMONTON AB T5J 0Z9 PHONE (780) 423-5353 FAX (780) 424-9117
EMAIL: LATTITUDE53@COMPUSMART.AB.CA Hours: Tues - Fri 10-6; Sat 11-5

**TRINITY
SQUARE
VIDEO**

35 McCaul Street Suites 110, 310, 415
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1V7
Phone:(416)593-1332 Fax:(416)593-0958
www.trinitysquarevideo.com

Toronto's Community and Independent Video Artists' Centre

Media 100i, Final Cut Pro,
SVHS Edit Suites,
BetaCam SP, DVCam, MiniDV,
SVHS Cameras,
Lighting and Audio Accessories,
Videotapes, Workshops.



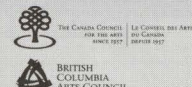
Free internet access &
everything you need to take
your video to the Web



scope and slant...



May 8-May 23:Roving Projects: Seedpod
Claudia Lorenz
May 25-June 2:Roving Projects: Illusion Catastrophe Suspense
Daniel Laskarin
June 8 - June 23: **interval response**
Jacob Gleeson, Leslie Grant, Alison Hrabluik, Jane Lee, Paul Knight, Kim Munro, Valerie Salez, curator: Jessie Birch media based photography and videos
July 6 - August 11: **To Remain At A Distance**
Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands Multiple Exhibitions
510 Fort Street & Rogue Galleries, 4th flr Eatons Centre
April 21: Monday Nights@Open Space: **Collaboratory**
Hospital (Vancouver), Ryan Turvek (Victoria); collaborator Monday Magazine
June 21: New Music@Open Space
John Butcher (Great Britain), Jeff Allport (Victoria)



510 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1E6
Tel (250) 383-8833 Fax (250) 383-8841
openspace@ii.ca www.openspace.ca
Gallery Hours: Tues to Sat, 12-5pm

**OPEN
SPACE**

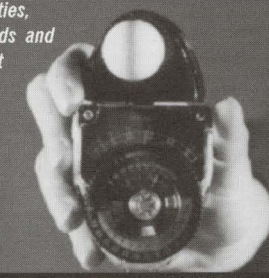
SPLICE THIS!
TORONTO'S 4TH ANNUAL SUPER⁸ FILM FESTIVAL

JUNE 22-24 2001 BARCODE • 549 COLLEGE STREET

WWW.INTERLOG.COM/~COLDSORE/

We provide affordable video production facilities,
media arts training, production funding awards and
public screenings to communities throughout
South Western Ontario.

Ed Video
medio arts centre



16A Wyndham St. N, P.O. Box 1629, Guelph, ON. N1H 6R7

T: [519] 836.9811 F: [519] 836.0504
edvideo@albedo.net www.albedo.net/edvideo

Ed Video acknowledges the generous support of its members, the Canada Council for the Arts & the Ontario Arts Council

David Burkes, B. Com, C.A.
Chartered Accountant

Auditing for not-for-profits, personal taxes, accounting.
Specializing in art and cultural organizations,
artists and cultural workers.

tel (905) 882-0497 fax (905) 882-0499
30 Wertheim Court, Unit 14
Richmond Hill, Ontario L4B 1B9

Editorial

You'll cover a lot of territory in this issue of FUSE: from the La Jolla Indian Reservation in California to the Banff Centre for the Arts, from Vancouver to Mexico City. These diverse places have an impact upon the production of art and culture on levels ranging from institutional policy to the highly personalized politics of memory and community.

Johanna Householder's insightful review of *Live at the End of the Century: Aspects of Performance Art in Vancouver* conveys the timeliness of this essential anthology of texts recounting the history of performance art in Vancouver. Moving one province over, Oliver Hockenull's photographic and text rumination entitled "Banff: Utopian Memplex Machine — Making the Invisible Visible" puts to paper probing questions about the current relevance of the Banff Centre for the Arts. Richard William Hill takes us both to Northern Ontario and to the La Jolla Indian Reservation in his interview with James Luna and Rebecca Belmore, in which they discuss what it means to do their work in their home (First Nations) communities.

Over the past few months there have been a number of changes at FUSE, including an infusion of new members of the editorial board. We welcome Michelle Jacques, a writer, arts administrator and assistant curator at the Art Gallery of Ontario; Shawn Syms, a writer and editor who has done editorial work for FUSE since 1992; and Janice Andrae, a writer, visual artist and academic who has been volunteering as an image researcher at the magazine for the past year.

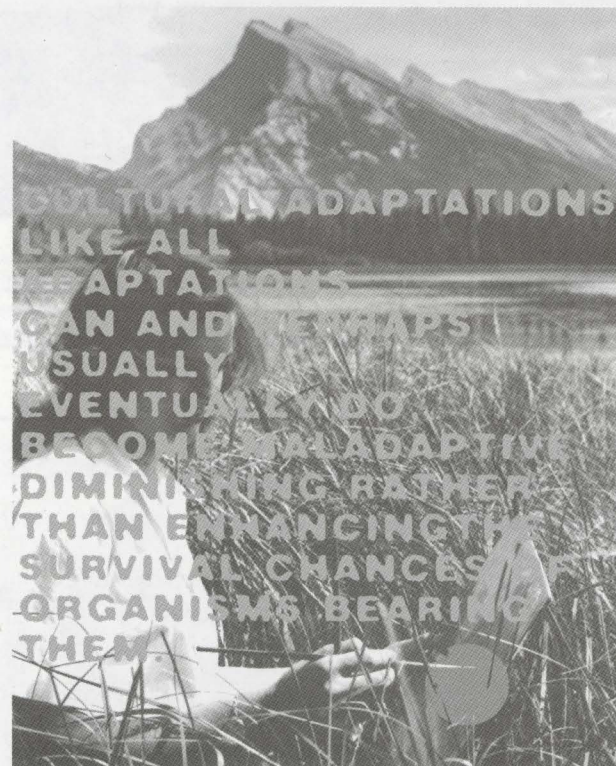
As well, after many dedicated years as Managing Editor at FUSE, Petra Chevrier has moved on to an exciting position at Bruce Mau Design. We'd like to thank Petra for her invaluable contribution over the years and the integral role that she played in ensuring FUSE's success. We welcome a new member to our group of dedicated staff — Managing Editor Christina Starr, a creative writer and performer-producer who brings with her a strong publishing background.

The staff and editorial board are very excited to have these new voices at FUSE, and we look forward to working together to build on past strengths and move the publication forward.

The Editors

erratum

The caption line on page 43 of volume 23, no. 4, should have read "Detail of *Tagore and Mrs. E.*, Rachel Kalpana James, 2000, installation of artist books. Courtesy: Art Gallery of Ontario." FUSE apologizes for the error.



Photograph: British Photographic Laboratories of Canada
Photographer - Unknown

cambridge galleries 

Architecture in Cambridge Shaping the City

May 25 - June 30
In partnership with the University of Waterloo
School of Architecture

Translinear

July 7 - Sept 1
Nicole Collins, Michael Davidson, Angela Leach,
Howard Lonn, Euan MacDonald, Kazuo Nakamura,
Taras Polataiko, Margaret Priest, Ayad Sinawi,
Tony Scherman, David Urban, Scott Wallis

Open Juried Exhibition

Sept 8 - Oct 7, 2001
Open to artists from Ontario working in all media
Deadline for entry: July 28, 2001

Queen's Square
1 North Square, Cambridge, Ontario N1S 2K6. 519.621.0460

Art Gallery of Windsor

Brian Jungen
February 10 – July 22

Riopelle: A Space of Freedom
May 26 – July 29

Organized by the Le Centre d'exposition de Baie-Saint-Paul, Baie-Saint-Paul, Québec
Supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage Exhibition Indemnification Program

Julie Sando: Separate Spheres
June 23 – September 9

Stephen Andrews: Likeness
June 23 – September 16

Guest Curator: Annette Hurlig
Co-production with the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia

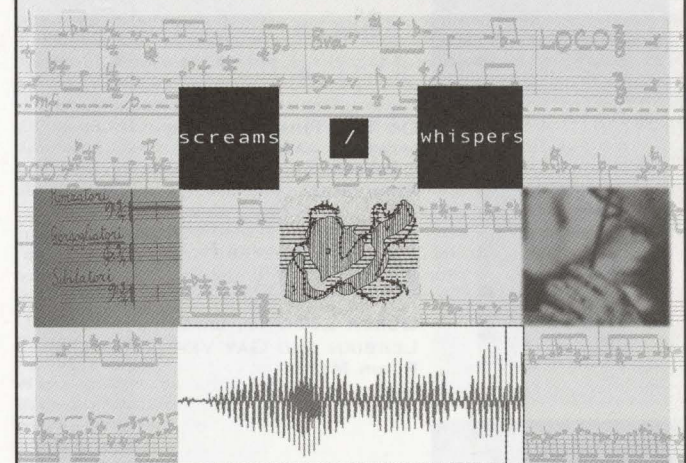
Peter Yeadon
August 4 – January 5, 2002

AGW

Art Gallery of Windsor
401 Riverside Drive West · Windsor, Ontario N9A 7J1
Telephone 519 977 0013 · Fax 519 977 0776
www.artgalleryofwindsor.com



screams / whispers
an **Audio** residency
at Charles Street Video

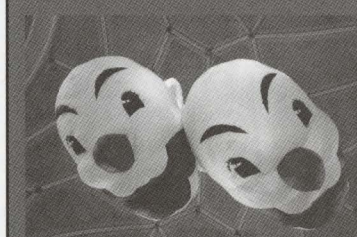


Emerging artists, sound artists, and experimental composers are invited to submit proposals for a residency at Charles Street Video.

The application deadline is July 9th, 2001 at 4pm.

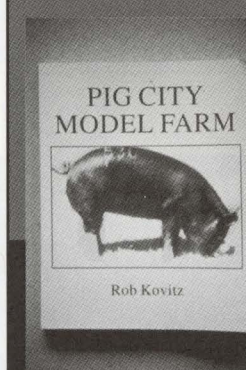
For an application form contact Charles Street Video at 416-693-6564 or e-mail us at csv@charlesstreetvideo.com

14 SEPTEMBER - 18 NOVEMBER 2001



MAXSTREICHER

organised by the Mendel Art Gallery
curated by Dan Ring



ABATTOIRS by ARTISTS

organised for the Mendel Art Gallery
by Sigrid Dahle, Curatorial Consortium adjunct curator

Lois Andison	Richard Dyck	Matt Holm
Eleanor Bond	Fastwurms	Wendy Jacob
Blair Brennan	Joe Fafard	Rob Kovitz
Dana Claxton	Temple Grandin	Bernie Miller
William Eakin	Steve Higgin	Jeanne Randolph

Mendel Art Gallery

950 Spadina Cres. E., Saskatoon p:306.975.7610 www.mendel.ca

MSVU ART GALLERY
EXHIBITION CATALOGUES
MT. ST. VINCENT UNIVERSITY
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
WWW.TEXTSTYLE.NET/MSVUART

Do Try This At Home
HEATHER ANDERSON &
CRYSTAL CLEMENTS
APRIL 2001

Jim Shirley Returns
The Art of James R. Shirley
INGRID JENKNER
FEBRUARY 2000

JIM SHIRLEY RETURNS:
THE ART OF JAMES R. SHIRLEY
INGRID JENKNER
FEBRUARY 2000

QUEER LOOKING, QUEER ACTING:
LESBIAN AND GAY VERNACULAR
ROBIN METCALFE
OCTOBER 1997

↑
OUT

WWW.ABCARTBOOKSCANADA.COM

Artist talk
Opening night
June 1st, 7pm-9pm
Show on display until
July 13th

Leah Decter
"Trace" sculpture installation

Gallery Connexion is located behind the
Justice Building at the corners of Queen
and York Streets, Fredericton, N.B.
Gallery hours: 12-4 pm, Tues. / Friday
Sat. by appointment.
Ph: 506 454 1433
Fx: 506 454 1401
connex@nbnet.nb.ca

Gallery ConneXion  The Canada Council for the Arts
Le Conseil des Arts du Canada

musicworks
for the
**Ear
eye
mind**
and ■ ■ ■

Subscribe today: 416-977-3546 • www.musicworks.ca

www.vtape.org

vtape

video by artists

DIGITAL IMAGING & PRINTING
CENTURY
Graphics
Your Digital Imaging Expert

Offset Printing - 25" Press • Desktop Publishing •
PC & Mac Imaging Film • Large Format Poster • Colour
Proofing • Drum Scanning • Full Bindery Service
404 Adelaide Street West (Adelaide & spadina)

(416) 504-2387

MIX
independent art & culture magazine /
Vol. 27.1 Summer 2001 /
www.MixMagazine.com /
price \$6.95 US/Canada

INVENTORY: ONE OF EVERYTHING

Chris Walker on Jason Le Heup's digital-hybrid gay-love children /
a projected 500 page letter written by Erin and Michelle to Stephen Ellwood /
Rosemary Heather on Webtracer, software that visualizes the structure of the web
Terrence Dick on Rodney Graham and Ron Terada /
Bruce La Bruce inventories his career from punk to artist to
p o r n o g r a p h e r /

**artists sell themselves in
MIX CLASSIFIEDS**

MIX List {for submissions and hoppin' gallery goers}
the ever-popular **Artist-Run Culture** /
CIRCULATIONS 0.4 /
and CENTERFOLD 0.3 /

NEW!

**GET IN-
FUSED**

reading writing
discussing debating
advertising subscribing
flyswatting doorstopping
recycling submitting
displaying inspiring desiring win-
dowpropping reading writing discussing
debating advertising subscribing flyswat-
ting doorstopping recycling submitting

internet design & development

- @ web site design
- @ internet access
- @ web site hosting
- @ custom solutions

**everything
you need
to get
DISCOVERED**

- < online galleries >
- < online portfolios >
- < online collaborations >
- < online exhibitions >

coolwater

t 416.665.3566
f 416.665.8285
e info@coolwater.ca
i www.coolwater.ca

WALTER PHILLIPS GALLERY

Computer Voices/Speaking Machines

Émile Morin & Jocelyn Robert
David Rokeby

MAY 19 -
JULY 29, 2001

GALLERY HOURS
Tuesday to Sunday
noon to five

tel 403-762-6281
fax 403-762-6659

www.banffcentre.ca/wpg

Box 1020-14, Banff AB
Canada T0L 0C0

The Walter Phillips Gallery
is supported, in part,
by the Canada Council for
the Arts and the Alberta
Foundation for the Arts.



Multiples Tsa de yoh don's

Jason Baerg, Carl Beam, Bonnie
Devine, Robert Houle, Teresa
Marshall, Gary Miller, Shelley Niro,
Veran Pardeahntan, Ann Pineault,
Arthur Renwick

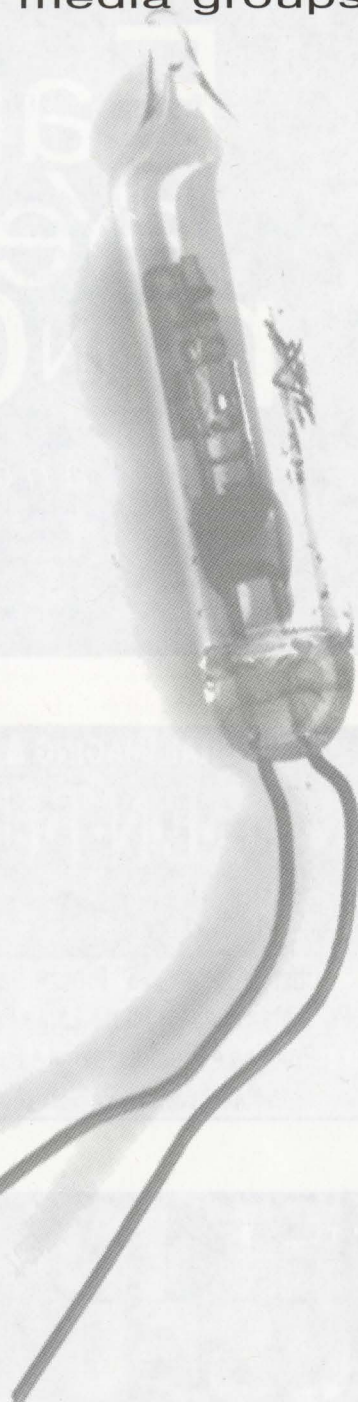
AUGUST 8 -
SEPTEMBER 30, 2001

Curator: Tom Hill

WWW.fusemagazine.ORG

Link into hundreds of
contemporary Canadian
art and media groups.

FUSE ART
Online Directory



416.340.7221 or
events@fusemagazine.org
to make sure your
organization is not left out.

HOME MADE MOVIES

The Home Movie Project

Home Made Movies is currently assembling a
catalogue of home movies from
Canada and beyond.

If you have home movies made by your family
or which you've collected, we would like to
hear from you!



contact us for more info or to:

- include your home movies in the catalogue
- meet others with home movies or interested in home movies
- be included in home movie screenings & events
- locate home movies

homemademovies@hotmail.com
401 richmond st. west, box #45
toronto M5V 3A8

Contact us about showing films from your home movie
collection in upcoming screenings.

PREFIX
PHOTO

[3]

A Canadian Magazine of
Contemporary Photography
and Related Arts



EXHIBITION
Gallery TPW
80 Spadina Avenue, Suite 310
Toronto, Ontario
M5V 2J3

Information: 416.591.0357
www.web.net/~prefix

a canadian magazine of new writing

Prairie Fire "blurs the line that distinguishes a
magazine from an anthology."
—Prairie Books Now

PRAIRIE FIRE

"Prairie Fire
is lively,
eclectic and
intelligent."
—Carol Shields



"The best little
magazine
in Canada
today."
—Sandra Birdsell

Subscribe for
1 year
(4 issues)
for \$25.

Subscribe for
2 years
(8 issues)
for \$45.

Coming up in 2001:

Race poetry, eh?

Flaming Prairies: The Queer Issue

First Voices, First Words

Pay with cheque, money order or Visa.

Add \$5 / year for U.S. addresses; \$10 / year for other foreign addresses.

Prairie Fire, 423-100 Arthur Street, Winnipeg MB R3B 1H3
prfire@escape.ca www.prairiefire.mb.ca

MICHAEL BLUM, TONY COKES, TACITA DEAN, SAM DURANT,
JILL GODMILOW, DOUGLAS GORDON, JINHAN KO, LES LEVEQUE,
GLENN LIGON, SUSAN SCHUPPLI, DENNIS TOURBIN,
CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS, X-PRZ

Take Two/Reprise

26.04.01-24.06.01

RENEE GREEN, DOUG HALL, BRIAN JUNGEN, GARY KIBBINS,
JOACHIM KOESTER, KERRY JAMES MARSHALL, JEAN-LUC MOULÈNE

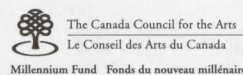
Présent Composé

05.07.01-16.09.01

International Symposium

Saturday 7 July 2001, 10 am-4 pm

The Ottawa Art Gallery | La Galerie d'art d'Ottawa
2 Daly, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6E2 (613) 233-8699
fax (613) 569-7660 www.cyberus.ca/~oag

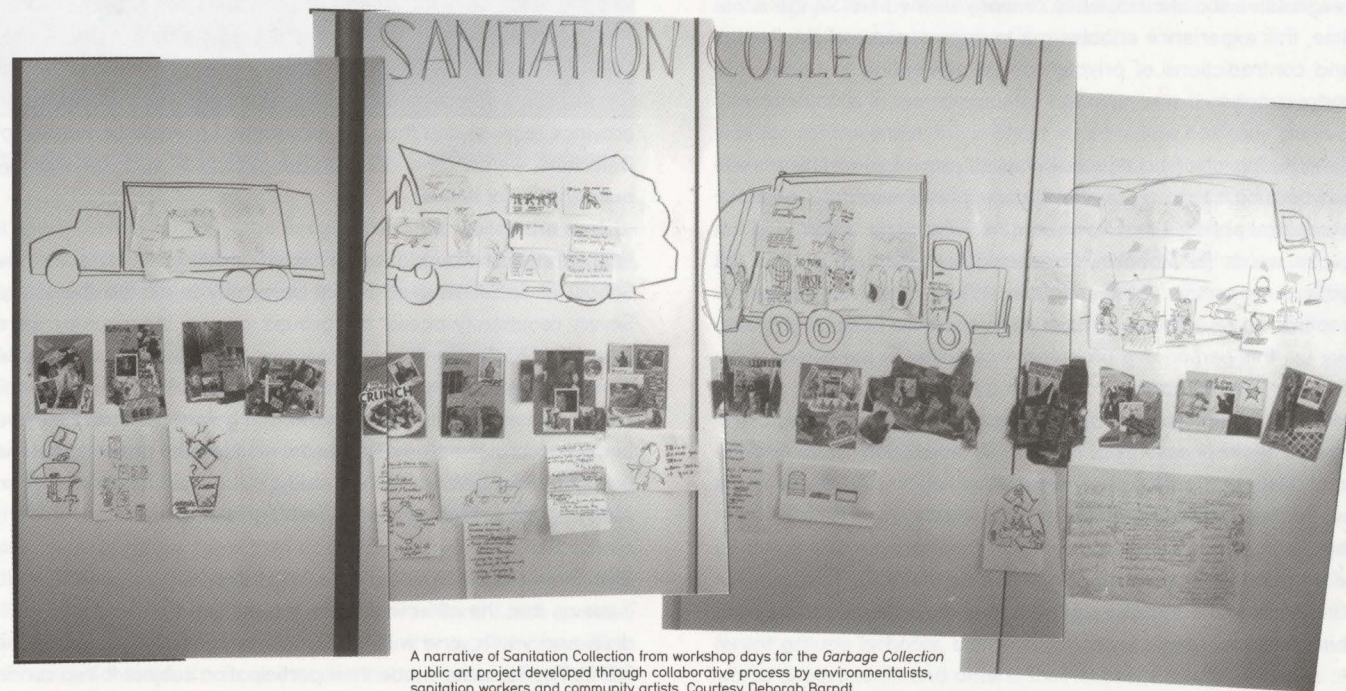


oagAO

You say you want to fund the revolution?

Oh well...

by Robin Pacific



A narrative of Sanitation Collection from workshop days for the Garbage Collection public art project developed through collaborative process by environmentalists, sanitation workers and community artists. Courtesy Deborah Barnet.

Mother, may I go for a swim?
 Yes, my darling daughter,
 Hang your clothes upon a limb,
 But don't go near the water!

In a right-wing climate, the labour movement feeding on its own entrails, the left having long ago eaten its young, the boards of public institutions stacked sky high with Tories — where are we to find the call for social justice, the will to foster real social change?

Why, in the work of private foundations, haven't you heard?

Based on huge reserves of private capital (from lumber, from liquor), family foundations such as the Laidlaw Foundation, the

Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation and the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, to name a few, are accountable to no one but their hand-picked boards and federal laws governing charitable foundations. While most of them do use advisory panels to award grants, they are not bound by the rules of transparency, peer review, confidentiality and arm's length that are the sacred cows of the public arts funding world. They are free to participate in the projects they fund as "partners" and they are free to withdraw or withhold funds if the recipient doesn't meet certain "benchmarks."

The upside is that they are also free to fund projects with a "social justice agenda." They can initiate innovative programs, and if they don't like them after a year or three, they can dismantle them and try something else. They can fund research and evaluation to determine "successful outcomes" on which to model further funding programs. Through their funding, they can encourage social

call for submissions

attention artists

FUSE Magazine in conjunction with AdFactor is sponsoring an ongoing artist's postcard project.

Submissions will be juried and the winning pair of postcards will be published and inserted into an upcoming issue of the magazine.

A \$300 artist's fee will be given to the winning entry.

Priority will be given to works that develop critical content while successfully engaging the postcard format.

criteria:
 mock-ups or executed ideas for a pair of postcards

size:
 4 x 6 inches

Please include your name, e-mail and mailing address.

Electronically transmitted submissions will not be accepted.

deadline for submissions is July 31, 2001

Send proposals to :
The Postcard Project
 FUSE Magazine
 454-401 Richmond St. W.
 Toronto, ON M5V 3A8

inclusivity and civic responsibility on the part of youth, immigrant groups and other marginalized or "grassroots" populations.

These and other Canadian foundations are part of a North America-wide trend in private philanthropy that intends to influence public policy where public institutions are too weakened, scared or hogtied to do so. They have long ago tried to transcend their role as charities, giving handouts to the poor, to become players in the public sphere, "fostering change," promoting "civic participation" and "cultural democracy."

Speaking as someone with firsthand (although brief) experience designing and implementing just such an innovative program (for the Laidlaw Foundation), I can attest to the genuine sincerity and progressive social conscience of many in the field. At the same time, this experience enables me to unpack some of the ironies and contradictions of private capital attempting to underwrite social change.

First, the phrase "social justice" itself. In recent years this phrase has become a kind of shorthand code, a euphemism for all those words and phrases that have become *infra dig* to say out loud in public: words like Marxism, class struggle, radical, revolution, left wing, progressive and socialism. When one friend says to another "so-and-so has a social justice agenda," she means that, like us, this person is a progressive, a leftie. By the same token, however, "social justice" can mean a kind of whitebread liberalism, a token of mainstream democracy, of social inclusion, of the mosaic. It's a phrase used by Jean Chrétien, Bob White and the anarchists and radicals in Seattle, Washington and Windsor. It's one of those portmanteau terms that, in carrying different meanings, can both unite people and confuse or even fool them. So when a foundation or its spokespeople claim to be interested in funding the social justice agenda, they may not mean what you think they mean.

And of course, although they may espouse one or another version of social justice, they are structured on a strictly corporate, hierarchical model with virtually total power wielded by the executive director.

Another critical term is "partnership." Funders, both private and public, increasingly want evidence of partnerships, of groups combining resources. Yet their own individual funding cultures are so particular that the idea of their pooling funds, of becoming partners themselves, is daunting at best. Furthermore, many foundations want to participate in a project and see themselves as one of the partner organizations. Yet the partner with the purse strings is hardly an equal one, and arts groups accustomed to arm's length public funders react in horror at what they perceive as possible interference in the artistic process. Beware of foundations bearing gifts!

It all comes down to change, and how you believe change happens. On the one hand, there is the will to influence public policy around social issues such as the environment, child poverty, the

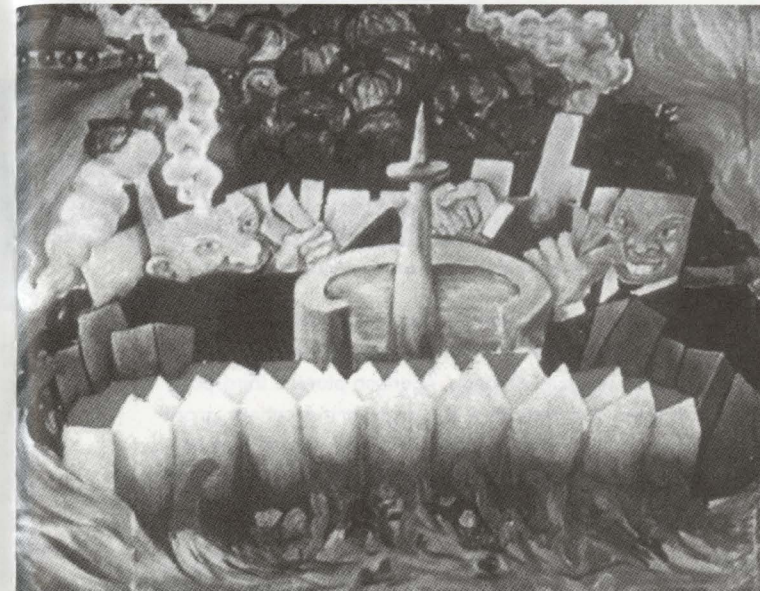
disaffection of youth or art education. The idea seems to be that if you put a study funded by a foundation on the desks of the right people in the civil service, people who have the ear of the right politician, then progressive legislation will follow. On the other hand, by funding projects that encourage or promote civic engagement among disenfranchised populations (youth or immigrants, for example), you will effect change from below. So far, we are still in the land of neo-liberalism, where social change means increasing social involvement in what currently passes for democracy.

Yet even here, problems and contradictions arise. The Bronfman Foundation, for example, is currently funding a major national study on art education. They aim to demonstrate that children who make art do better in school. (Why they don't study children who get extra math tutoring to see if it makes them better artists is another question). Given the drastic cutting of art education in Ontario (the sole access to art that the majority of students in the province receive) and thus the exclusion of a whole generation of Ontarians, we can only applaud the motives of such an endeavour. What's not to like?

The Bronfman Foundation provided start-up funding for the School of Social Work at McGill University to design the study. Seven community-based art groups across the country were selected. The first problem arose, however, when some of these groups, subject to the usual vicissitudes of funding for small non-profits, either ceased to exist or couldn't guarantee they'd survive the duration of the study. Bronfman will fund the projects that the School of Social Work will then study, but the old familiar problem of how to get operating funds doesn't go away.

Bronfman's further funding is contingent on matching funds. Well, it seems that the other institution interested in working with children and youth, and willing to come in on the project, was the RCMP. The Mounties made their participation subject to two conditions: first, that the study could only be of "youth at risk," and second, that there had to be a guaranteed number of volunteers for the projects (originally the projects were supposed to be open to all children). So the participants are now labelled and the artists are once again being asked to work for free. The study itself involves children taking workshops for three-month periods with their parents and teachers being asked such questions as "Now that Johnny's taken this art class, is he relating better to his peers? Have his marks improved?"

Now we have an art and education research project, the intent of which at least is commendable, looking like something else altogether on the ground: surveillance. There's a disjuncture between the intent of the foundations (usually looking down from the fifteenth or twentieth floor) and the resulting project on the ground. While there is nothing wrong with the Bronfman foundation leveraging other funding through its good name and good will, what does seem questionable, is the failure to imagine how the study will be perceived by those meant to benefit from it.



Detail of censored mural from the *Garbage Collection* public art project, Grace Channer and Min Sook Lee in co-operation with The Toronto Environmental Alliance and sanitation workers from CUPE Local 416, Summer 2000. Courtesy Deborah Barndt.

It's just such a failure of the imagination that fuelled the controversy surrounding the Laidlaw Foundation's funding of a pilot community art project known as the *Garbage Collection*.

Last summer a team of environmentalists from TEA (Toronto Environmental Alliance), sanitation workers from CUPE Local 416 and three artists painted murals with a recycling message on the side of garbage trucks. The project was funded by Laidlaw and had the enthusiastic participation of the city's culture office and the full approval of the works department. The trucks were painted around the same time as the city's controversial decision to ship Toronto's garbage to Kirkland Lake. At the media launch, the press spun the story as an anti-Kirkland Lake protest. Councillor Bill Saundercok, chair of the works committee, demanded that the trucks be recalled and the murals painted out. In the end, one mural on the side of one truck was indeed painted over. The mural depicted a train full of garbage leaving Toronto, while three porcine-looking men in suits clutched fistfuls of dollars. The group who painted the mural meant to suggest that there was money to be made contracting out garbage. Saundercok thought it meant politicians were on the take and that the artists had defaced city property.

Surprisingly, the Toronto arts community hardly raised a single voice in protest over this blatant act of censorship. To its credit, the Laidlaw Foundation supported the mural group and felt that the controversy had furthered their goal of fostering "cultural democracy" and "resistance." They authorized funds for the group to repaint the censored mural and plans went ahead to paint it on the side of the Bamboo last October. At the same time, municipal elections were underway and the major, really the only, election issue was Toronto's garbage. Mayor Mel Lastman was endorsing Saundercok against David Miller who had opposed the Kirkland Lake proposal. The Toronto Environmental Alliance declared

Saundercok to be "Public Environmental Enemy No. 1." A few days before the mural was to be painted, the Laidlaw Foundation informed the *Garbage Collection* project that it would not release funds until after the election.

There were several reasons given for this decision. The funds had been authorized contingent upon the development of a communications strategy. There were rather different opinions about just what such a strategy would mean, ranging from an agreed upon press release to something involving months of work and thus justifying the Foundation's decision to postpone the funding. The issue of whether a Foundation can be seen to be involved in electoral politics in any way was first proffered and then withdrawn as a justification. The Foundation didn't want the artwork once again to be hijacked by the Kirkland Lake issue when the mural was intended to be about recycling in general.

The consensus in the community, however, was that the situation was too controversial, too political, and Laidlaw basically choked. They said they wanted to fund resistance and social change, but drew the line when those possibilities became realities. *Hang your clothes upon a limb, but don't go near the water.* Not surprisingly, the mural group felt that this was a second act of censorship, a view that the Foundation heatedly denied. In spite of a meeting called by Laidlaw some weeks later to discuss the issues, the two sides remained unreconciled.

The idea that Laidlaw was a partner in this whole affair is problematic. Their decision was sudden, unilateral and non-negotiable, hardly the *modus operandi* one expects of a partner. They seemed not to realize the simple fact that their controlling the funds gave them power none of the other players had. They also seemed unable to imagine how their decision was received on the ground. Since community art projects typically involve several different groups (schools, community groups, libraries, politicians, works departments and others) their success always depends on



Katrina Miller (middle) of the Toronto Environmental Alliance(TEA) and Grace Channer (right) paint the censored mural on the side of a garbage truck, Summer 2000. Courtesy Deborah Barndt.

everyone's ability to imagine how things look from where other people are sitting. Harder than it sounds, perhaps, but nonetheless essential. In fact, I would argue that this "act of the imagination" is the essential ingredient in cultural democracy.

To give Laidlaw its due, there is nothing in the mission statement that is inconsistent with a liberal idea of social justice — it's Trudeau style liberalism four-square. The program that funded the *Garbage Collection* project was its radical baby, and when things got too spicy, the baby had to be silenced.

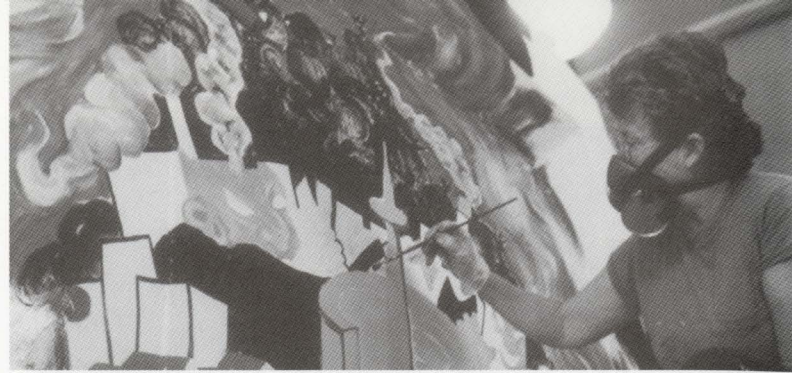
The mandate of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, established by Joseph E. Atkinson, former publisher of the *Toronto Star*, is more explicit. According to the guidelines posted on their website, they "look for projects that...are radical and innovative...ideas and projects that challenge current attitudes, policies and approaches, and that not only identify but attempt to address the systemic reasons for economic and social injustice."

When I asked the Executive Director, Charles Pascal, what he meant by "social justice," he replied, "Fairness. Canada used to be about fairness, now it's something that floats in the wind — nice if we can afford it. We wouldn't call ourselves left-wing because that's ideological and we are a charity. But if someone from the *National Post* calls us left-wing (and they mean it as an insult), we don't care."

Atkinson definitely views itself as a partner with its grant recipients in two distinct ways. First, they "link up resources in a timely and transparent manner, to play the role of honest broker." For example, they might provide a communications expert to a group to help them write their proposal. In one instance, the Board offered to increase the salary of a group's employee. They felt they couldn't justify someone getting an unfairly low salary when their project was about promoting fairness. Second, they feel they have a responsibility to make groups accountable and definitely want to influence outcomes. "We're not just, 'Here's the cheque, see you later.'"

They have recently funded a chair at the University of Toronto in early childhood development and education. According to Pascal, "We wanted a lot of say. We are the strategic investor." They wanted to ensure that this would not be simply a research position, but would bring "doers and thinkers" more closely together. "We say that's what this chair's about and we set it up that way. If they don't like it — say they just want the research side — we wouldn't fund it. If you want \$1 million from us, we have to co-determine it." Pascal feels that in influencing events on the ground, they are practicing due diligence as a funder. "There's lots of organizations out there who don't know themselves as well as they might, and if they don't want our due diligence in pointing it out, they won't get our funding."

At the same time, Pascal is sensitive to the issue of a power imbalance between the partner dispensing the funds and the partner



Censored mural in progress with Fiona Skurjat of CUPE Local 416, sanitation workers, Summer 2000. Courtesy Deborah Barnat.

receiving them. "With money comes huge responsibility. Number one, recognize it. To be effective you have to acknowledge power imbalance. It takes unusual respect." Atkinson plans a third-party evaluation of their own role as a funding partner where grant recipients will be able to respond anonymously. Pascal looks forward to this critical response, which will help them improve their role in the future.

I tried to ascertain where the limits were, when something had become too controversial or too political, and where the point was for Atkinson that Laidlaw had obviously reached. Each year Atkinson funds a major journalistic study. I asked how they would respond if, for example, someone doing a study of "the systemic reasons for economic and social injustice" (to quote again from their mission statement) came to the conclusion that capitalism is the systemic cause of poverty and that the way to address it is to advocate the violent overthrow of the state. "We wouldn't fund that person" was the response. But say you already funded them and they reached that conclusion in the middle of their research.

"You're painting a picture I can't imagine."

As Pascal says, "There is very little progressive money in Canada." In spite of problems at Laidlaw, the program continues and is funding some exciting initiatives in cultural democracy with Mayworks, with *Myths and Mirrors* in Sudbury, and with the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Local 75. The Atkinson Foundation has funded some excellent exposes generally published as a series of articles in the *Toronto Star*, and the Bronfman Foundation's Urban Issues program, under the guidance of Gisele Rucker, continues to fund outstanding Canadian community art projects over a three-year period. These foundations often attract individuals as directors or program officers who have a somewhat maverick approach, who are on the left side of the "social justice agenda" and are sincerely motivated. They generally have transparent procedures of one kind or another. It's just important to be aware that there are definite limits to the kind of political change they will fund, and in the end, because their money is private money, they can do whatever they want.

Robin C. Pacific is an artist, activist and writer who believes in making art part of everyday life. She is the co-founder of Art Starts Neighbourhood Storefront Cultural Centre and has installations in the local fire hall, health and community centres. She recently put 2,000 books in a Toronto ravine, following the course of a buried river, and produced Babes in the Woods, the art computer game for women.

BANFF:

Utopian Memeplex Machine Making the Invisible Visible

by Oliver Hockenhull

(For those who have no knowledge of the Banff Centre, it is advised that you skim over the Banff Centre for the Arts website at <http://www.banffcentre.ab.ca>. The Banff Centre for the Arts proclaims itself as Canada's Premiere Art Production Centre.)

The entire operation of the Banff Centre is under the rubric of an "educational institution" as legally constituted by the Alberta Government's Banff Centre Act. The management is vested in a national board of governors.

The Banff Centre for Continuing Education consists of the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Banff Centre for Management, the Banff Centre for Mountain Culture, and the Banff Centre for Conferences. The disparate interests of these institutions within the institution, are, as can be imagined, difficult, if not impossible, to coalesce into a strategic coherent whole. Past executive directors of the centre — such as Donald Cameron and David Leighton — were intimately involved with practically every aspect of the centre. Clearly the centre requires a director who understands it as a synchronous totality.

The current president of the Banff Centre, Graeme McDonald, is quite distant from the arts area. While I was at the centre off-and-on for two years (working on two co-productions, attending a thematic residence, and as a participant

We can and should build an institution here dedicated to the cultivation of the mind...in all varied aspects...which as far as man's humble efforts may go, will be worthy of the setting.

— Douglas Cameron, first director
The Banff Centre for the Arts.

This rhetoric of location and the calling to a higher art.

The founding ideals of the Banff Centre for the Arts — a panorama of utopianistic vistas, of determination, a legacy dependent on experimentation, inclusivity and the placing of the individual and the cultural in the embrace of a site so sharply configured, in an air precise, and then humbled by the extravagance of geological time and upheaval and the alert of nature. Yes, easily defined as Romantic, but that would be too easy, as is the simple of the dismiss as tourist trap. To be in awe — the intoxi-

1933

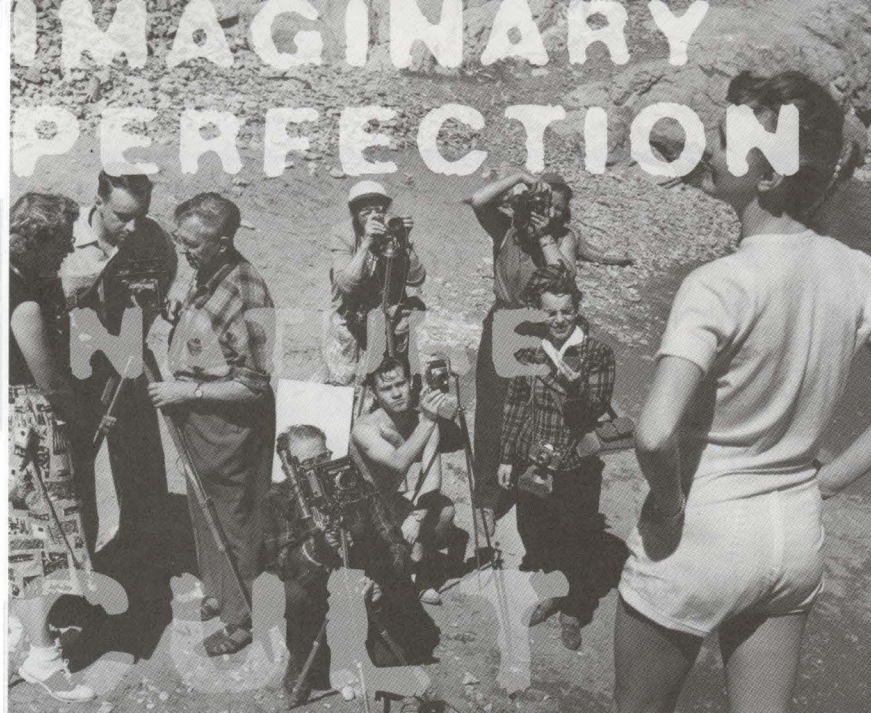
The Canadian Group of Painters holds their first exhibition. The catalogue for this show stated that the new organization represented a modern movement in Canadian painting.

The Shape of Things to Come by H. G. Wells is published.

cant of making you small and seeing the largesse of the world — who knows the complexity of a mountain lion feeding her young?



Photograph from the inside cover of the 1949 Banff School of Fine Arts Calendar. Photographer — Unknown



Photography class at Lake Minnewanka with Barbara Wilke Posing, 1958. Photographer - Unknown

As the human species fouls itself in its own greedy fossil fuelled inertia — the means of its own survival, though at hand, is as if invisible.

The integrity of creative thought and rationality, radiant in imagination and intellectual, aesthetic and design connectivity, is disregarded. Lethargy, purchase and/or a dependence on the misuse of historical consciousness rules the prevalent night.

Radical problems requiring innate solutions

The task may take a hundred years or more, but that is the perspective we must have if we are to do justice to the opportunity which is ours.

— Douglas Cameron

It is sometimes suggested that we do not live in a class-based society. Ha! Yes, we are all consumers under the

in one of the New Media Institute workshops), I never saw Mr. McDonald attend one concert, one gallery opening, one lecture, or one social event with artists. Is it because the centre has become such a diverse institution and that his attention is elsewhere, or because he has no time for the arts? I cannot say.

The Banff Centre for the Arts is inclusive of aboriginal arts, media and visual arts, music and sound, writing and publishing, theatre arts, the creative electronic environment, and the leighton studios. The above essay concentrates on the media and visual arts areas and a remembrance of the originating myth of the centre itself.

In an article entitled "Art and Scandal: Public Controversy and Contemporary Art" (FUSE volume 23, number 2) Kevin Dowler, a teacher in the communications studies program at York University, states that: "...the absence of private interests has compelled the state in the past to intervene in the interests of the nation; indeed, the emergence of Canadian culture is predicated on state structures organized to support the development and maintenance of culture." The Banff Centre has been described throughout its history as a "most unusual institution for Canada" not least of which is the historical and current financial structure of the organization. Though the origins of the Banff Centre for the Arts was dependent on the University of Alberta's extension program, the original financing of the institution was from first, the Carnegie Foundation of New York, and then by the insightful (and substantial) donations of key individuals, such as Eric Harvie, a visionary philanthropist and Alberta oil man. In 1999-2000 the centre (according to its own year-end report) is 75 percent self-reliant, generating revenue from conference sales, donations, sponsorships, program grants and tuition. It would also appear that wealthy individuals continue to support the centre to a tangible degree. This is not an argument against the crucial importance, and clear necessity certainly,

of State support for the arts, however it is an example of the value of diverse structures of funding for the arts and humanities. Sara Diamond has made a remarkable effort, and has achieved equally remarkable results, in her effort to fund the New Media Institute and the Canadian Creative Innovation Initiative, partnering the Banff Centre with Stentor, the Canada Council and others. Unfortunately there is only one Sara Diamond, too much work to be done and the private sector in Canada (experiencing record profits) is notoriously, ridiculously tight-fisted, riding on the coat tails of U.S. innovation instead of investing in the home grown.

Further research regarding the financial accountability of The Centre and its various departments, though of obvious import, was beyond the scope of this essay. Rumours of abusive of power and conflicts of interest are heard — as would be expected in an institution of this size and importance.

The centre's facilities are not used as heavily as one would hope. As previously noted there is a crying lack of publication, the photographic department is under used... it also seems that the universities across the country are not much aware of the centre, or what it is about, as other than the Alberta institutions, they rarely seem to interact with it. It would also be good to see more graduate students working at the centre, pursuing projects, working and learning.

Concerning equipment and staffing (media and visual arts): Once upon a time the centre was considered one of the most well-equipped artists' centres with regards to digital tools. This is no longer the case. There is a lack of concern regarding software updates, new software and equipment purchases. Artists — from Canada and abroad are often surprised by the lack of technical support available to them and the lack of up-to-date equipment. Video production is only now starting to go digital, slowly. Presently there is only one digital video camera available for artists to use (!)...The media arts area has

to speak, but to be heard (as pervasively, say, as a new underwear label or the latest pop group) places us in the class called "the invisible."

The invisible, the taken-for-granted environment, is the support from which dangles the fabric of culture.

It was in the years of the Great Depression that a small grant by the Carnegie Corporation of New York that allowed the extension program of the University of Alberta to initiate in August of 1933 "an experimental school in the Arts related to the Theatre" in Banff.

Generally the arts are allowed this pristine space of public indifference. The arts — possibly pretty to look at, comforting to hear — but not the markers from which social structure is to be rethought.

Yet to discount the creative is to slight creation itself. The lack of regard is prevalent — in education, in business, in government.

A community's hierarchy of responsibility must, if it is to be rational, be founded on ecosystemic principles. The liberalism of the economy is really only the tyranny of the market. Ideological constructs, or the rules of market and desire, or the neurosis of alienated consumerism matter little during a drought, a flood, or to the intestines of a child who has drunk water from a polluted source.

Cultural production presupposes a culture to produce for, and as we slip further into a McCulture we are seeing more and more McArt — an art empty of time, empty of meaning (other than self-promotion), i.e., art that is a reproduction of the logic of consumer capitalism.

The end of World War II came a few days before the close of the 1945 summer session. The

1933

Singing telegrams.

Phonograph records go stereo.

Large numbers of Jews begin to emigrate to Palestine, despite opposition from the Arab population.

Apparition: Virgin Mary seen at Banneaux, Belgium.

Motorola invents the walkie-talkie.

Nazi destruction of Hirschfeld's Scientific-Humanitarian Committee & Library.

Denmark repeals anti-sodomy laws.

Beginning of the Eranos seminars, started with the purpose of finding common ground between Eastern and Western religious thought. Participants included C.G. Jung, Heinrich Zimmer, D. T. Suzuki, Martin Buber, and Mircea Eliade.

great glaring eye of the dollar (not the Canadian Peso, thank you). Each and every problem is subsumed under the aspect of our global consumer identity — which name brand is my lifestyle? To then speak outside the confines of Nike/Sony worlds, to posit that the intellect of our society necessitates a platform from which not only

young struggling institution known as The Banff Centre for the Fine Arts had survived 5 years of depression and 6 years of war all through this time it had grown in strength and vigor and it had sent its message to the far corners of the

Canada and the world. It had survived and taken root and become self-supporting because in a modest way it had filled a need in the minds and hearts of the Canadian people.

— Donald Cameron, *Campus in The Clouds*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1956.

Culture is a tool — and the need for the Means of Access.

Banff contains within its originating scope the promise of a meta-institution, an institution that promotes the intercourse of the creative, the ecosystemic and the question of the organizational.

The service of art to the human spirit is not limited to the few but is universal for all...art is not for adornment's sake, or preaching sake, or pleasure's sake, not for the sake of gratifying the senses, or exhibiting technical skill, not for art's sake, but for life's sake.

— E.H. Griggs, *The Banff School of Fine Arts Calendar*, 1949.

The paradigmatic function of the Banff Centre as a vehicle or tool for culture

Tools are artifacts, but they are not in essence objects. Since they qualitatively increase a species possibility of organizing and controlling the matter-energy in their ecosystem, their primary characteristic is that of information. They are forms which inform; they are informed because they remember the past and make possible new types of projection into the future.

— Anthony Wilden, *System and Structure* (Second Edition), London: Tavistock Publications, 1980.



Photographs from the 1943 Banff School of Fine arts Calendar 1943. Photographer — Unknown

to negotiate with a different department (CEE—creative electronic environment) to access equipment and lobby for software, editing time, etc. This is most definitely a problem, and one that reflects on the staffing at the centre — there is no policy of preferring the hiring of practicing artists. Too often bureaucratic and trite policy and purchase decisions are being made for artists by non-artists — people trained as educators or as technicians. These decisions, made by individuals ill-informed of the needs and working methods of artists, sap the productive capacity of the centre.

The physical plant of the entire centre is also in a serious need of an overhaul. Commissioned art works and design work is needed throughout.

Alberta has the money to support the centre, to give it the funds needed to renew its lease on its innovative and experimental heritage — but does it have the vision?

September, 1945, the Macdonald Hotel, Edmonton — a conversation between Donald Cameron and Eric Harvie.

Mr. Harvie: "Yes, I know you need money, but tell me what you would do if you didn't have to worry about money."

Well, nobody had ever said that to me before, and as I didn't know Mr. Harvie well then and didn't know if he was serious, I stamped my foot and cried "But I've got to have money...and I want a million dollars."

Eric Harvie was standing up looking over the river valley, but as I said I want a million dollars, he swung around, snapped his fingers and said, "That's the kind of thing that interests me. What would you do with a million dollars if you had it?"

As recounted in *Campus in the Clouds* by Donald Cameron, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1956.

"...the prevailing mode of intellectual discourse is militantly antimethodological, if by methodological we mean a questioning of the structure of fields and discourses themselves. A principle of silent exclusion operates within and at the boundaries of discourse; this has now become so internalized that fields, disciplines and their discourses have taken on the status of immutable durability. Licensed members of the field, which has all the trappings of a social institution, are identifiable as belonging to a guild, and for them words like "expert" and "objective" have an important resonance."

Edward W. Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: essays on postmodern culture* (edited by Hal Foster), Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983.

Elizabeth Vander Zaag's project "Talk Nice," part of the Canadian Creative Innovation Initiative (Stentor/The Canada Council/the Banff Centre), is an exemplary project that combines research and developments in speech analysis software with a trenchantly interactivity presentation/questioning of gender, intonation, and power.

Definitely an achievement in the advancement, through the technological and through playful engagement with social language, of media arts.

The NFB and Telefilm jointly support The Women in the Director's Chair program; they both also give some support to the Banff New Media Institute.

"...against institutionalism, mass production, and rigidity...the Banff Centre for the Arts represents a real affirmation of belief in individualism, small numbers, self directed learning — in short, personal freedom and responsibility as the cornerstone of creative development."

David Leighton, second director of the Banff Centre for the Arts

The institution as tool. The evolution of a mnemonic trace — to be improved upon. The Banff Centre is articulated as a place from which the cultural can reassert itself over its fate through the act of the imagined. It is to do this person by person, by creative expressivity and by an internationalism respectful of difference.

Canadian Glasnost contra the production of Canadiana

What is wrong with Canadian cultural production/identity in general? Limping, lumbering movements — body parts not coordinated — the whole bumbling contraption is thoughtlessly headless! (Our clutch of various institutions, the NFB, the CBC, the CRTC, the artist run centres, the museum art circles, the university art programs, the various federal institutions, not knowing, not caring, not supporting, and often even antagonistic to one another!)

The Canadian heritage department de-evolved years ago now from the Department of communication has neither the fortitude nor the expertise to coordinate the various agencies that it funds. It is as if this hydra head had little time to imagine itself functioning within the needs of a national culture, a culture not simply one of the past, not one so much of heritage, but of modification and movement, of future prospect.

It would be unfair to blame the Banff Centre for failures that are distressingly so national in scope. Most prominently, the CBC and the NFB have apparently little use for the Banff Centre for the Arts, a centre devoted to creativity and innovation in the arts and especially in the media arts. Is it the fact that the centre is located in Alberta (albeit in a national park)? Or more plausible, that these crown corporations are so institutionally frigid — their position so taken for granted and unamenable to scrutiny — that they are blind to the seductions of speculative thought, fearful of collaborations, and the inter-

1933

John Heartfield flees to Czechoslovakia.

Escher has a large one-man exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam on the occasion of the International Mathematical Conference. He meets Canadian professor H.S.M. Coxeter.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt gives the first of his radio 'fireside chats' (a term coined by journalist Robert Trout) eight days after his inauguration.

Daily national radio broadcasting begins in Canada.

V. K. Zworykin publicly announces his "ikonoscope" cathode ray transmitting tube in a technical paper.

First Mickey Mouse watch goes on sale in the United States at \$2.50 (or \$2.75?). A Mickey Mouse clock sells for \$1.50.

Bell Telephone in the United States transmits stereophonic music.

It is the status of their products, not the consciousness artists have of their activity, that defines the social effect of works.

— Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (translation from the German by Michael Shaw), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

course of joint institutional projects and research? (Note: media/visual arts should be more responsive to its own national responsibilities. The often-heard comment from artists and artist-run organizations across the country is that they feel very distant from the centre — they feel it to be cliquish. Conclusion: media/visual arts needs

to outreach in more effective, responsive and inclusive/democratic ways.

Adjusting the noise to signal ratio

The centre must take on a much more active role in the creation, articulation and promotion of cultural theory and activism. In the past three to four years, and acknowledged by the principles involved, very little has been published and disseminated in terms of the work or debates of artists who have been resident in visual/media arts. Research is poorly funded and many projects never receive the technological expertise necessary to bring them to successful conclusion. As well, the overall framing of the aesthetics and/or direction of the centre itself is left to promotional phrases and the thematic residences.

Fixing limits and the allowed playing field

The concentration of the media and visual art departments on thematic residences presents a significant dissipation of institutional intent. Instead of persistent enquiry into constitutive aesthetic, creative, communicational and/or design principles of various media or social paradigms, the thematic residences predicate artists' involvement via the interpretive fancies of the centre's directors. (Maybe it is all we can expect in this age of apathetic disenfranchisement...maybe this spoon feeding is the necessary correlate of artists not knowing what purpose they are to assume?)

(The programs are outlined until the year 2003! In 2001: "Sports" and "Slo-Mo: On Time," in 2002: "WildLife" and "Public/Private," and in 2003: "Twins: Doubling, echoes and repetition.")

Abdicating the wide-angle strategies and comprehensive objectives of the founding principles and interdisciplinary

The Cult of Enthusiasm and What's Wrong with That?

"... the Banff School has become a beacon flashing from the mountain top, whose beneficent rays reach into the far corners of the land making it a more fruitful and a better place in which to live."

Donald Cameron, *Campus in the Clouds*.

Synarchy — Groupware

Synarchy, or synchronous, synthetic anarchy, involves individuals and institutions linked technologically, socially, collaboratively, and professionally in organic spontaneous relationship webs instead of in rote, linearly defined or institutionally directed roles.

Not a collectivist or industrial model cooperative, there are no meetings, no dues, no qualifications except the self-declaration of participatory engagement. I network therefore I am.

Originally in Webweavers: Synarchy — created 17/03/94
Version 1.0, Derek Dowden.

Individuals and areas

Expect the Banff Centre for the Arts to be going through some structural changes in the year 2001. While this article was prepared, Jane Morrow accepted the position as the director of the Centre for the Arts. She's stoked for the challenges of leading the organization via a much more interdisciplinary and inclusive manner than that of the recent past. I have a sense from conversations with her that she wishes to sign the centre with her own understanding and application of the utopian impulses of the original mandate.

Sara Diamond remains as the director of visual and media arts, as well as the director of the new media institute. A veteran in the media arts as an artist, writer, and activist, Ms Diamond is that rare administrator: imaginative, perpetually curious and syncretically minded, balanced by an ever-acute political consciousness.

Jon Tupper, director of the Walter Philips Gallery, will be leaving the centre in the next year. Mr. Tupper's direction of the Gallery reflected his accommodation of a predominantly cautious and critically dispersed post-modern aesthetic. He has initiated a new development at the centre: the Banff International Curatorial Institute, which will be providing workshops, seminars, fellowships and pre-professional training in curatorial practice.

Paul Lawrence was director of the creative electronic environment area for the past year. Mr. Lawrence is leaving the centre in early 2001. The area is under review and may simply be absorbed by the media arts department.

Ernie Kroeger, artist and teacher, heads up the photography department. Note: this area of the centre is under used and yet fairly well-equipped.

Ed Bamiling is the highly active director of the ceramics department, one of the earliest art production areas of the centre and one that has an international reputation. The Banff Centre ceramics department is an institutional member of the International Academy of Ceramics based in Geneva. They have been consistent in their local outreach, offering continuing education classes to local residents. As well, the ceramics department has been involved in a number of international exchanges, with artists from Greece and Mexico. Mr. Bamiling also conducts workshops in creativity in several of the Banff Centre's management and leadership programs.

To be fair, the jury that decides on acceptable projects for the thematic residences throws a large net — practically any reading of the theme is gist for the mill. In parallel, the visual/media arts does offer "self-directed residences," however these residences are not as subsidized as the thematic residences. (Co-productions for particular individual projects and workstudies are also juried on a continual basis.)

Yet the clear emphasis — and the largest allocation of support — is for the thematic residences, ultimately a historical erosion of the role of the centre media/visual arts for Canadian and International artists, as it is a dissipation of actionable intents.

At many stages we possess new constructible tools or new intellectual tools which obviously are bound to increase our powers considerably in some direction or other. The question is in what direction? It is just as truly a work of invention or discovery to find out what we are able to accomplish by the use of these new tools as it is to search for the tools which will make possible a new device or method.

— Norbert Wiener, *The Care and Feeding of Ideas*.
Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994.

This premise of the centre as a liminal space for cultural articulation would demand that it profoundly embrace the tenets of its own *raison d'être*. That it theorize, rationalize and actualize its existence in terms of a vital synthesis of creativity, environmental awareness, and leadership education. To do so, the centre is obliged to develop a level of integration, understanding and appreciation between departments and disciplines not currently expressed. It is also required to produce, in a consistent and continuing way projects and publications heralding its own role as a key, attentive author in these fields.

1933

British Film Institute is founded.

UK Film Quota Act is passed.

Under the new Italian film quota law, Italian cinemas must show one Italian film for every three foreign films.

First Persian-language film is *Duktare Lur*, produced by Ardeshir Irani for Imperial Film Company.

First Indian film made in English, bilingually with Hindi, is *Karma (Destiny)*, directed by Himansu Rai as a co-production between his company and the United Kingdom's IBB.

Paul Klee is fired from the Dusseldorf Academy.

At the Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago, Western Electric demonstrates a "voice mirror" endless-loop magnetic tape recorder in a demonstration called "Hear Your Own Voice."

Plastic magnetic tape is manufactured in Ludwigshafen, Germany by Badische Anilin und Sodafabrik (BASF).

nary vision, media/visual arts could be depreciating itself out of a job and depriving artists of a key institutional forum — a forum that could be continually weighted in historical perspective and future expectance, a place of ongoing debate, discussion and production.

Cultural renaissance, innovations in the arts, a democratic and active citizenry, the application of technology toward the liberation of individual creativity instead of further indenture to the system grid...How? Certainly by introducing a greater professionalism in the visual/media arts. That is to say a furthering of discourse, analysis and criti-

cism of artistic practice and a substantial registration with the design arts (and industries), and with communications, civil planning and architecture. The introduction of these arts at the centre should not however impinge on the other established areas, such as what was called once upon a time the fine arts; their addition must be accommodated without taking away from other areas.

Yearly seminars dealing expressly with the question of creativity and the care and nourishment of invention and innovation in all their forms (social, artistic, civil, structural) would be called for. Actual material, social goals and projects established at such meetings would make the seminars more than gabfests. Representatives from concerned player institutions — national and international — would be involved and an equal or larger number of independent artists/scholars contracted.

Currently the Banff New Media Institute, a division of the media/visual arts department, holds seminars and workshops of crucial interests to digital artists. Directed by Sara Diamond and Susan Kennard, the seminars are generally brightly conceived propositions and queries of new media. They are smart and practical workshops that are orchestrated and composed by the directors to engineer ideas and projects. With its blend of raw cross-disciplinary curiosity and practical applications, the Banff New Media Institute is, in miniature and in limited fashion, an example of the construct of the preceding arguments.



H.G. Gyde and art students - 1927. Photograph: British Photographic Laboratories of Canada

1933

Bucky invents the dymaxion car.

Textophone wire recorder is introduced by C. Lorenz Company and bought in large quantities by the Nazis.

Anatoly Lunacharsky (1875-1933) the Comrade Director/Commissariat (Ministry) of Enlightenment dies.

Officially Picasso lives with Olga, but their relationship deteriorates, while his affair with Marie-Thérèse blossoms.

Hitler is named Chancellor of Germany.

The Bauhaus under Ludwig Mies van der Rohe is closed under pressure from the Nazis. Ludwig goes on, attempting to get commissions from the new ruling power.

The Banff Centre for the Fine Arts begins life.

Here we are expressing purpose founded on utopian impulses, a cognition of the not yet achieved potentials of a Blochian analysis. Obviously this embracing is outside the perpetual refusals, postponements and ineptitudes of the academic postmodernist conformist. It is crucially important that the Banff Centre for the Arts

Across Western Canada New Media Institutes and Research centres are springing up like psychedelic mushrooms on Kitsilano lawns. (From "Netera" in Alberta and 'Newmie' in Vancouver (a new 30-million-dollar-plus centre). These centres are rigidly structured, resources are targeted principally for technical hardware and software developments. Though lip service is given to 'content development' as part of the 'cluster area of inclusion' it is once again clear that content is an afterthought.

(Remember the debacle of the '90's - Canada's 'Centre's of Excellence'? Remember the Centre for Image and Sound Research in Vancouver? — Most of it simply padding bureaucratic salaries for such luminous projects as a CD on the Prime Ministers of Canada!) These new centres are, from a first reading of their websites, the same — artists are not on salary, artists are not given positions of power and influence, artists will be the beggars at the door. Canada is going to build a first class new media backbone and clothes itself in the hand me downs of Disney and Time-Warner.

Banff was doing New Media in the '60's — devised, conceived, and engineered by artists. Presently the new media budget at Banff for infrastructure, equipment, personnel and software is pathetic.

Remarkable that information design and the rhetoric of aesthetics is given such short shift — when aesthetics and design is clearly the core from which creative developments can radiate. (Check out "Starry Night" by Alex Galloway & Mark Tribe & Martin Wattenberg <http://rhizome.org/starrynight/>)



Student in Photography Lab 1960. Photographer — Unknown

remain a centre for the independent artist/intellectual — not a conference retreat and recreational centre for those individuals who have already (too often) acquiesced and accommodated themselves to the status quo in their fields, at their institution, or in the world.

Aesthetics is a subgenre of communication. Perhaps it is the valuation of communication — of the possibility of the creation and anamnesis of a self, of a soul. Therefore, it is a relative of ethics. A relative of ethics, or justice — a placing into just relationship, negotiation, and then the ecstasy of union, of pleasuring sense. A politics of aesthetics, a social of aesthetics would take seriously its responsibility to the environment, to definition, and to the body of humankind, as the ecology is the frame.

The commodity under consumer capitalism is infinitely substitutable and indefinite. In this way substitutability becomes the principle of the production of meaninglessness. The response of the much serious art of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is to confront substitution with definition.

— Sean Cubitt, from <http://www.imaging.dundee.ac.uk/people/sean/as.html>

To be more than a data cloud amongst the data clouds the value of the individual transforms from sign to signification, becoming articulate through social, political and poetic connection and empathy. Grounded in aspiration, i.e., the ground of the mortal alive, the traverses and articulations, shades and raptures of the movement of our days become the marks and masks of our art and our society. The work is rebellion against the occultation of self and politics by the facileness of consumerism, the ignorance of careerism and the imbecility of institutionalisms. By way of the vision from the top of the mountain, the work of engagement turns to demands, necessities.

LINKS:

- <http://www.banffcentre.ab.ca>
- <http://www.banffcentre.ab.ca/nmi>
- <http://www.banffcentre.ab.ca/mva>
- <http://www.crosswinds.net/~ideoplastic>
- <http://www.imaging.dundee.ac.uk/people/sean/as.html>

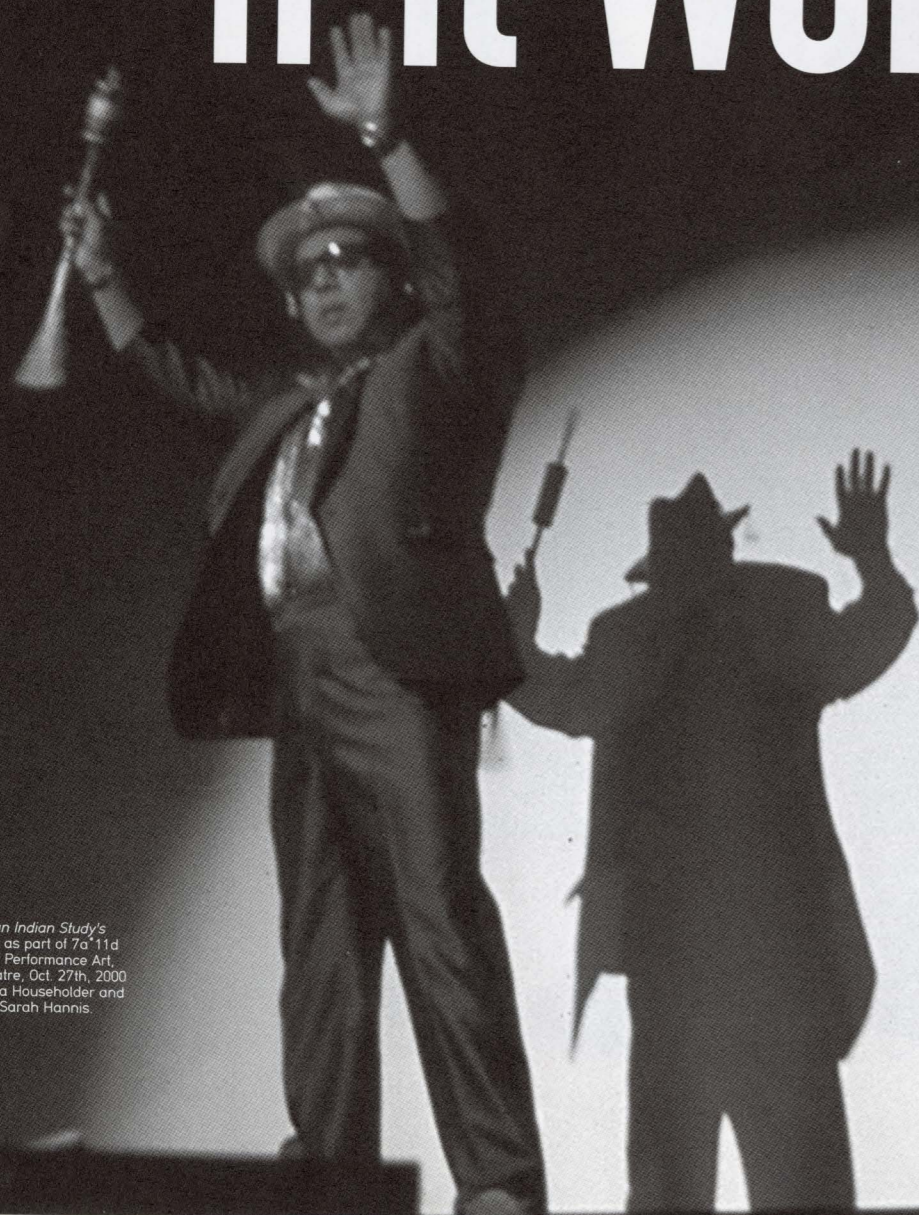
Oliver Hockenhill is a writer, filmmaker and media artist/theorist whose works (from photography/film/video to hypertext and morphogenetic vrm programming) have shown around the world. A new 110 minute DV work, "Beautiful Jew," will be released in the fall of 2001 and a new series of 8 short video works was released in May 2001 through Video Out, Vancouver. He is currently in the throes of conceiving and shooting an experimental DVD called "Fucking Darwin."



Soft Rock. 2001
Def Leppard 7 day weekend concert tour t-shirt
AC/DC shirt
boys XL underwear
cowboy black fringe
black fishnets
sewing thread and needle
Model: Eowyn

It's Very Rewarding if it Works:

James Luna and Rebecca Belmore talk to Richard William Hill about the possibility of bringing it all back home



James Luna in *American Indian Study's* performance presented as part of 7a*11d International Festival of Performance Art, Toronto, Workman Theatre, Oct. 27th, 2000 and curated by Johanna Householder and Louise Liliefeldt. Photo: Sarah Hannis.

Last fall James Luna was in Toronto to do a performance as part of the 7a*11d festival. Using a brunch of home-cooked waffles as a bribe I was able to convince him and fellow artist Rebecca Belmore to discuss their occasional efforts to bring their art practices back to their communities. Luna lives on the La Jolla Indian Reservation in southern California. Belmore is from northwestern Ontario, but currently resides in Toronto. Both have international reputations, primarily (but by no means exclusively) for their performance work. I asked them about the satisfaction and frustration of also trying to do work for their communities.

James Luna: When you say community, are you talking “Indian community” or are you talking where we live, or where we’re from?

Richard William Hill: I’m thinking about your home communities, but the complexity of relationships to other communities is something I hoped we could flesh out.

JL: Because I feel kind of at a loss there. I live in an Indian community. It does have a lot to do with my work because of the subject matter, but it doesn’t in a way because I just live there. Maybe I contribute that way. I guess I do. I get a big kick because people have no concept of what I am doing here this weekend or in general.

Rebecca Belmore: You mean people from your community, your home?

JL: From my home. I’ll tell my Mom. She’ll go, “Oh, that’s nice. Behave yourself.” Which means I’ll be getting all frothy and fucked up here. And then the boys — I have a circle of friends and relations that I hang with and they are an integral part of my work. I get tickled because I got an article in the local newspaper, so “if it is in the newspaper, it must be true and...you must be famous.” It was great because I went to the store (a travel store and gas station) and people said, “Hey, got that article!” It tickles me, but it is kind of embarrassing because in one way I want them to know about this and in another way, when I get recognized for it, I want to run and hide because I don’t want to be different in my community. But I certainly want the respect.

RB: You just did that performance one time in your community though.

JL: Yeah.

RWH: That’s what I was thinking of, the film that Chris Ayre made of the performance you did in your home community.

JL: I have done limited things.

RB: And in your video stuff — like putting “the boys” in the video so that they participate. Maybe they don’t know what they are participating in but they are willing to be in it.

JL: And those are really the highlights. I would not be dancing around with a goddamn potato in my underwear and walking around in snake-skin pants on the rez. I would but... people have mixed-up ideas about me anyway. So I get to live my fantasies out more so than at home.

RB: Those are your fantasies? I didn’t know that...

JL: I don’t tell you everything, Rebecca.

RWH: Well, he was up there peeling his clothes off.

RB: That’s right.

JL: That little script piece came from when I went down to Tijuana, to a Mexican bar. There are bars for the tourists and then there are the strip places for the Mexicans and those places are a lot more fun. They have these ladies up there that just... well, they had seen better days and they had rolls and stuff and they did some sort of dance. All of them had this fuck-you look on their face: like, “fuck you, guys.” Everybody’s whistling and

things like that, but they don't care. So I can do that too.

RWH: It's an interesting idea that you get a certain amount of freedom when you go away, but at the same time, you obviously are getting something when you return.

JL: I can hardly wait to get back. I like the peace and quietness, my own bed, to cook something up as opposed to going out to eat. I enjoy it when I am here, but it is great to get home, because it is so different and I am comfortable there. I am also comfortable other places, but there is a certain point when I really need to get back, reconnect, and then I get antsy and look forward to the trip.

RB: I was just remembering when I first came to visit you back in 1988. I was just starting to make work, and I was really impressed with how you lived, how you worked, how you were...

JL: A simple man. [laughter]

RB: I was interested in how you were dividing your time, that you had your counseling job at the college

JL: I'm still there.

RB: I really was interested in talking with you because I think it's a really tough thing — that's what I found, myself — to be able to stay in a small place, on a reservation, and to still make work from there.

For example, I live here in the city and I (kind of) try to go back and forth, but I don't know when I will actually get to go home again. Life is very complicated and time passes. For myself, I don't really feel that I work for my community, my home and my own family or relations or people that I know. On the other hand, when I saw you [James] in Saskatoon I did a performance there. The performance was site specific because I was dealing with a local issue and I wanted to communicate, through the work, with the people who lived there, the Indian people who lived there. I think it was fairly successful. In that way, I do get to connect here and there with Indian people, but not always. I was in Quebec City, and there were no other First Nations people there, so it really fluctuates.

RWH: I guess with performance you know whether you succeeded or not right on the spot?

JL: It's immediate, yeah, but I remember when I first started really touring and I thought, this is great. I've got calls coming in and I'll just book 'em. After the first couple, it became apparent to me that this is tough. I can go out and do an installation and it almost becomes thera-

peutic, because I am sitting there late at night, having a Diet Coke, smoking cigarettes, putting things up and sitting back and looking at it, and I have the music on. I mean, it's just a wonderful moment, but with the performance it's [snaps his fingers] and then it's over. There's no legacy. It's in people's minds, which is powerful, but it's so different. So, I learned there are pros and cons, and you really wonder whether you did succeed or not. And people come up and say...

RB: That's the awkward part, don't you think? When you're standing around, or you're just packing up your stuff, and people approach you, not sure whether they should, or they are not sure what they want, but they want to say something. I always feel somehow like I am waiting for someone to come over to at least say something. After it's over I would like to know, "How was it?"

RWH: So it's not something you immediately get from it?

RB: No, and if no one will come over, then you probably sucked.

RWH: Or scared them.

JL: Yeah, because they don't really know how to take you. Who is the real Mr. Luna? Mr. Potato or...?

Do you ever get asked this, "Would you do a question-and-answer thing after the performance?"

RB: Yeah.

JL: And I say "No." I either want to hug somebody or kill somebody. It's not the time. You pour your guts out and then somebody comes over and asks, "What do you think about the medicine wheel?" Actually, last night I got an interesting question and I guess that I am still processing it because I wonder, "Does this guy think I really know something or did he just take the opportunity to come up and ask an Indian?" He has an instructor who is half-chief, right? And she is very hostile to him. I said "Well it's probably from her own cultural baggage." I said, "Who is the male in her life?" Then I thought, what am I answering here? It's like...

RB: How did you get yourself into that shit.

JL: You know, it's like I was the instant therapist there. But I came up with a good answer, I said, "Take her some tobacco ... and then walk away." [laughter]

RWH: Going back to Ayre's film of you performing in your home community, how was that experience different from other audiences or other communities that you perform for?

JL: That was one of the scariest moments of my life. People on the reservation, they know I am an artist, and I just play along because I don't want to insult people's intelligence. They ask, "How is the painting going?" I say, "Great!" You don't want to sit down and try to explain the history of art to them, but here I was going to expose myself, what I do, and I knew they would be the toughest critics. That people would actually come to that to see what I was made of. That people would come there to reaffirm their ideas, not to change their mind but to reaffirm "he's a loser, just doing it for the money." Or other people that were my relatives were really proud of me and were curious. These performances here, I go home. But there, I was home, and I'd see these people the next day, the day after. It was not like the one-night stand.

The date approached, and I was just like pins and needles. My brother Willie was my tech, and I did the bicycle piece first. I think probably out of those pieces I did it's more arty and its complex. And so they applauded, it was a nice applause but I could see they were thinking "What is this?" — bewildered, you know. Then I went off and then I came back on for that story-telling piece. What's really great when I have an Indian audience is they laugh at the right place, but there it was a more hearty laugh, because I used first names and they knew the places and they were right there. In fact Willie ran in after I walked off stage after that piece and he goes, "You've got 'em now." I had really brought it back home with that piece.

That was pretty tough and what was really tough was that, in that video, it was Chris' idea to go out and interview people in the street because he said, "You know there is a bigger story here than just you performing." After a couple of weeks, he said "You know, there are some pretty funny ideas out there about you. Kind of negative. You want to see this stuff?" I said, "No, not right now. I know that." Then after I saw it and heard some of what they were saying, it confirmed things. To hear it was tough. But I accept that and I would not change it. Put it in there because that's important. I don't want this, "Oh, we love James and everything is perfect," because I'm not.

RWH: Rebecca, I know we've talked before about some of the stuff you've done in Thunder Bay, about band night or open stage...

RB: Talent Night. That was quite a while ago. That was probably in the mid-'80s. Basically there is this neighborhood in Thunder Bay which is the Indian neighbourhood, and it's kind of in the poorer section of the city. They had a community hall, and so once a week they would have Talent Night. It was basically musicians, mostly country music. There was a house band, and people could go up and join the band. So, a couple of times I

inserted myself into that situation. What was interesting is that I found I could make a work where I could, in a sneaky way, say something to the audience or to the community, to point out different situations in the community. For example, the actual talent night was very male dominated, and women were complaining that they weren't allowed to get up on stage and they weren't being encouraged to be part of this whole community activity. So I did a piece that poked fun at that. It was pretty low tech, fairly humorous. I did a skit like on the Gong Show or something. They would ask, "Are you going to do a skit tonight?" But it was fun, I didn't mind, because what I was trying to do was to point things out because I had the opportunity. There was the venue, it was all set up, and all I had to do was to jump in and do something. Take my five or ten minutes and have my say. So a lot of people enjoyed it and actually a lot of women would come up to me afterwards and they'd say, "Yeah, that was great. I like what you did and I like what you had to say." I think that maybe the men did not get it but the women did.

Another time, when I was living in Sioux Lookout, I was asked to be the entertainer at this dinner. It was a graduation for Native students who were graduating from a teacher's program, but it was distance education so they had come to Sioux Lookout from their reserves to get their diplomas. I was the entertainer. And I ran into Bev's aunt [Bev Koski's aunt, Lorraine Kenny] at the grocery store, and she said, "Oh, could you come tonight and do something?" I said, "Well, okay." She said, "All you can get is fifty dollars. Is that okay?" I said, "Yeah, that's fine," and she said, "Well, you can come for dinner."

So we went for dinner and I was sitting there in a tiny little banquet room in the restaurant. It has a beautiful picture window overlooking the lake. The ice was breaking up and it was really beautiful. Everyone was crowded in there while we were having our dinner. I decided, I'll just tell some stories, that's what I'll do. I was thinking, well this is my hometown, this is my mother's hometown. I was thinking about all the stories of my parent's and our family's past. I had to think fast; I was eating and thinking what am I going to do? I kind of planned part of it but I wasn't sure how the situation was going to be and it was really crowded and there was no room to do anything. So what I did is, I just painted on the window. I painted 'Fucking squaw' really big. The waitress is going, "What the hell is going on here?" I said, "It's okay, its okay. I'll clean it up."

JL: It's art. [laughter]

RB: Nobody did anything, but they were all looking like, "What the heck is she doing?" And I got up and ran outside and went down to the lake. They could see me going out to the lake, and I went to the edge of the water

with the ice and I broke off a chunk of ice. I brought it back into the restaurant and I sat down back at my seat. Then I just started to tell stories about racism based on my memory of my mother's stories and I changed them and altered them to make them more dramatic and what not. I just hung on to this ice until I was shivering and talking and when I finished, I put the ice on the table and I had some Windex and paper towel and I went and I cleaned the window. And that was it.

At first people were nervous, they were giggling, they went, "What the hell is going on here?" but then they got really quiet and got really serious. It was great because I could tell that a lot of them were shy kind of people, and they didn't know me, but they came up afterwards and said, "That was really great." I really like those moments when I can actually come up with something good and make it in a fairly spontaneous way. For me, it's really challenging, but at the same time it's very rewarding if it works. This is what I love about performance.

RB: You get really energized because of the risk factor, don't you?

JL: I hate it. I don't think of myself as a spontaneous kind of artist. It may look that way but it's not, it's all very planned. The more I plan it, I find that I can be somewhat spontaneous. Last night I was thinking a Canadian

audience, they are a little hold-backish, but my audiences are like that in general too. I love having a Native audience because they are right there, they laugh at the right place.

Another time that I had an audience that was like really with it, was an anthropological audience. They were great. They loved certain pieces, like my high-tech war-dance tennis shoe because they got it, they got all the nuances of it. That was kind of funny. But, I was thinking last night — in fact I asked someone about that — why didn't they respond more? It was respect, but it was also that they were hesitant. It's like they have to get permission to laugh at the right places or they laugh and they find that, "Oh, this is uncomfortable, why am I laughing?" That is the whole point of it. A lot of my audiences are like that. Usually when I have a few Natives there, they are cracking up and that gives people permission to laugh. "Well, the Indians are laughing, we can laugh too. Wow, what a relief."

When I script, it's all idealistic. I think foremost about Native people — will they get it? Is this a little too much, a little too arty? I do cross that line because it's idealistic, and there are art things in there that are for artists, but that's another drive, see. I never try to write something for the general audience because then I could not do it. Where do you start? So I write for a Native audience with the idea that they are going to get it. It

isn't about them liking it, it's about them getting it because there are some things that I know make Native people cringe a little bit like, "What's he doing with that pipe. Is he making fun of the pipe?" I know that, but they have to see it in context. There are some risky things there, but that's part of it.

RWH: Have you had conversations with people about stuff like that?

JL: Yeah. In certain situations, but they have been far and few between. I hear about it later. People don't come up and confront me. This one guy did, a full blood.

RB: Oh boy...they are the only ones that...

JL: Yeah. I had opened a beer can on stage. He said, "You should not be doing that because that's a stereotype!" Well, goddamn it, that's what the whole piece was about. I mean there was no calming him down. Then he followed it up with a fax to the president of the college where I work.

RB: Oh, God.

JL: Then he threatened to close down my next exhibit if there was liquor on stage because it's against the ordinances, blah, blah, blah, and I am going, "Lighten up, guy." Then I thought, well, I guess it was successful. I got a rise out of him.

RWH: I know you did a piece, *Rebecca, for Land, Spirit, Power* [Mawu-che-hitoowin: A Gathering of People for Any Purpose] that was about bringing Native women's voices into the gallery, and sometime later I was around when you brought that work back to Thunder Bay and exhibited it.

RB: Well, it's actually interesting how the piece felt totally different in Thunder Bay. I put it in a storefront space and I was the gallerist. I babysat the work every day for two weeks, and it was interesting and disappointing because a lot of the people that I invited from the Native community didn't come to the exhibition. I had a few stragglers come in, but not many. At least I made an attempt to take the work out of the ivory tower and bring it down to street level and invite people to come. There were a lot of people from the non-Native community who came in. The struggle with my own thinking is, who do I mean by community? And so I become very confused myself, or maybe disappointed, that the way I see things is not the way other people see things. That is something I have learned to try to accept. I will do my best, and that is all I can offer. If they don't show up then I don't have to feel bad either. If they don't want to deal with it, then there is nothing you can do about it. But I still think it's a worthwhile thing to

do because it's good for me to try to keep myself honest in some way, on some level, communicating through art.

RWH: I think a lot of people in Native communities already have an idea about what Native art is, and it's not necessarily what either of you do.

JL: When you mentioned community early on, I said, "Which community?" There is the community where I live and there is the Indian Art community. I feel I have, not to answer to that, but that people look to me — not look up to me, but look to me because I am out there. These guys in Santa Fe were telling me, "You know you got that review in Artforum? Hey, that was really great." They made me feel really good because I know what they were talking about. It's like, "You are out there and you're successful and your success means success for us." I kind of laughed. I said, "Yeah, but you guys are making all the money," because they do. They will whip off a painting or two and sell them for these huge amounts, and I'll be knocking my ass off in Toronto, bouncing around a potato in my shorts for Canadian dollars. But you know it's great, because...

RB: The potato feels good... [laughter]

JL: Real good, real good. Makes me feel like a real guy. But, you know, I feel like I have a responsibility there and that feels good. One thing I feel like I am doing in my work, as far as dealing with the community, is teaching that there is another way. Teaching younger artists about things to see, things to talk about, not the standard pink buffalo with plumes and a galloping pony, that there is subject matter there that is very important, but also to think about the presentation of it. I would like to think that Rebecca's and my work and a few other people, it's right there, art-wise as well. It is very important for it to be finished. It is very important how it looks, that it's clean. I was looking at Rebecca's piece from Rhode Island. That was right there artistically. I mean, it's a wonderful piece, and talking about the people in it and the people that were there, that just knocks me out.

Getting critical reviews is important to me because I could pull out all these human-interest stories that have been done about me. In fact, the last two, the one was called "Luna shoots arrows through stereotypes of Indians." That was the name of the article. Isn't that kind of stereotypical? The other one was — I had mentioned to the writer that a big compliment to me was from this Hopi guy who said, "You're a clown." Wow. So I told her that story, and the name of her article was "Send in the Clowns."

Richard William Hill is a writer and curatorial resident, Canadian art, at the Art Gallery of Ontario.



Scene from *Who is Rebecca Belmore and How Old is She?* at the Smith Hill branch of the Providence Public Library, March 2000. Courtesy The Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design.

Sympathetic Magic

SHEILA BUTLER

*Art Gallery of Mississauga, March 2000 and
McLaren Art Centre, Barrie, Ontario, September 2000*

Review by Patrick Mahon

I did not expect to be altogether surprised when I visited Sheila Butler's recent exhibition *Sympathetic Magic*. No doubt my sense of expectation was informed by my long-standing familiarity with Butler's project. I, like many people, know that she has been tenaciously engaged with figurative drawing and painting for more than thirty years. Butler's is a kind of signature work that owes something to historical figuration and something else to strategies informed by montage and cubism. So my thoughts on the prospect of seeing a new exhibition by Butler suggested that I should expect to see something familiar rather than something strange.

I must admit before going any further that my sense of anticipation with respect to Butler's new work was also inhibited by my awareness of the suspect status that drawing and painting has within the current art climate. Clearly many viewers display an obvious lack of enthusiasm about seeing illustrative paintings and drawings, for such works have seemingly set the standard *against* which many contemporary conceptually oriented works are judged. Thus it was with my suspicions in tow that I ventured into Sheila Butler's new exhibition of recent drawings and a selection of paintings that span more than a quarter of a century.

And I was *indeed* surprised.

Butler has chosen to work with a 30 x 22 inch rectangular page as a format for her new series of twenty-two oil drawings, but there is no real surprise in this. Many of her new drawings bear some of the recog-

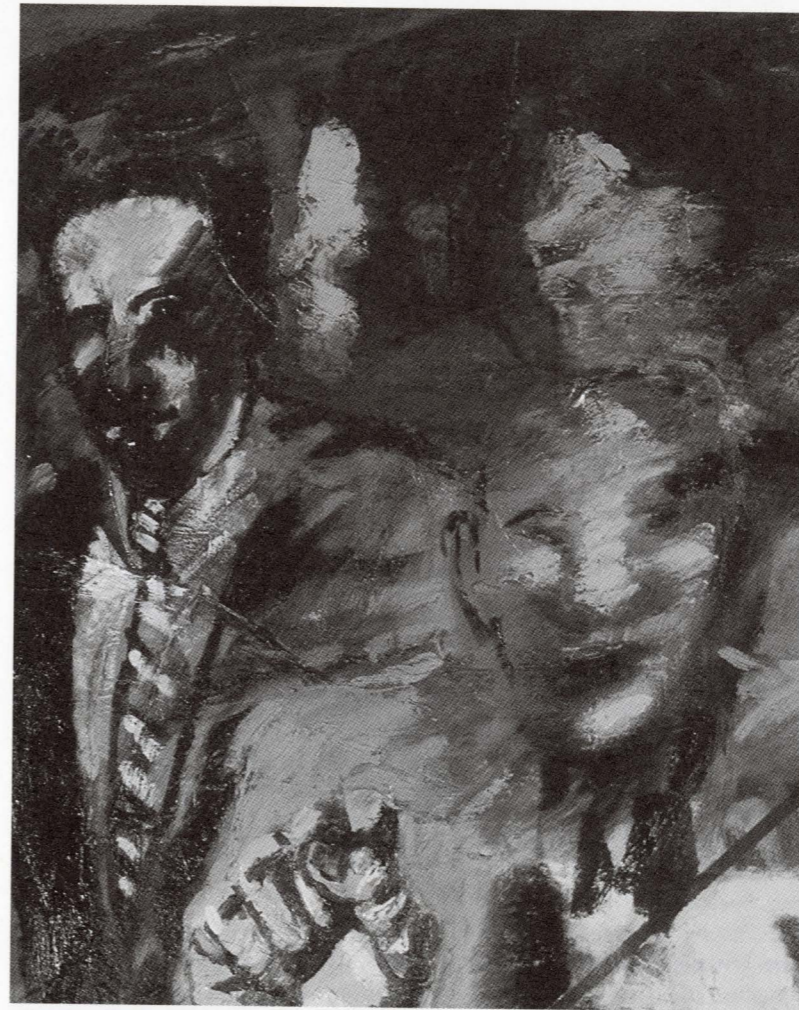


Detail of *Scars Faded*, Sheila Butler, 1999, oil on paper, 76.2cm x 55.88cm. Courtesy Patrick Mahon.

nizable cartoon-classicist sensibilities that we have seen from Butler before. This quality sometimes promotes the uneasy feeling that we are confronting a world caught somewhere between a film noir excerpt and the pages of a hand-illustrated Sears catalogue — though this yields to no "eureka moment" either. What is remarkable about these new drawings is their considerable reach: they have the unmistakable character of a thing that is about to claw itself inside of the person looking at it. So there is something unavoidably stirring here, and more so if

we remind ourselves that these are just made-up pictures after all.

One example of the effect of these drawings occurs with the work *Scars faded on his face, his skin had lost its pigment* (1999). In the drawing, a man lays back on his sick bed, turning slightly away from another man who attends him. The second figure is lost in shadow. As in other works by Sheila Butler, the sick man has been rendered twice: once in a sketchy fashion that simultaneously speaks of a speculative drawing process and produces a



Diptych detail of *You Can Die Today*, Sheila Butler, 1999, oil on canvas, 142.24cm x 172.72cm. Courtesy Patrick Mahon.

ubiquitous *doppelgänger*—and a second time rendered more clearly and forcefully. Taken together with the title, which is a viewing requirement in the case of these works, we see that it is the drawing that has its scars fading and its pigment dissipating. (One of the *figures* is disappearing, and the paper has lost its pigment.) This metonymic quality comes through in other drawings as well, offering a sense of discomfort that surrounds the images that is palpable yet somehow sweet. Is this the kind of ache one feels after a deep loss? Perhaps it is. Clearly the artist understands something very deeply, and eventually the viewer comes to know it too.

Sheila Butler's titles for her new drawings betray a canniness about the unconscious, and about dreams, that reminds us that while these may be merely hand-made pictures they situate themselves

firmly within the arena of psychoanalytic thought. Thus, the occasion to look at a triple-headed one-armed figure as it moves into a muddy grey fog, and to read the title *It felt silently weightless* (1999), successfully invokes the experience of trying to recall a dream in order to interpret it—while trying not to let it disappear into pure language directly. This effect suggests that Butler is presenting us with drawings that can act as lie detectors for the viewer. The artist has produced them with few attempts at editing for "content"; this functions to give the drawings authenticity as *signs*. Thus, they become like tests, questioning our readiness and even our integrity as we undertake our task of looking. "Are you willing to accompany me in this?" they inquire.

It is safe at this point, I think, (without being subject to accusations of "ageism," for

instance), to call Sheila Butler a senior artist. The term, ironically, has lately within the art world come to refer to the particular career strata of a producer rather than to the possibility one has attained a level of seniority in the world, even as they go along being an artist. In the case of Butler, I'm more interested in the latter construction, (though by most measures she has also reached the stage of having a "mature career"). Butler's seniority in the art world is interesting to me because it helps me to understand the frames she peers through while inventing her pictorial worlds. So, in the stunningly complex and richly textured *Bearing in mind you could die today* (1999), we are witness to a space where before and after unite as if the past were an extended tail that keeps curling in upon the present. Here, ghostly figures that appear to have been lifted from old newspaper clippings and then processed by something "garish-making" meld with other bodies that whisper. And paint exists in a balanced way as muck, as scary unidentified matter, and as a lyrical means of illustration. How does one develop the means to produce both the sense of dread and the sense of spiritedness that pervades this painting? I may only wonder.

("Are you willing to accompany me in this?")

With Butler's work in *Sympathetic Magic*, we as viewers are asked to do the work, too. This is a difficult task to demand of art-going audiences who are more often expecting to be introduced to the new, the fresh and the surprising. What's more, contemporary art is not supposed to be preoccupied with aging and death, or made by *old people*, for that matter. Yet with Butler's work, there is the necessarily tangled impression that what is old has become "new again"—even as it remains old, perplexing and deep.

Patrick Mahon is an artist, writer and educator who lives in London, Ontario. His most recent exhibition, "Good Boy", is on display at the Leo Kamen Gallery from June 30 to Sept. 1, 2001. Upcoming projects include a solo exhibition at the London Museum (April 2002), and a Research Residency at the Textile Museum of Canada, (Winter, 2002).

c/o La Ciudad: working in Mexico City

Blackwood Gallery
University of Toronto, Erindale Campus, 14 September – 8 October, 2000
Guest curated by Germaine Koh

Review by Luis Jacob



Sedentario(a)/Sedentary, Galia Eibenschutz, 1996/1999, stool, photograph, manuals. Courtesy of the Blackwood Gallery at University of Toronto at Mississauga.

I have long marveled at how the physical proximity between Mexico and Canada contrasts with the cultural differences between the two countries. The recent exhibition of *c/o Ciudad*, which featured the work of seven Mexico City artists, allowed an opportunity to explore the communicative possibilities of art when it is transplanted from the country of its production to a neighbouring country that culturally may appear to be a world away.

Entering the exhibition space, I was met by Gabriel Kuri's *Untitled (a la brevedad posible / as soon as possible)* (1999), a large rock cast in fiberglass and placed on the floor facing the gallery entrance. On the surface of the rock were carved the words "a la brevedad posible." This colloquialism was transferred from the casualness and transience of everyday conversation to the monumentalism and permanence associated with stone sculpture. Similarly, Kuri's *Untitled (doy té / by my faith)* (1998) was a colloquial expression written upon the surface of a chicharrón cast in fiberglass and placed in

a large vitrine. The everyday origins of the utterance and the fried pork-skin snack were preserved as in a church reliquary, scientific display, or museum exhibition. At issue in both works was the effort to preserve or transfer experience from one realm to another.

Daniel Guzmán's *iQue extraordinario que el mundo exista! / How extraordinary that the world exists!* (1996) consisted of a group of plastic buckets stacked one upon another on the floor to reach the ceiling of Blackwood Gallery's cubic space, forming a very tall column in the room. The artist himself had produced only a single plastic bucket bearing a logo and the work's title in Spanish and English. This was accompanied with photographs of the bucket "in use" (one suspects fictionally) in the streets of Mexico City, and instructions for the exhibiting institution to present the single bucket along with similar but locally found buckets. The work thus entailed an invitation for the exhibition's hosts to visit their own environment in search of the remain-

ing buckets in the installation, and experience anew their own surroundings. The photographs depicted the quotidian intelligence of working-class people utilizing buckets as stools, as parking markers, as storage for things they were not originally intended to hold. The instructional installation induced the work's recipients toward a similar search for new possibilities in their own society's cast-off objects.

The image of search was continued in Jonathan Hernández's *SE BUSCA RECOMPENSA / Seeking Reward* (ongoing since 1998). A series of found photocopied posters announcing the search for lost pets was hung on the wall, randomly in the style of a bulletin board. Since there was almost no possibility that animals lost in Mexico could be discovered in Canada, the work read as a kind of inventory of emotional investment and its expression in contemporary graphic forms of popular communication. *SE BUSCA RECOMPENSA*, like Guzmán's work, was a kind of celebration of everyday creativity. In Hernández's case,

this was a celebration marred by distance: our situation as viewers in another country looking at the posters limits us in our capacity for concern and our ability to help; we become studious instead.

Luis Felipe Ortega's works attempted to bridge the distance between the production site of the work of art and its exhibition destination by an appeal to a shared literacy in contemporary North American and European performance art. His three photographs from the series *Los Cuerpos Dóviles / The Docile Bodies*—depicted the artist marking, with contortions of his body, the arrangement of two planters on a city street. The photographs recalled artworks by Denis Oppenheim, Valie Export and Erwin Wurm; the title of the series recalled the work of philosopher Michel Foucault. What these photographs gained by appealing to the (possibly!) shared knowledge between artist and audience of these artistic and philosophical references, was offset by what they lost: a reference to a purpose or motivation significant outside of the art world.

Galia Eibenschutz's *Sedentario(a) / Sedentary* (1996/1999) suggested to me a similar paradox. A wood and leather stool was placed in the gallery next to a set of photographs. The stool had been fitted by the artist with a strap and plastic buckle set-up to resemble an automobile seat belt. In an instructional manner, the photographs showed how one could strap the stool to

one's waist, comically walk around with the stool attached, and use it to sit while waiting for the bus, or when present at an overcrowded patio. The stool was bound with a rope to the gallery wall, suggesting at once that the stool was intended to be worn, walked with and sat upon—and that the stool was not intended to be taken to the bus stop, or to a patio, but had to remain in the gallery.

There is a long history of the use of the image of "the street" in art as an emblem for ideas about everyday life, and of individual and collective participation in the public realm. While Ortega's and Eibenschutz's works were manifestly interested in behaviour "in the street," this interest was belied by the manner in which the works were presented in the art world (in Ortega's case) and in the gallery (in Eibenschutz's case).

Bar-code Stickers Service was a locally realized version of a project by Mejor Vida Corp. / Better Life Corp. (Minerva Cuevas). The work consisted of a series of bar-code stickers copied from those found in a local supermarket, and available to be taken away by gallery visitors. Mejor Vida Corp. thus provided an opportunity by which the gallery audience could visit the supermarket and, by substituting with "wrong" bar codes taken from the artwork, purchase food items at a reduced cost. In the gallery, booklets printed in English described other Mejor Vida Corp. projects available without

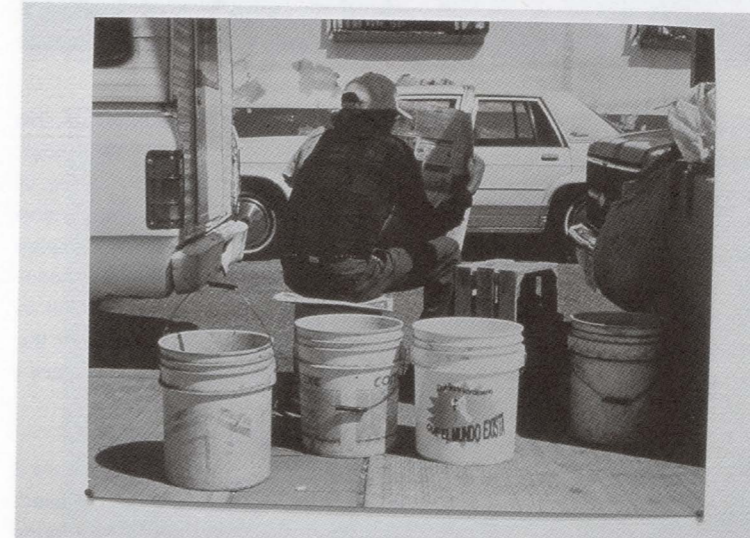
charge worldwide, and merchandise priced in British pounds and US dollars. The corporate and multinational stylization of Mejor Vida Corp. was ridiculed when contrasted with the scale of the Corporation's operations, the do-it-yourself quality of its products, and the mildly subversive character of its projects.

Yoshua Okón's video *Poli I* (1999) was shot during a confrontation between the artist and a policeman, depicting the policeman's face, gestures and words from the camera's point of view, while he shouted and finally assaulted Okón for videotaping him against his will. The work manifested in a visceral and emotional way a dialectical tension between the abusive authority of the police officer, and the intrusive and privileged activity of the artist. The impact of this work stays with me still.

Art that attempts to function internationally is in a strange position. On the one hand, we tend to believe that art is a discursive practice like any other, where its meaningfulness is subject to the literacy of its practitioners. As a result, meaning is understood to depend upon the specificities of historical and cultural context, the audience's education and level of familiarity with art's discursive field. On the other hand, we tend to believe that art is a practice, interesting precisely in its ability to cut across differences, being of relevance to audiences of diverse backgrounds in a variety of shifting contexts.

The idea of art operating across international borders plays between these two polar positions, engaging the mutual connectedness and otherness between the production site of art and its exhibition destinations. *c/o La Ciudad: working in Mexico City* succeeded in showing various possibilities of such engagement between persons in different countries — persons who are members of an art world, both local and international, as well as a broader world, both local and international.

Luis Jacob is a Toronto-based artist and curator. He is the publisher of *Galerie Largeness World of Art*, a publication series of artists' multiples begun in 1996.



Detail of *iQue extraordinario que el mundo exista! (How extraordinary that the world exists!)*, Daniel Guzman, 1996. Courtesy of the Blackwood Gallery at University of Toronto at Mississauga.

Live at the End of the Century

Aspects of Performance Art in Vancouver

edited by Brice Canyon, Visible Arts Society, Vancouver, 2000.

Review by Johanna Householder

"Times'er tough in those days, little Lulu, you kin hardly imagine...."

"Tell me about it, Gram, tell me about the olden days."

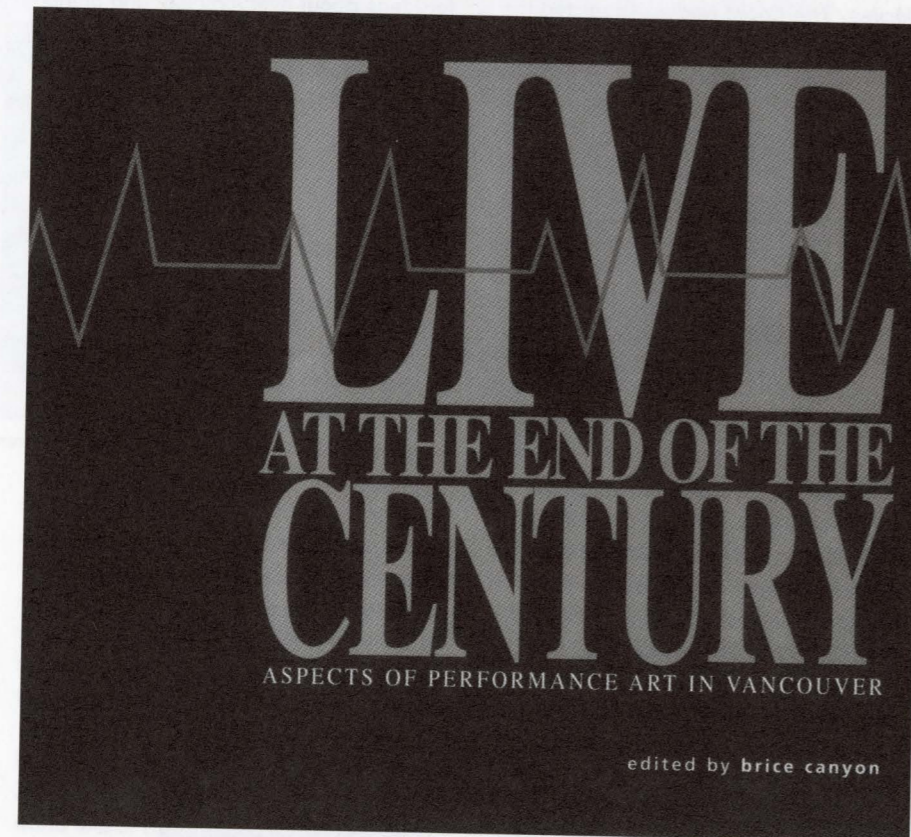
"Wal, when I furs began teachin' performance art there was only one book."

"One book! for all of those artists!"

"That's right missy, and now there's hunnerds. Course mos' of em still don't mention Canadians"

That one book was *Performance by Artists* edited by AA Bronson and Peggy Gale, published in 1979. It was followed shortly after by the proceedings of the Multidisciplinary Aspects of Performance: Postmodernism conference—*Performances Text(els) & Documents*, published in 1981 and edited by Chantal Pontbriand. Then a long intake of breath, and in 1991 the encyclopedic *Performance avin Canada 1970–1990* edited by Alain Martin-Richard and Clive Robertson. That's three books attempting a comprehensive account of four decades of performance art in Canada.¹ Of course there are countless articles, catalogues, monographs and the like, but so very few collections that this one, *Live at the End of the Century: Aspects of Performance Art in Vancouver*, slakes a big thirst.

In her contribution to *Live at the End of the Century*, Judy Radul cites Marvin Carlson, to wit, "Performance by its nature resists conclusion, just as it resists the sort of definitions, boundaries and limits so useful to



traditional academic writing and academic structures."² Just so. Perhaps that explains the absence of literature. In fact, this statement could well be the jacket blurb of the book in which we find it quoted. So performance has only itself to blame for its absence, and I for one am relieved to have it so. For instead of thick theory, we get the artists' eye view and the very readable handbook of a community.

Unlike another recent compendium, the massive *Out of Actions*,³ *Live at the End* is modest in its aspirations, preferring the

personal over the authoritative account, the local over the global. However, this book transcends itself through a rich array of approaches—thirteen articles, each one offering important insights into a complex field. It turns away from "traditional academic writing" and indulges to the hilt in writing by performance artists, about the art they think about all the time—dare I say it—passionately.

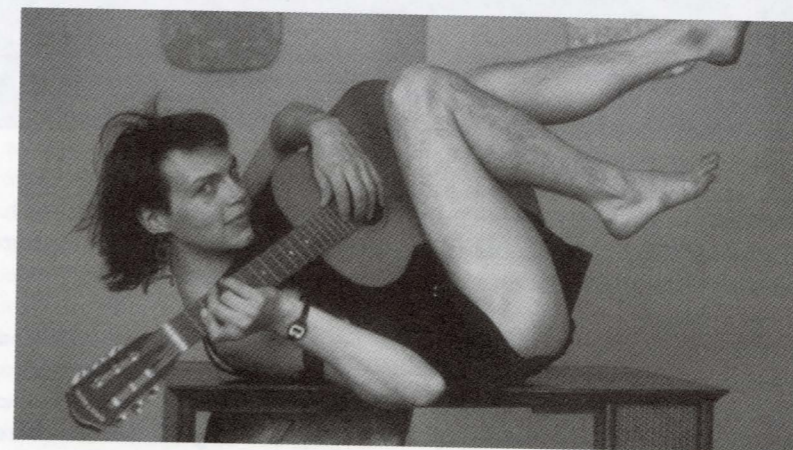
Live at the End is significant not because it is encyclopedic but because it is focused. Certainly the Vancouver scene has many

aspects distinguishing it from other centres—the continuity of the Western Front as a performance presenter, the unflagging involvement of specific artists, and the plethora of persons willing to underscore the performative nature of everyday life by naming themselves as characters in a berserk roman à clef—to name a few. But the specificity of certain trajectories played out in Vancouver ripple outward.

Editor Brice Canyon has gathered topographical and chronological approaches to the subject, "aspects of," as the subtitle says; so we really have two books in this one. The first is an excellent collection of essays, scripts, ruminations, scholarly accounts and personal reflections on performance art. The second is a comprehensive chronology that runs as a sidebar on every page giving an astonishing thirty-five-year record of events interspersed with thumbnail-sized images of performances from 1965 to 1999.

Amongst its treasures are essays on aboriginal performance by Warren Arcan, Aiyana Maracle, and Archer Pechawis. Soaring descriptions of significant performances accompany deeply-felt analysis.

In a poetic text about the dangers of writing true stories, Ivan Coyote centres the collection, reminding us of the repercussions of telling. Coyote begins in the tactile world of handwriting, "My grandmother's letters look like someone has run an iron over them," and leads us to the writers dilemma—history or fiction, "Something is always changed, or lost altogether, in the translation."



Billy Gene Wallace frolicking in Kempton Dexter's *Digby County Pastures*, June 1986. Billy was a Vancouver drag artist who was a founding member of the grunt gallery. Billy also did drag performance art works, mostly at the Lux at Western Front during the 1986 Strategies for Survival Conference Cabaret, and later for the Broken Moose exhibition opening at Unit Pitt Gallery. Billy Gene died in 1989, one of the Vancouver art community's first casualties to the AIDS crisis.

But something is to be found here, too. In this case it is the insistence that performance art is a fabulous hybrid, suffocated by the "Euro-American Neo-Fluxus" (so dubbed by Margaret Dragu) canonical garb. In "Beyond Haute Camp: the interplay of drag and performance in Vancouver," Glenn Alteen makes a vivid chronicle of the hybridization of the art, gay art, gay and performance "communities." In "Performance Art & The Native Artist: an Evolutionary Mix?" Aiyana Maracle describes in loving detail the pivotal moments of silence broken by aboriginal performers. Karen Henry recalls that golden time when artists were playing in the airwaves with expanded performative investigations into slow scan video, live closed circuit performances, radio and cable TV.

The crux of the matter is the assertion made by Alteen and others throughout the book that performance art has many mothers (some of them men in drag) and that the insistence that it is a child only (or even primarily) of visual art limits our understanding. An attenuated European lineage that includes poetry sonore but excludes tap dancing is not the experience described here. The Vancouver scene was/is remarkable in its cross-dressing, cross-pollinating plethorality.

And Warran Arcan speaks to the hybridity of embodiment, "Given: the impression Duchamp left on me... an impression where he and I ("he and I" being provisional concepts, for the sake of this article) are never the same afterwards: a hybrid, a

singularity encompassing heterogeneity.... as I try to account for Marcel's muddied footprint on the floor of my grandmother's house within a cultural silence found only on a certain Indian Reservation—where the silence is a living space, the direct descendent of life before the Reservation."

In between, Judy Radul takes on performance art's arch-nemesis—*theatre*. Stepping off from Fried's 1967 essay "Art and Objecthood" (it was after all his invocation of the demon theatricality that cast its pall over literal art damning the fluids and juices of live art with guilt by association) Radul mulls over the ascendance of theatricality. Meanwhile Paul Wong cuts to the chase with "Various Definitions of Performance Art, Oct. 13, 1999."

Bracketing these candy box contents are highly performative texts by les emminences grises, Glenn Lewis and Tanya Mars. In "Mondo Artie," Lewis takes off on a mad detective skulk through lived Vancouver art history. This hip shooting script starring Sleuth Lips and a cast of VIPs and VIPlaces works a "You are There" magic on all of us who weren't. Gathie Falk, Mr. Peanut, Lady and Dr. Brute, Marcel Idea, Anna Banana and many more of the late and great make sharply observed Ed Sullivan-esque appearances. Ms Mars closes out the collection with an ironic send-up of her own life's work.

I don't think that stuff of this quality comes easily, and it is some of the best writing about performance art I've read. Let's pray we don't wait another decade for the next installment. And for a trip to Vancouver, it beats the red-eye.

Johanna Householder is on the steering committee for the 7a*11d International Festival of Performance Art held biannually in Toronto.

Notes

- 1 I am talking about English publications—there are numerous publications coming out of Quebec especially from Inter/Le Lieu. In his introduction to *Live at the End*, Brice Canyon makes a similar point.
- 2 Carlson, Marvin A., *Performance, a critical introduction*, London: Routledge, 1996.
- 3 Schimmel, Paul, editor, *Out of Actions: between performance and the object, 1949–1979*, New York and London: Thames and Hudson, 1998.

Practice Practise Praxis:

Serial Repetition, Organizational Behaviour, and Strategic Action in Architecture

Edited by Scott Sorli
Published by YYZ Books, Toronto, 2000

Review by Emily Andreae and Janice Andreae

When you study architecture the first thing you do is learn how to draw; the second is how to draft. An individual accomplishes the first task by tracing the expression of an object; the second, by organizing space.

If, as the title of this anthology suggests, *Practice Practise Praxis* is about the practices of architecture, its processes of making, viewing and thinking, it is also about the possibilities generated through critical interplay between these processes.

This text crosses boundaries, considers differences and diversity, and discovers detritus as resource instead of waste product. In the process, these writers and architectural practitioners fundamentally interrogate the meanings of architecture itself.

A diversity of interests and territories of knowledge inform our readings of this text. For us, the unfixing of line, surface and space through practise is as provocative an issue for architectural practice as it is for the process of reading this text.

Which side of the line are you looking at: the void or the space?

This is the third of an ongoing architectural publication project entitled *Span*, initiated in 1992 by students at the University of Toronto's former School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (renamed the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design in 1998) where Scott Sorli and a number of these writers studied.

The editorial of the first *Span* issue called for "a trans-architectural practice where

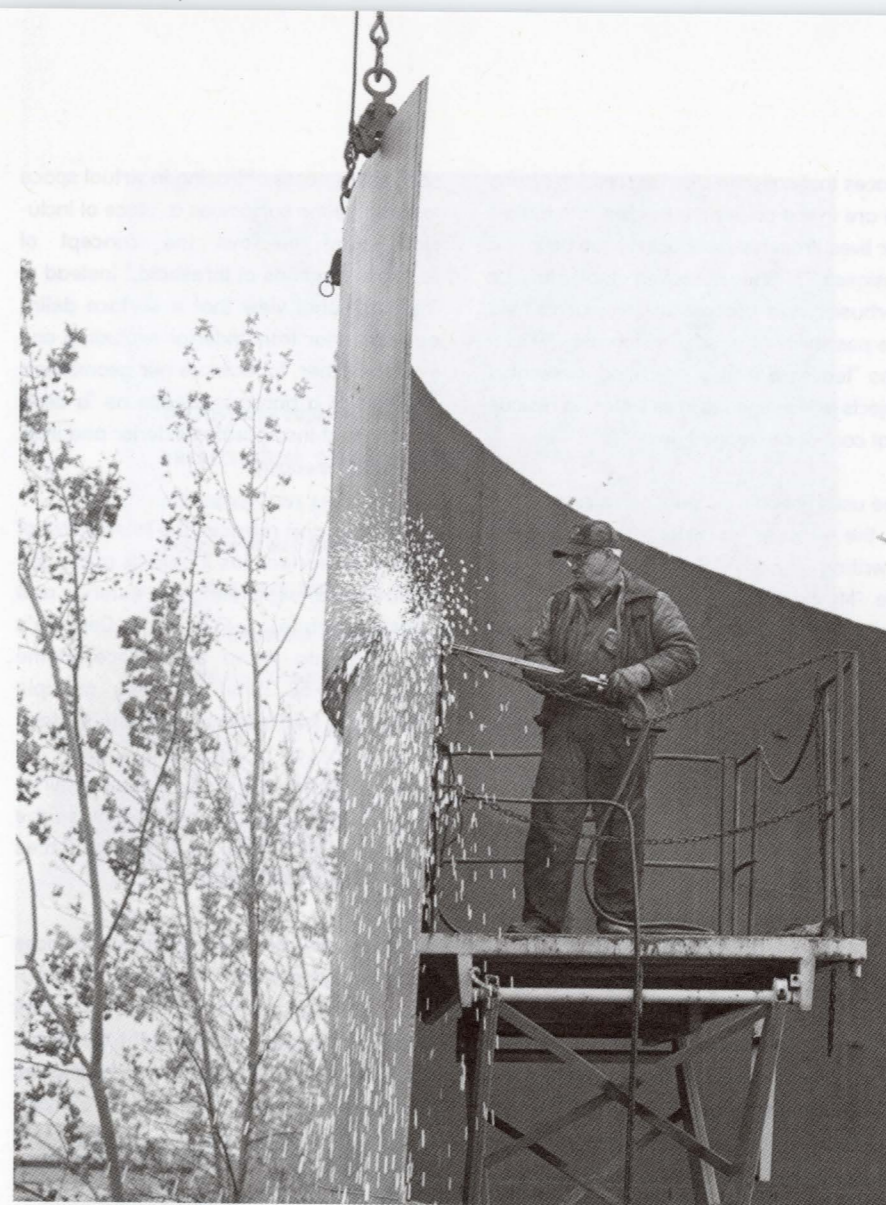


Taken from Peter MacCallum's photo exhibition the *Milnes Fuel Oil Demolition*, Toronto, Ballenford Books, September 21 - October 15, 2000. Courtesy YYZ Books. Photo: Peter MacCallum

there just isn't enough time to create an epoch anymore."¹ Heavily influenced by new media technologies, the heightened social and political consciousness in universities of the early '90s and the destabilizing effects of post-modernist inquiry, *Span*'s writers have consistently advised that the staid traditions underpinning

conventional academic architectural studies are responsible for its current anxious, *dangling*² state.

In this text's opening essay, "1968 and its Aftermath: The Loss of Moral Confidence in Architectural Practice and Education," George Baird argues that the current



Taken from Peter MacCallum's photo exhibition the *Milnes Fuel Oil Demolition*, Toronto, Ballenford Books, September 21 - October 15, 2000. Courtesy YYZ Books. Photo: Peter MacCallum

"l'esprit nerveux" is due to a "clear loss of moral confidence ... inside schools of architecture." He cites key events responsible for this current state of anxiety, including riots at Berkeley and Columbia, as well as the 1968 political arson of the architectural school at Yale. According to Baird, these events were decisive in the demise of modernist architectural practice and architectural education in North America.

He asks, "What possible new theories might be formulated *within education* so as to animate practice usefully?" (emphasis added). The problem, of course, lies in where Baird directs his question. It's an interesting problem because he both practices architecture and educates, at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. Ironically, his statement echoes that from

one of the posters that editor Sorli rescued for his exhibition project "Mouldy Modernism," which sets out the modernist concept that the building is the outward expression of an idea or "new principle." To extend the analogy, ideas of architecture and its praxis first occur within the academy; practice/practise occur outside.

Sorli, on the other hand, employs the halls of learning as a venue for tearing down the boundaries that separate the academy from the everyday practice of working architects. He exhibited "Mouldy Modernism" spontaneously at the SALA gallery at University of Toronto's School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture in 1995.

In the brief text accompanying his photo essay, he describes how he retrieved

fifteen deteriorating panels from a disposal waste area. They had been previously used to convey what he describes as "the optimism and self-assurance" of modern Toronto buildings from the late 1950s, early 1960s. He notes how the "moral confidence" of the vision signified by these images "can still be read through the water stains and the bright red and orange mould that cover a substantial portion of the panels."

As the wasting/growing state of the exhibition panels suggests, such visions are momentary. Their power is limited and, like these physical images, fall prey to the fluctuation of decay and regeneration. He observes that "several of the buildings pictured have been or will soon be demolished, while others have been renovated or altered." This contextualizes Toronto's local expressions of postwar dreams of urban space and form within an inner-city economy of spatial organization and usage concerned with access, exchange and reclamation potential. He claims that viewers/readers of these "mouldy" modernist-proclaiming works respond to their changing signification with a dis/ease suggested by the physical damage that has occurred with the images themselves.

A line can be a surface, a site of exchange.

Other urban sites of dis/ease contain such possibilities of disclosure; for example, the once-active Cherry Street fuel depot of Toronto's port. Peter MacCallum's "Milnes Fuel Oil Demolition" project systematically documents the highly scripted and formulaic process of demolishing fuel storage tanks situated on one of many contaminated "brownfield" properties along Toronto's waterfront. He carefully records the salvaging process undertaken by Mike Zuppan and Wesley Fernandes of these worn markers, oil drums historically preceded by coal piles, of an harbour economy based on the thriving shipping and storage industries of the 1920s, which by the 1970s had finally declined.

Even in the refuse, the remains of the fundamental characteristics of modern architecture are visible: order, geometry,

structure and balance, and it is at the site of such detritus that, as MacCallum's visual study suggests, reclamation and regeneration are possible. His photographic process of description harbours clarity of analysis and respect for traces of human remains. In this way, he invites the reader to reconsider the signification and significance of industrial waste.

*"To live means to leave traces."*³

There is much to discover in another's cast-offs, as any visitor to a lawn sale will tell you, but the process of sorting through layered, decaying fragments of refuse is provocative and sometimes dirty. In "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," Walter Benjamin discusses how living is a process of making traces and leaving them, a point that Melony Ward appropriates for her essay "Cleaning House: Purity, Presence and the New Spirit in Le Corbusier" to investigate how the interconnecting agendas of political, psychoanalytical and aesthetic interests of the post-World War I era effected an urgent need to eliminate such traces and "clean house."

She also notes the significance of tracing as a fundamental procedure of modern architectural practice and how, as early as 1911, Le Corbusier prescribed "a process of tracing and retracing" by drawing directly on photographs of buildings and "outlin[ing] regulating lines, organizing geometry, and distill[ing] purified form."

Referring to Le Corbusier's axiom: "purification is a vital necessity"⁴ she examines the implications of purism as a practice that dictated that drawing was a refining process for discovering pure form and, for example, colour was considered secondary to line, useful for adding to the form. According to Le Corbusier, Ward states that "the essential elements of an object were selected and represented in a rational manner" and "inessential elements" were pruned and discarded.

Le Corbusier advocated cleaning up living environments and excavating these spaces from the detritus of human existence, for, as Ward shows, he was preoccupied with

"traces that sully the clear expression of who we are in the present, a burden that makes our lives [from his perspective] 'too difficult a business.'"⁵ She observes that, for Le Corbusier, this process of elimination held the possibility of a "sane[r] morality,"⁶ but it also "leaves a trail of so-called inessential objects and memories in its wake... a residue that cannot be cleaned away."

She uses Freud's account of his exploration of the process of writing, erasing, and rewriting in his 1925 essay "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'"⁷ to address Le Corbusier's ideas of reduction and refinement. "The surface compounds layer after layer of meaning, leaving an inscrutable mass of traces in its wake. The many-layered representation of the process shows that the inessentials of experience or memories of past events continue to persist," she observes, suggesting the possibilities for reading/viewing that such accumulations of tracings offer.

A surface can be a site of reciprocity.

In the text accompanying her visual essay "The Occupation of the Surface: Time-Sections," Judith Geher describes how she

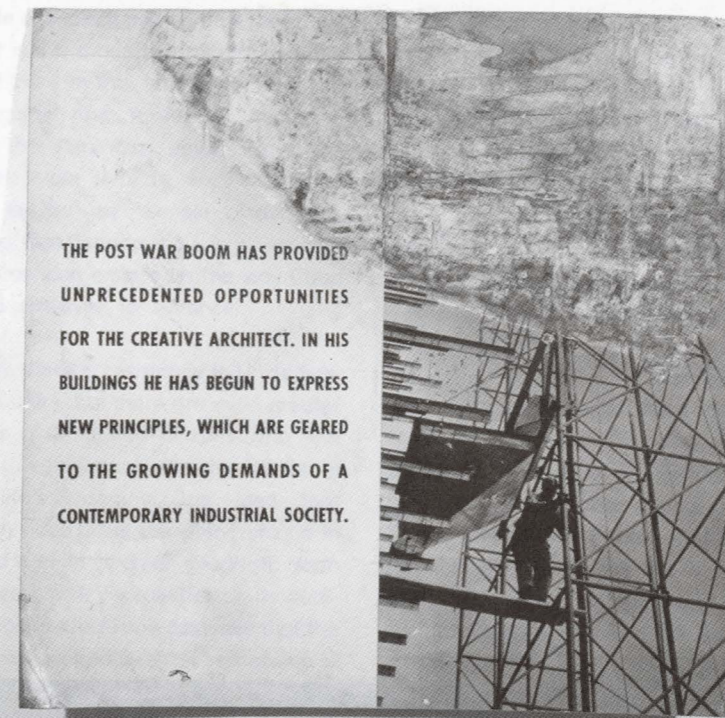
used the process of tracing in virtual space to examine the surface as a "place of inclusion." She employs the concept of "extended notions of threshold," instead of the traditional view that a surface delineates interior from exterior excluding one from the other, to facilitate her geometrical analysis of a baroque facade as "a deep surface that incorporates exterior and interior simultaneously."

She traces and retraces the lateral flow of the virtual surface (as it unfolds at the site of threshold) separating the exterior and interior facade of Pietro da Cortona's chapel Santa Maria della Pace, Rome circa 1656-58. She collapses multiple sections of her tracings onto the surface of a piece of photographic paper. By making numerous exposures (using thirty-second time sections), she examines the interaction of interior and exterior forces that inform that space.

What results are photographic surfaces occupied by the visible remains of her cumulative tracing process. These fluid codes signify fields of surface tension, and recall the rich accumulation of lines and marks left in the waxy surface of Freud's "mystic



Mouldy Modernism, curated by Scott Sorli and exhibited at the SALA Gallery, University of Toronto, School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, in 1995. Courtesy: Scott Sorli



Mouldy Modernism, curated by Scott Sorli and exhibited at the SALA Gallery, University of Toronto, School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, in 1995. Courtesy: Scott Sorli

THE POST WAR BOOM HAS PROVIDED UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CREATIVE ARCHITECT. IN HIS BUILDINGS HE HAS BEGUN TO EXPRESS NEW PRINCIPLES, WHICH ARE GEARED TO THE GROWING DEMANDS OF A CONTEMPORARY INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY.

writing-pad." As Geher points out, these surfaces are informative for the architectural practice of making space, for they suggest that a surface can be examined as fluid and relational instead of as a fixed boundary.

In "Conditioning Infrastructure," Keller Easterling examines the intervention work of postwar regional planner Brenton MacKaye. MacKaye read the landscape as relational: as "the measure and outcome of activity — as the circuitry of the environment," rejecting the modernist tenets of his day. As early as 1921, his conception of the Appalachian Trail challenged contemporary legislated templates of community development in the eastern seaboard.

Conceived as an invisible footpath infrastructure organized by the geological formations of the Appalachian Ridge, not around metropolitan formations, the trail could redistribute people into an infrastructure of communities connected, as Easterling states, not by an organizational model of "vehicular filtering out to pedestrian, but rather a footpath filtering out to streets and rails."

Here Easterling's insight of "a curious parallel between electronic networks and automobile infrastructure" is instrumental for her analysis of MacKaye's view of the "landscape of development," which he theorized as an "industrial wilderness" that could be read for "its recording of change" for its "cross-references" of activities and movements, a landscape of "cultural and personal mnemonic[s]."

Surfaces are sights/sites for discovery.

Benjamin noted how evidence of an occupant's existence remains in private spaces: traces or clues that act to establish a narrative of the relations that link a person to a site. MacKaye, Easterling tells us, shared this view, seeing the process of planning a site as exploration. He believed the architect discovers signifiers of cultural and personal space that suggest possible material reorganization and re-structuring, and as Easterling observes, "rearrangements of function within a place."

Such an open-ended process of viewing, discovering and planning the landscape is

difficult, complex and highly subjective — and it poses difficulties for design practice, as Gordon Brent Ingram describes in "(On the Beach) Practising Queerscape Architecture." In the corporeal, cognitive and virtual processes of tracing and re-tracing the human activities, movements and geological formations of the queerscape of Vancouver's Wreck Beach lie multiplex possibilities for designing safe and accessible personal/public (queer) spaces.

His work makes evident that that process is neither reductive nor conclusive. As Easterling says of the Mississippi River; it "still overflows its boundaries." Significantly, Ingram, along with the other contributors to this volume, requires the landscape architect to generate design ideas at the sight/site of practice: "to animate" architectural praxis through practise.

Emily Andrae graduated from the University of Toronto Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design in 1999 and is currently interning at a landscape architecture urban design firm in Toronto.

Janice Andrae is a Toronto visual artist and writer whose interests are contemporary textual and visual art practices.

Notes

- 1 See "L'Esprit Nerveux" in Span 1, 1992, p.9.
- 2 "In the words of McLuhan, 'we've been left d-a-n-g-e-r-i-n-g.'" A description of this state of "l'esprit nerveux" from the first editorial of Span.
- 3 Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," Reflections. (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), p.155.
- 4 Ward refers to Le Corbusier's text Journey to the East, edited and translated by Ivan Zaknic. (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1987), p.171.
- 5 Ward cites Le Corbusier's claim in his text Towards a New Architecture, trans. Frederick Etchells (London: The Architectural Press, 1946), p.70.
- 6 Ibid., p.147.
- 7 Ward refers to Sigmund Freud's account of his exploration of the process of writing, erasing and rewriting on the cellophane surface of a mystic writing-pad. When the cellophane is lifted from the waxy surface beneath to erase its surface, traces of what has been previously written (or drawn) remain indefinitely. She makes the following parallels: "Like the conscious mind, the cellophane holds information for a limited time. Like the unconscious, the wax tablet below is inscribed with traces of what was formerly experienced as present in consciousness." In order to show a fundamental difference in Freud's and Le Corbusier's ways of thinking about the process of tracing and its implications, she states, "For Le Corbusier, tracing helps rid the mind of traces of the past. For Freud, the process of tracing or drawing creates traces of the past which cannot be erased." See Freud's account in "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad,'" in Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis, trans. James Strachey, ed. James Strachey and Angela Richards (London: Penguin Books, 1984), pp.427-34.

Magnetic North

(Experimental Canadian Video)

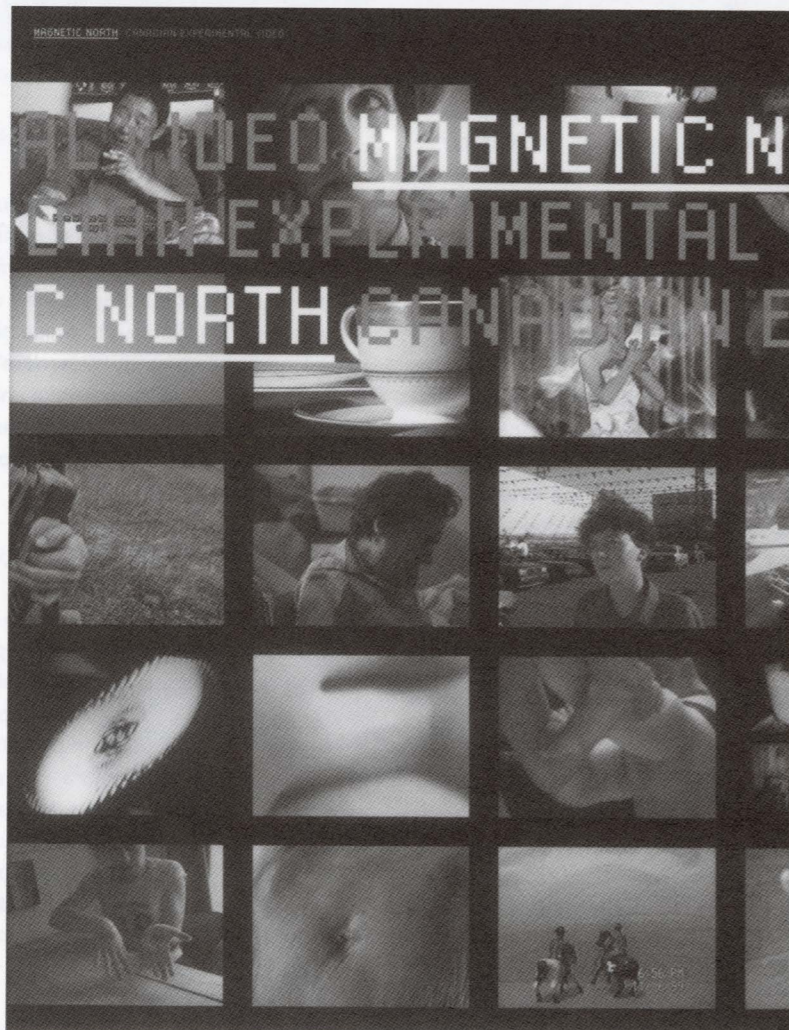
Edited by Jenny Lion
 Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001
 in association with the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and Video Pool Inc., Winnipeg

Review by John McCullough

In a popular and iconoclastic passage from the "Theses on the Philosophy of History" Walter Benjamin tells us that every artifact of civilization is simultaneously a story of barbarism. He also argues that historical materialists should be horrified by this. Beyond the pitched melodramatic tones of this pronouncement, and considering the author was influenced by a strain of European apocalyptic criticism, there is a fundamental truth in Benjamin's claims. He clarifies his point considerably when he argues that "whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day in the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate."

"According to traditional practice," he continues, "the spoils are carried along in the procession."¹ It follows that one should be particularly cautious when approaching the artifacts of national culture and most specifically those European-derived canons of high culture that are understood to be the efflorescence of progressive civilization. In this light, Canadian national culture has to be approached with suspicion as it is thoroughly wound within the fabric of the state's history of genocide and repression.

But what is one to make of American celebrations of Canadian cultural achievements? This is what *Magnetic North* is: an American book and video programme that champions Canadian video art. Is this just



one state capitalism patting another on the back; or is this a nod to a resistant culture north of the 49th that has fought the good fight against the Yankees? Ultimately, folding the American empire and the Canadian state into an undifferentiated whole seems as simple-minded as assuming that Canada is a feisty opponent of the American empire (in the way Cuba might be perceived, for instance).

No doubt, there is resistance to Uncle Sam in this country, but there are even greater numbers of Canadian citizens who find comfort in compliance with the US. All of this militates against the idea that Canadian video art is something unique in the world and, to its credit, *Magnetic North* never forces that perspective on its audiences. Nonetheless, one assumes that the project was inspired by some recognition of difference or alterity even if that is restricted to the attempt to address the lack of exposure of Canuck art south of the border. In fact, in an effort to correct this underexposure, curator and editor Jenny Lion wanted to "export experimental Canadian art video to the United States and beyond, and to facilitate significant critical dialogue about the work by artists and critics from both sides of the border."

Lion lives and works in St. Paul, Minnesota, so it is curious that she understands herself to be exporting Canadian art as she is, more precisely, working as an importer. But maybe this slippage is simply symptomatic of the blurriness of boundaries and identities in the age of global mobility. Maybe we should think of her as an importer/exporter of cultural artifacts. That she has chosen to curate Canadian video art may suggest something about a current fetishization of marginal culture, difference and cultural exchange within granting agencies, publishing houses and the cultural world generally. It may also simply reflect the current monetary exchange rate that favours US-based importers/exporters who can buy cheap and sell high.

As for other differences that are highlighted during the course of the book, the most significant is the existence in Canada of

what Lion calls "an extraordinary breed of institution: the 'artist-run centre.'" Though none of the contributors choose to seriously pursue critical analysis of these institutions, one could argue that the Canadian state's support of video art has usefully bolstered an innocuous but palatable (to most tastes) system of production and consumption, which mediates between (and regulates) well-intentioned artistic expression and nationalist rhetoric.

Lion's appreciation of these centres is typical of Americans who regularly lament the lack of state-supported cultural, social, political, educational and medical institutions in their home nation. A little history would help them realize that it was their own New Dealism that inspired the welfare state in Canada and that the reactionary moves to eradicate the vestiges of social democracy in America have not only impoverished American lives but have essentially set the table for attacks on state support in Canada. Unfortunately, this is not a book about history (which Lion readily and often acknowledges) so much as it is a survey of contemporary critical and aesthetic trends and debates in video culture.

As such, most of the written pieces tend to be superficial overviews of the videos in the show. There are six essays including Lion's introduction and fifteen short "responses" to some of the videos. Additionally, there are two conversations included, both of which are useful expansions of important themes in cultural production. In one of them, Puhipau (a Hawaii-based video producer) and Zack Kunuk have a conversation about First Nations' identity and video activism. In the other, which has moments of real clarity, Carrie Mae Weems and Sherry Millner (both American artists) re-evaluate the role of the body in feminist video, setting in motion subtle challenges to the received historiography of the early years of the art form.

As for the six essays, they are uniformly unremarkable. Peggy Gale's "other videoscape" (other to what?) is a version of her well-rehearsed affirmative historical overview, which has previously appeared in print (most notably in the collection

Mirror Machine: Video and Identity edited by Janine Marchessault). This essay could have served as an introduction, however, situated as a concluding statement, there is an implication that all that needs to be said about video art in Canada is pretty much covered in the book. So there is really very little opening for critical discussion of Canadian video aesthetics or politics let alone recognition of truly alternative video work which might include discussion of groups like the Toronto Video Activist Collective, to name only one example. Typically, the major essays are reifications of themes developed in Gale's essay and any really new or challenging commentary is relegated to the brief "responses." Of these, both George Lipsitz and Gary Kibbens make class-based interventions in their comments on *Continuons Le Combat* and *Good Afternoon Royal Tower*, respectively, and trombonist/composer George Lewis contributes a precise evaluation of Stan Douglas' *Television Spots*, which remarkably pulls together the Krokors, John Fiske, Sam Greenlee, Joan Logue, Nazi radio and Foucault (wow!).

When Americans start celebrating Canada's video art one has to wonder if this isn't just another process of cultural imperialism. This is especially the case when the package is so pretty (and there is no denying that design has a featured place in this book). In a way, the design is the decoy for the cultural theft. It is worth remembering that every time American imperialists turn appreciatively toward the North, the next thing you know is that what was once ours is now theirs or simply extinguished. Is Canadian video art to follow in the path of clean air and water, social democracy, medicare, "SCTV," basketball, hockey, salmon, lumber, Peter Jennings, Canadarm, Norman Jewison, Alanis Morissette, Pam Anderson and Lorne Greene? History should teach us that this has already likely happened.

John McCullough lives and works in Toronto. He is a contract teacher in the film and video department of York University.

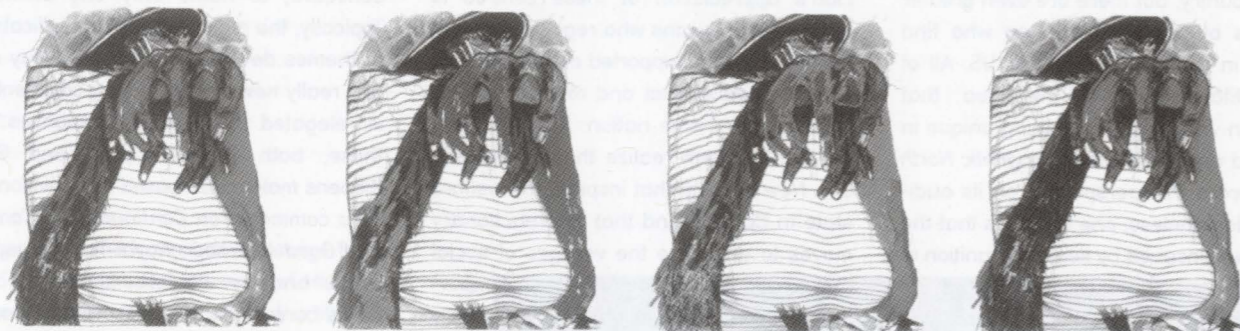
NOTES

¹ Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn and edited by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), p.256.

A Bum Deal

The Starving Artist Paradigm

by Julie Fiala



SPARE SOME CHANGE. Change is what the canadian artist needs MOST.

Spare Some Change, Julie Fiala, 2001, silkscreen/digital print, 30.25 cm x 45 cm. Courtesy Julie Fiala.

I've always been a bum lover. The mere sight of Mr or Ms Penniless stabs me right in the gut. Sometimes it's those pleading eyes that win over my sympathy. Other times, their relentless mutter seduces me — like bait to a fish. No matter what draws me to these needy *fellas*, something — something always — lures me in.

Jiggling their right hand, up then down, up and down, they mumble, "spare some change," *reluctantly*, "spare some change," *under*, "spare some change," *their breath*. Every time, I toss at least a quarter into that empty palm in exchange for a smile. Then, and only then, can I "guiltlessly" cross the tollgate.

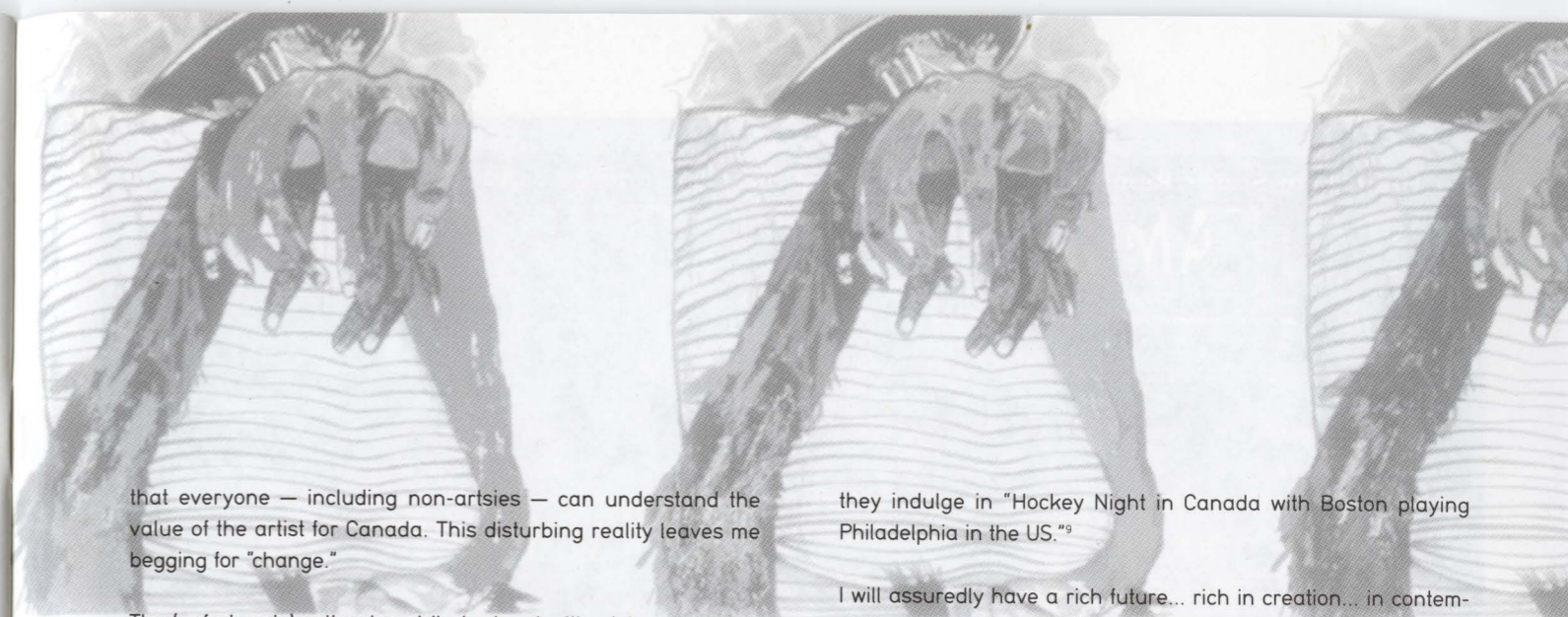
It has always been too easy for me to sympathize with those unfortunate bums. And for the longest time, I just didn't get it. Again and again, I continue to give: a quarter here... another quarter there... a dollar to the left... twelve-fifty to the right... twelve-fifty?! When I opened my wallet this time, I remember shamefully admitting: "When I graduate from art school and begin my "happy" career as a *starving artist*, I pray that you or someone else will be there to return the favour."

Finally, it dawned on me. Sympathy? This is not sympathy at all. Empathy had stabbed me right in the gut. The future scares me. I am appalled that though many have recognized that Canada's visual artists fulfill such a prominent role in engineering Canadian

culture,¹ the artist continues to receive little in return. What scares me even more is that ironically, I still want to be a visual artist.²

Of course I do realize that the term "bum" is demeaning in every which way. However, what is equally humiliating is the Canadian artist's financial reality; *s/he* is wrongly perceived as a moocher and pigeonholed in much the same manner as the homeless, by the too-quick-to-condemn who blurt out over-simplified generalizations. (The solution is just never quite as straightforward as: "Get off your ass and find a job, you lazy bum!")

What do visual artists really mean to Canada? When I stumbled on Statistics Canada's startling figures, my apprehensions about my future were confirmed. \$12,633. Five bold digits stamped on my mind. On average, visual artists such as painters and sculptors "rake" in a bitter \$12,633 annually, which situates them well below the total labour force average income of \$26,474.³ Now who's to blame? I don't intend to point fingers at anyone. What shocks me even more is that within the whole of government expenditures on culture, only 0.9 percent of funding is budgeted toward the visual art and crafts sector.⁴ Crossing my fingers while I hope for increased (or redistributed?) government funding might be a little too idealistic. I can just imagine Jean Chrétien entering *my* living room, convincingly exclaiming, "Here are your tax dollars!" while he refers to one of my very own paintings. Let's be real. Most taxpayers would never stand for that. It's futile to think



that everyone — including non-arties — can understand the value of the artist for Canada. This disturbing reality leaves me begging for "change."

The (unfortunate) cultural contributor has legitimately earned this right to both reform, and remuneration, through commitment and hard work. The Appelbaum-Hébert Report (1982) supports this claim in stating that "...the largest subsidy to the cultural life of Canada comes from not the government, corporations or other patrons, but from the artists themselves, through their *unpaid or underpaid labour*"⁵ (emphasis added).

And of course, the visual artist's meager salary is then minced up by a tax department that demands its share. Last September, the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) proposed a tax exemption for "creative" income of up to \$30,000 — an exemption based on artistry as copyright.⁶ I applaud those who understand the need to reform and firmly believe that such changes would show sincere government support toward the visual artist.

Even the Canada Council almost seems to have forgotten about the individual artist.⁷ When I called Revenue Canada to track down the outcome of the CCA's proposal, the information agent bluntly explained: "What are you talking about, artists pay taxes just like everyone else." Such a simple answer only further perpetuates such blasé indifference toward artists in Canada. Did he even know what the CCA was?

Regardless, I cannot imagine that the government will implement this policy (or any other one that favours individual artists), with *facileness*, when it has not been eager to listen in the past.⁸ Within the Canadian creative context, it is paradoxical that the starving artist still keeps slapping canvas and chiseling maple. But wouldn't it be absolutely moronic if the government changed it's scrooge-like ways when artists have worked almost gratis in the past?

Unpaid or underpaid, I will be an artist. I smirk when I'm ignorantly asked: "So you'll produce crafts alongside which "real" profession?" "Government-desk-job-art-as-a-hobby-I-call-myself-an-artist" might seem like an acceptable title for some. But I will not yield my passion. When a so-called "artist" accepts such a choice they compromise their passion and handcuffs themselves to a desk. And then these same Canadians ask: "Where the heck can I find Canadian culture?" And eyes adhered to the TV set,

they indulge in "Hockey Night in Canada with Boston playing Philadelphia in the US."⁹

I will assuredly have a rich future... rich in creation... in contemplation... in self-exploration...in ideation... Evidently, such intangible "tions" are "merely" those riches of the mind, "merely" within a social structure where artistry isn't always marketable. Then why is it that everyday (and despite what I know and what I fear most). I continue to tell myself, again and again, "I should be an artist," reluctantly, "I must be an artist," under, "I will be an artist," my breath.

This is my personal anthem.

This article is part of an ongoing intervention entitled Spare Some Change. The text is concealed within a folded paper tea cup and revealed only when unfolded.

Julie Fiala produced a limited edition of tea cup multiples to raise funds for the Kingston Youth Shelter Project. She is currently completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Queen's University, Canada. Please direct all comments or inquiries to juliefiala@hotmail.com.

Notes

- 1 I am referring namely to the Massey Commission Report (1949-51), it's outgrown the Canada Council (CC), and the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA). However, such acknowledgements do not automatically infer funds, though remuneration is essentially what the artist needs most.
- 2 What I am geared toward is as much discussing the starving artist paradigm, as my hypocrisy in stating that yes, I will be an artist despite financial drawbacks, I am well aware that I mutter from opposites sides of the mouth. At once, I damn the lack of support and yet (with this yes), I accept it. However, if I chose to ignore my aspirations, I suffer an even greater loss. Damned in you do, damned if you don't.
- 3 Compiled by Statistics Canada, these figures also include part time, seasonal and self-employed workers. See Average Employment Income of Artists by Occupation (Table), Census, 1996.
- 4 I have calculated these figures from those compiled by Statistics Canada. For a complete breakdown, see Government Expenditures by Function and Level and Government, (table), Census data, 1996-97. The visual arts and crafts sector receives the third-least amount of funding, situated just above sound recording and multiculturalism.
- 5 This report is quoted in Seeking Out the Creators-Equitable Taxation Treatment for Canada's Artists and Creators. Online at <http://www.ffa.ualgary.ca/cca/budgt00.htm>.
- 6 For a discussion of the Canadian Conference of Arts past and present goals see Seeking Out The Creators-Equitable Taxation Treatment for Canadian Artists and Creators. Online at <http://www.ffa.ualgary.ca/cca/budgt00.htm>.
- 7 Canada Council's website indicates that only 18.5 percent of total grants is allocated to individual artists. It goes without saying that only a small fraction of this is allocated to visual artists. See Canada Council's website at <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/council/annual-reports/1999-2000/cp1-etx.asp>.
- 8 This is not the CCA's first cry for reform. As explained online, their "recommendations have usually fallen on deaf ears." See Seeking Out the Creators-Equitable Taxation Treatment for Canada's Artists and Creators. Online at <http://www.ffa.ualgary.ca/cca/budgt00.htm>.
- 9 Susan Crean, *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?* Don Mills: General Publishing, 1976, p.8. I realize the topic of the American monster is a whole other ball game, however I believe such an analogy proves that we need someone (artists?) to resuscitate the "dying."

Hindi Film Songs Remixes Bhangra Chutney Soca Reggae R&B House Disco Drum n Bass

FUNK ASIA
is moving on out to the
B-SIDE
129 Peter Street (above Fez Batik)
JULY 7, 2001

DJ ZAHRA
spinning...

"South Asian sounds...a skirl of drumbeats, a downpour of sitar, a thrill of hindi."
- *The Toronto Star*

FunkAsia celebrates its 3rd successful year of Desi vibes in a dance space...
...the first Saturday of every month.

Upcoming Dates
July 7, August 4, September 1
info 416.204.9660
tune into Masala Mixx on 88.1fm every Saturday from 4-6pm for details

Hindi Film Songs Remixes Bhangra Chutney Soca Reggae R&B House Disco Drum n Bass

July 3 – August 10, 2001:

The Last Sensei:
The Odd Obsessions of Japanese Master

CINEMATHEQUE
ONTARIO
A DIVISION OF THE TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL GROUP

Kon Ichikawa
23 Films! Many new 35mm prints!
Sponsored by The Japan Foundation
Accompanied by a 450 page publication.

 The Japan Foundation

"The director, Kon Ichikawa, and the writer, his wife Natto Wada, are among the foremost screen artists of Japan"
- Pauline Kael

"One of Japan's greatest directors"
- Yukio Mishima

With
HARP OF BURMA
FIRES ON THE PLAIN
KAGI
PUNISHMENT ROOM
AN ACTOR'S REVENGE
TOKYO OLYMPIAD
THE WOMAN WHO TOUCHED LEGS
TEN DARK WOMEN
and
THE MAKIOKA SISTERS

Cinematheque Ontario thanks its Cinema Ten Sponsors:
Astral Media, Bell Canada, Cineplex Odeon Corporation, Goodman and Carr, Herzig Eye Institute, In Style and TFO.

\$8 Non-Members; \$4.80 Members; \$4.25 Student Members and Seniors.

Cinematheque Ontario screenings are held at the Art Gallery of Ontario's Jackman Hall, 317 Dundas St. West, Toronto.

All screenings are restricted to individuals 18 years of age or older, unless otherwise noted. For more information, call the Bell Infoline, 416-968-FILM, or visit the Official Website: www.bell.ca/filmfest.

THE TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL GROUP IS A CHARITABLE, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEVOTED TO CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN FILM AND THE MOVING IMAGE.

 **Bell**
TELECOMMUNICATIONS PARTNER

 **CFMT**
OFFICIAL MEDIA PARTNER

For more information visit the Official Website or call:
Bell info 968-FILM
www.bell.ca/filmfest

westqueenwest

- 1 **SOF ART HOUSE Inc.** *688 Richmond Street W.*
- 2 Stephen Bulger Gallery *700 Queen Street W.*
- 3 **Archive Inc.**
Gallery & Art Library *883 Queen Street W.*
- 4 S. P. I. N. Gallery *156 - 158 Bathurst St.*
- 5 **Angell Gallery** *890 Queen Street W.*
- 6 Zsa Zsa *962 Queen Street W.*
- 7 **Propeller Centre**
for the Visual Arts *984 Queen Street W.*
- 8 LEE fotogallery *993 Queen Street W.*
- 9 **A.W.O.L. GALLERY** *78 Ossington Avenue*
- 10 Dubwise *13 Ossington Avenue*
- 11 **DeLeon White Gallery** *1096 Queen Street W.*
- 12 Mercer Union
A Centre for Contemporary Art *37 Lisgar Street*
- 13 **64 Steps**
Contemporary Art *1164 Queen Street W.*
- 14 Loop Gallery *1174 Queen Street W.*
- 15 **Woolfitt's Gallery** *1153 Queen Street W.*
- 16 West Wing Art Space *1267 Queen Street W.*
- 17 **Pygmalion and Galetea** *1273 Queen Street W.*
- 18 V. MacDonnell Gallery *1340 Queen Street W.*
- 19 **Gallery 1313** *1313 Queen Street W.*
- 20 CIRCA gallery *1506 Queen Street W.*
- 21 **Toronto Artscape**
Affordable Living Space for Artists *900 Queen Street W.*
- 22 Visual Arts Ontario *1153A Queen Street W.*

westqueenwest

