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FUSE

MAGAZINE

25th
Anniversary
Issue

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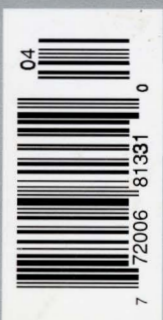
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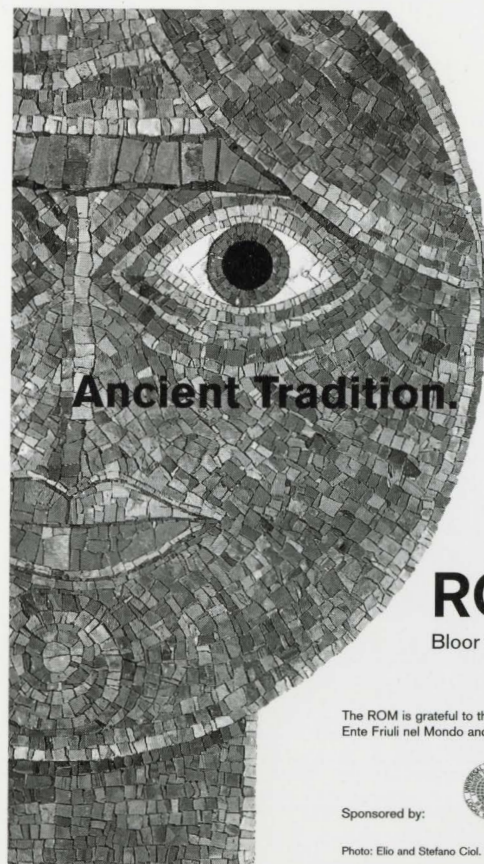
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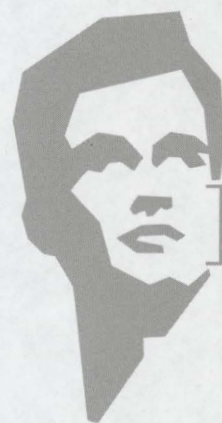
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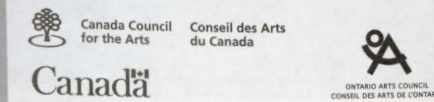
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THE

FUTURE

IS

Resisting the impulse to simply stroll down memory lane — to congratulate, archive and reflect on the past — we decided that the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of FUSE required a good dose of what is to come. Responding to structural shifts at the magazine, feedback from writers and readers and a some-time reputation for being pessimistic and cynical about our present cultural environment, we thought it an important time to address the great unknown space of contested hopes and fears: this issue of Fuse is dedicated to the future.

Our call went out to everyone from the founders of Fuse, to past contributors and to the community at large. We invited blatant optimism, or, if unavailable, glimmers of hope, suggestions, calls to action and futuristic visions. Our secret ambition: to use the thematic, issues and desires reflected in these submissions to develop future, hopeful directions for the magazine.

The responses were made up of a broad array of manifestos, markings, proposals, questions and, of course, rants. Overwhelmingly, what we encountered was a very ambivalent future. Our call for optimism was neither answered with complete debilitation nor unabashed, utopian fantasies. Rather, our contributors approached the act of stepping forward with trepidation, with combined visions of hope and paralysis, of disappointment and optimism, but also with an underlying will to produce. In the wake of exhausting exploitations, horrific monopolizations, untruths, closures of

discourse and widespread conservatism, there is still the will to forge ahead, to try to motivate change and to get on with the work that is to be done. As Robin Pacific reminds us by quoting Romain Rolland in her essay, what is called for and indeed what seems present in this issue, is "the pessimism of the intellect, the optimism of the will ..."

It is on the hinge of this ambivalence, this place between so called pessimism and hoped for optimism, this future where much is at stake, that we at FUSE would like to insert our own possibility—the possibility of criticism as proposition. We view our magazine as a space for this proposition—a proposition that lies equally in the acts of reading, writing and contributing, a proposition that is an offer, and one that hopes for some response. We offer our pages as places where argument is motivated and produced. We invite unfinished business and encourage writers, producers and readers to open up our texts to debate, and dissent. We ask you to consider with us what criticism can mean. Our hope is for fuse, and other sites of discourse, to become active, mobilized social spaces.

Toward this goal of inciting some reinvigorated response, we will develop a number of thematic questions in future Fuse issues. These issues enter the magazine as renegotiations of familiar political problematics: Class, Citizenships, Democracies and Participation, and negotiations of the ethics of producing and viewing art in contemporary time. We look forward to a future full of engaged response to the propositions held within the pages of FUSE.

— the editorial committee

editorial
25.4

ALL RIGHT

Art for Glob

by Richard Fung

They say to themselves,
"Let's go spend the weekend in Québec
City, we'll have fun, we'll protest and
blah, blah, blah."

—Jean Chrétien, *Le Devoir* (14 April 2001)

The future is capricious. It is stingy with its secrets. How many doomsday prophets have been left looking foolish on the day of the foretold apocalypse? I'm not advocating a move to Arizona or ordering any Kool-Aid. Still, the symptoms are pretty clear and I'll take a chance at saying that the earth's prognosis doesn't look too good. A noxious cocktail of militarism and corporate greed stirred with doses of political opportunism and sundry ideological fundamentalisms seems sure to kill off the planet — unless some potent medicine comes along to neutralize the poison.

What we call corporate globalization didn't come from nowhere; we've had over 500 years of colonialism and imperialism. But the system's being distilled and there are crucial changes. Unlike classic colonialism, which

saw workers in the "metropolitan" countries benefit from the exploitation of the Third World colonies, in this new phase the desperation of Third World conditions is being used to pull the rug from under the First World working poor. And the ranks of the First World working poor are increasingly filled by Third World folks: check out the demographics of any low-wage picket line in Montreal, Winnipeg or Toronto — and these are the folks lucky enough to belong to a union. "Liberalize the economy," clamour the corporate internationalists. "We must compete," chant the corporate nationalists. Whether it's the IMF or the BC Liberals, in Canada, Peru, Kenya or even the United States, poor people bear the brunt of privatization and corporatization — which leads to overturned environmental and cultural protections, the seizure and destructions of indigenous lands, and a devastated public infrastructure of health, education, housing, transportation and culture. It sometimes leads to genocide. There has never been so much disparity not only between, but also within, nations.

2.

Blah Blah Blah participating artists: Gisèle Gordon, Ali Kazimi, John Greyson, Charles Officer, b.h.Yael, David Best, Jody Shapiro, Lyndsay Moffat, Karma Clarke-Davis, Julie Fox, Michael Connolly, Kevin McMahon and Christopher Donaldson. Website: <http://www.urbannation.com/blah.htm>.



Video Stills: l. (off) fences, b.h. Yael; m. Packin', John Greyson; r. Like a Nice Rubber Mask, Malcolm Rogge

Looks like Rosa Luxemburg might have been right about the choice between socialism and barbarism.

So what precious antidote will carry us into the future? Who are our champions in the struggle? And does art have a role? The Zapatistas in Mexico, the Nigerian women who occupy multinational petroleum plants, the school-board trustees in Tory-ruled Ontario who refuse to turn in a balanced budget: these are all resisters to the CEOs. But while local initiatives offer sparks of hope, it will take a coordinated transnational movement to erode the power of post-national capital. We've seen attempts in the protests at Seattle, Genoa and Quebec. As world political leaders meet to cook up new ways to screw their citizens, a jamboree of environmentalists, union militants, human-rights activists, peaceniks, concerned civilians and young people looking for a buzz have conferred and demonstrated on the outside, often stealing the thunder from the assembled power.

In all of these events, alternative media have played a crucial role in circulating information and analysis. But the ambitions of the Blah Blah Blah collective were quite different. Fourteen film and videomakers from Toronto responded to the 2001 Summit of the Americas in Quebec City by creating art. Each produced a short video anchored in footage taken at the April summit. These were premiered to a capacity audience in Toronto the following fall, and subsequently screened separately and together at various festivals and events. A compilation VHS cassette, *Blah Blah Blah: (re)Viewing Québec*, was assembled and is distributed through V tape (www.vtape.org), proceeds going to the Quebec Legal Defense Fund.

The collective takes its name from Chrétien's typically dismissive quote. The project was initiated by film and video artist John Greyson and actor-filmmaker Sarah Polley and producer Gisèle Gordon stepped in to coordinate logistics. There was no formal membership and the final tapes represent only some of the people who participated: I, for instance, attended many of the meetings but was unable to go to Quebec, and Sarah Polley didn't produce a Blah Blah Blah tape but instead incorporated her footage into her short film *I Shout Love* (2001).

One of the most exemplary aspects of Blah Blah Blah was that it produced community from a range of artists toward a single cause: longtime activists and people who had never attended a demonstration; documentarians and experimental artists; seasoned filmmakers and novice directors. It was also racially diverse. This is significant because diversity has so far been lacking in the self-defined anti-globalization movement. It's ironic that the depiction of anti-globalization protesters we see in the media is that of mostly middle-class, mostly white youth in Europe and North America rioting on behalf of the planet and its inhabitants — images of the 2002 Johannesburg protests were not as widely circulated. This is not to knock the act of solidarity — I for one am grateful for mostly white groups like Anti-Racist Action, which battles to keep the fascists off my neighbourhood streets. Still, the unrepresentative racial composition of both the progressive internationalists of the Canadian anti-globalization movement, and the progressive nationalists of organizations like the Council of Canadians ultimately subverts their important goals.

The art of Blah Blah Blah reflects the diversity of its makers. While demonstration footage provides a repeated and perhaps repetitive motif, the range of approaches in substance and form is striking: from an incisive deconstruction of the news industry to a sweetly subversive take by a mix-raced group of Quebec City girls; from a haunting meditation on a first encounter with a tear-gas canister to a rebel fashion file; from a harrowing account of one independent filmmaker's harassment by police to a viciously funny take-down of the summit's display of phallic power.

At the premiere screening at Toronto's Innis College Town Hall, a member of the audience raised a familiar and thorny question about art and politics: the idea of "preaching to the converted." Because the tapes focus on the protest rather than the issues requiring protest, the works in Blah Blah Blah are not primarily pedagogical. But there are different kinds of art. One of the ways the Blah Blah Blah tapes were conceptualized was somewhat like artistic home movies for the anti-globalization movement. We shouldn't underestimate this function of rallying the troops and raising morale. In the current war on Afghanistan, and the impending war on Iraq, the US entertainment industry has sent Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and George Clooney to entertain American soldiers in Turkey, and Jennifer Lopez to warm the fervour of US troops in Germany.

To me art is like food and sex: a basic and persistent human need. Attempts to justify art by citing a social or redemptive function are not just unnecessary, but usually end up trivializing its significance. Still, what better tonic for a sickly planet than good art with good politics?

The Four-dimensional Monument:

Public Art Futures on the World Wide Web

by Annie Gérin

3.

In the past, the monument usually appeared as a three-dimensional object placed in a public space. Built of durable materials, its immutable meaning was expected to last as long as its form. Around this monument, communities came together, the public spaces it inhabited transformed into physical sites of remembrance.

In the present, the expansion of communication networks and digital cultures has altered the spatial and temporal parameters of collective experience, and by extension, of memorial activities. With new communication technologies, public space has become fragmented, serialized and also strategically (if not universally) accessible. This conceptual shift provides unprecedented potential for the monument, particularly as acts of memorialization rely more than ever on virtual rather than physical communities. These fragile and changeable populations are linked by ideals, convictions and interests shared *in time*, rather than geographical proximity. These are the intended publics for many recent memorials (and memorials-in-progress) that overflow

the locality of their origin to remember global causes such as September 11, December 6, Tiananmen Square, and the HIV pandemic, to name a few.

In an age when the local has exploded, the internet provides a medium in which public art can be created specifically for non-localized, interactive and lasting memorializations. Explorations of public art online indicate this potential in dislocating memorial activity.

For example, *The Numbers and the Names* (<http://www.herenorthere.org/11.09.01>) by Mac Dunlop reveals the global pathos of the September 11 tragedy not by using the names of victims, but words generally related to terrorism or war. These words are drawn from Dunlop's poems *11.09.01* and *The Numbers and the Names*. The words float on a colourless screen, in an orbital movement circling a void. The order in which the words appear is generated according to an inverse reading of the viewer's IP address and those of previous visitors to the site. By dragging the mouse the user can slow down

curvature
coastal



The orbital poetry engine: co-designed by Neil Jenkins (generative programming) and Mac Dunlop (creative text). Part of the ...here nor there... project: www.herenorhere.org

left
position
direction
beyond
feel
off
taken

or re-orient the dance of words — but they cannot stop or reverse the process.

In its collection of IP addresses, this virtual monument maps a history of mourners who have visited the site in a progressive temporal weaving of poetic and programming languages. It emphasizes how the tragedy has had, and will continue to have, a history of commemoration far beyond “Ground Zero.” By avoiding the boundaries of physical and political space and incorporating temporally based interactivity, it precludes jingoistic closure. It also indicates a paradigm shift: the memorial moves away from producing historic or aesthetic truth to engage instead with the conditions of possibility of remembrance.

This last point is crucial for the Tiananmen Mothers Campaign web monument (<http://www.fillthesquare.org>), a site administered by Human Rights China, which hosts a virtual Tiananmen Square. Visitors to the site are encouraged to sign an e-petition requesting the (still denied) right to mourn the deaths of hundreds of youth peacefully and publicly. Each one hundred signatures engender a bouquet on the virtual square. Since the victims’ kin have been prevented from building memorials or leaving flowers on the square, the website provides a safe space for mourning. Furthermore, the potential of this monument to grow infinitely and to perpetually occupy virtual space offers a provocative alternative to the physicality of stone and metal monuments, which become fragile under regimes of repression.

In exploring the fourth dimension, *time*, public art on the internet creates unprecedented opportunities for remembrance. Stressing this aspect, *Presence Forever: Perpetual Communication Machine* (<http://www.forevermore.com>) by Yuri Shutovsky provides symbolic immortality for visitors who are invited to create memorials to themselves. These are not meant to be mute representations or lists of personal data: the emphasis is on eternal and ubiquitous communication. E-bottles carry letters into cyberspace for future connections with strangers. Personal messages can be sent *ad eternam*. One may, for example, have flowers delivered to a grandmother’s grave annually for eternity, or a note can be sent to a grandchild in 2103. Users of this feature disappear into their memorial double by switching to a medium and temporal framework where memorial interactivity promises to last forever.

On this site, variations of future memories become the most actual part of the work. Because data files have no closure date, regardless of output or experience in any digital or print medium, a file is always open to modification. This reveals that the true asset of the virtual is located in its temporal possibilities. For public art, this also restores a sense of process, by demonstrating how meaning is produced in time through nomadic layering. The culture of immutable truth that once surrounded the sculptural memorial begins to fade in favour of a future culture of shared memorialization in any medium.

in the future currency will be produced only for collectors
in the future memory will be obsolete
in the future our noses will be smaller
in the future telephones will be mandatory
in the future girls will be born without hymen
in the future weather will be controlled with mirrors
in the future government housing will be all the rage
in the future everyone will have their own font
in the future weeds will prove useful
in the future your radio will know what you like
in the future architecture will be softer
in the future nostalgia will outsell pornography
in the future sound will solve all problems
in the future nature will be popular
in the future advertising and content will be indistinguishable
in the future refrigerators will stock themselves
in the future children will be tailor-made
in the future living underground will be desirable
in the future we will be charged in very small increments
in the future the speed of television will be adjustable
in the future food will become more geometric
in the future all sounds from the past will be recoverable
in the future privacy will be expensive

The Legend of Penn Power

(how the popular press learned to love art)

by Michelle Jacques

5.

Young Crit-El was just a small child when his mother, Art-El, a great Gallerian art critic, realized that their home planet, Galleria, was no longer stable, as evident in the fact that the newspaper pages dedicated to visual art were being replaced by articles about Hollywood films, pop stars and Broadway-style musicals. In desperation, Art-El tried to alert the Gallerian leaders to the dangers of such a change, but it was to no avail. They ignored her warnings, and soon the terms "art" and "entertainment" had been completely confused with one another. The people of Galleria forgot about art. They stopped going to see art. The planet's artists had no audience or market for their work and the art museums and galleries all had to shut down. Galleria turned into a sad and forgotten civilization.

Fearing for her own future and especially for that of her beloved son Crit-El, Art-El decided that they had to escape the certain doom of life on Galleria. Luckily Art-El had taken a weekend workshop in rocket-ship building, and she fashioned a small vessel that was just big enough to

transport herself and her small son to another planet. Unfortunately, just before takeoff she realized that she could not afford to put enough fuel into the ship to carry the weight of both herself and her son (Galleria was plagued by gasoline price wars in addition to the waning appreciation for art criticism), so she decided to sacrifice her own life to save her son. Little Crit-El was blasted off into space in hopes that he would land on a planet where the popular press still had a healthy regard for visual-art journalism.

After floating in space for nearly a year, the ship carrying Crit-El crashed in a hay field in the country Canada, on the planet Earth. A kindly Canadian couple named Robert and Marie Power were driving by, witnessed the collision and stopped to see if they could help. At the site of the wreckage, they found the small boy, and being childless themselves (although they had always wanted children) they took him home and raised him as their own. They named the child Penn. Penn Power lived happily with his new family and had a fairly unremarkable childhood.

Canada was in fact not so different from Galleria. Although a great deal of wonderful art was made there, it often went unnoticed by the larger public because it was rarely considered newsworthy by newspaper editors. This led to a situation where so many of the people of Canada were uninterested in art that the nation's artists had diminishing audiences and markets for their work and the museums and galleries were always in financial difficulty. If something was not done to change the situation very soon, Canada, like Galleria, would turn into a sad excuse for a civilization.

Now, when Penn was a young man, he began to display some extraordinary powers. He possessed an almost unearthly capacity for speaking about art in an interesting and engaging manner, and he had an otherworldly ability to get the better of micro-managing newspaper editors. The newspapers for which he worked began to have meaningful visual-art sections again. The frequency of his reviews and articles was so out-of-this-world that people began to wonder where he had come from. While the readers loved every word, the art establishment became suspicious. Penn had seen enough episodes of the X-Files to know what would happen if the authorities investigated his past and discovered the secret of his origin on the planet Galleria, so he went underground for a while to divert suspicion. When he re-emerged, he did so as "Super Art Critic," wearing a mask and cape (in an unpretentious shade of beige) and his super-powerful brand of art criticism grew even stronger. This superhero of art journalism began to single-handedly transform the nature of arts reporting in the popular press in Canada. He covered all of the contemporary art activity in a thoughtful and informed manner. Canadians far and wide became interested in contemporary art. Artists had audiences and a market. Museums and galleries prospered.

Forever more, Canada would be known for its visual art, and Canadian newspaper art criticism was saved from the tragic end that it met on the planet Galleria.

Upon first consideration, the issues raised in this tale might not seem earth-shattering, but the urge to create is a fundamental human tendency and artistic production is, of course, one of the defining elements of any society. The practice and products of our contemporary artists can challenge, enrich and transform our experiences and yet our support for artistic activity seems to be declining — in Canada, we are living in a moment when art programs are being eliminated from school curricula, museum visitorship is diminishing, the survival of arms-length arts councils are under constant threat and the visual-arts pages in our newspapers are dwindling into non-existence. It seems clear that art practitioners and the venues that present their work would benefit from increased interest and support for contemporary art. In London, England, visual-art stories often share the front pages with hard news. While the situation in London has garnered criticism from some who accuse the press of sensationalizing art to the point that artists are forced to make work that will be newsworthy, would it not be remarkable to live in a place where visual-art activity is an important part of the collective consciousness? In order to build understanding and engagement with contemporary art practice, there needs to be some place where public debate and discussion can occur. So, since you asked, FUSE, I think what the future demands is a Super Art Critic, a hero for the twenty-first century with the power to triumph over overzealous newspapers editors and bring contemporary art to the people.

The story of Kal-El (a.k.a. Superman) was the inspiration for this essay.

The Buffster, striking a pensive pose on Malevich's
Suprematist Composition: White on White, 1918.



Courtesy: R. Pacific

The Political Economy—or is that the Psychopathology? —of Hope

by Robin C. Pacific

6.

The pessimism of the intellect, the optimism of the will...

—Romain Rolland

Who wants to look back? We drag the last century around like a rusty chain that we pretend isn't there. Given the facts, isn't denial the heart-smart choice?

Take Russia, for example. Eighty years of famine, war, epidemics, gulags, Stalin, Hitler and the final ignominious, anarchic slide into Mafia-driven capitalism, spelling penury and chaos for the majority of the population.

And you thought the Hellmouth¹ was in Sunnydale!

Will I get through this without mentioning September 11? I guess not.

You have to hand it to the devil for his global marketing strategy. He's selling Hellmouth franchises all over the world, faster than

Macdonald's can destroy the rain forest. Chile, Cambodia, Kosovo. Indonesia, Lebanon, Rwanda. South Africa, Ireland, Iraq, Kuwait. Oklahoma City, New York, Washington. And on the charts with a bullet, soon to be the Numero Uno war stock: the West Bank!

As if all that wasn't bad enough, we in the art world have had to deal with a decade or more of postmodern theory, the death of the meta-narratives. No vision of social evolution, let alone revolution, can stand up to the artspeakers who have convinced us that it's just another story and all stories are equally fictitious.

To feel anything but despair and cynicism, you'd have to be plumb stupid. There's no scope for hope, and without hope there can be no activism, and without activism, there can be no change — change being, of course, another fiction.

Graydon Carter, editor of *Vanity Fair*, famously proclaimed the "end of irony" a few days after the attacks on the World Trade Centre. Did he

mean that we should start thinking in terms of good and evil — good firefighters, evil terrorists? That it was now okay to have feelings again? To feel sorry for the victims and their families? In any event, the era of sentimental journalism we've lived with for the last year is surely worse than the meanest of prior cynicism. And it's not confined to the endless memorializing and tributes to the victims of 9/11; the slobbering over the Pope during World Youth Day, suddenly canonized as an ancient, wise holy man was just as bad. Forgotten are the church's position on homosexuality (love the sinner, hate the sin), the exclusion of women from the priesthood, the antediluvian views on abortion and a supposedly celibate clergy, and worst of all, the refusal to advocate the use of condoms in Africa, where up to forty percent of the populace in some countries is HIV-positive. Why that clever old devil has another Hellmouth dressed up to look like the Church!

But let's consider Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Buffy is a morose and confused young woman. Her boyfriends leave her, her mother dies, she feels guilty about neglecting her younger sister. She dies herself, and then comes back from the dead with part of her soul missing. Her "watcher" and father figure returns to England, her best friend and ally is battling an addiction to the dark powers, and Buffy can't free herself from an obsessive sexual thing for a guy who's cute, but a vampire. Yes, the world weighs heavily on Buffy's shoulders, just as it does on our older, less toned ones. She never smiles, except for the occasional ironic and pained grin. Her deadpan one-liners are spoken from a hurting heart.

Yet ten minutes before the end of each and every episode, no matter how awful she feels, Buffy gets out there and righteously kicks

vampire butt. What makes it interesting, besides those elegantly choreographed fight scenes, is that it isn't just a ritual re-enactment of the battle of good against evil. It's the fight against evil forces from the underworld with the knowledge that this world is already evil enough. In one episode, after her mother dies, Buffy finds she is broke and gets a job working in a fast-food restaurant (the question of how Buffy or anyone else makes a living never comes up again). The shots of vast quantities of meat being ground up in a giant grinder were far scarier than any demon or vampire that their special effects people ever came up with. Even though the things coming out of the Hellmouth are infinite in number and variety, Buffy manages to slay enough of them to keep Sunnydale safe from demons, if not from humans, for another week.

My favourite banner from the first big anti-globalization protests in Seattle reads: "You think globalization's bad, wait 'til you see capitalism!" because although the numbers of young people taking up the cause, like Buffy, are a source of optimism for me, I don't really see an articulation of alternatives. There are the usual configurations of evolutionaries — those who want to soften the effects of globalization — and anarchists — those bent on radical forms of protest. But what's missing is an analysis, a program, a manifesto, a platform. The old, the new and the middle-aged left are all discredited. Socialism in one country famously failed, pomo irony triumphed and North American lefties fell into disrepute.

History itself has betrayed us and destroyed our trust. Yet if we comb through the rubble of the twentieth century, back to the moment before history shackled up with the devil, we can uncover a spark of fervour for a better world that still might hold promise for us. In the ten

years leading up to the Russian revolution, the politicians and the artists made common cause. Although new manifestos and splinter groups formed and disintegrated faster than Buffy can vapourize a vampire, there was, I think, a thin red line of consistency: the belief that political revolution and spiritual regeneration were inseparable, two sides of the same coin, sisters under the skin. That's what made the art revolutionary and the revolution artistic. Sure, there was the long since unfashionable modernist belief that new forms of technology were making a new human being and a new social order possible; a little hard to swallow after the dot.com debacle. And we all know the sad sorry tale that followed the revolution. But just that moment, that sweet decade, unique in history, when large numbers of artists and revolutionaries held different facets of the same vision, and at one and the same time overthrew the state, and overturned all previous ideas about what art is, and what poetry is ...

So here's to Buffy and the Russian avant garde, and here's to the folks who demonstrate against the evils of globalization, and here's to Jaddi Singh, for getting arrested for using a teddy bear as an ostensible weapon. Indeed, I propose that like the Danes who wore yellow Stars of David in WWII, we build catapults and hurl teddy bears over all the real and virtual barriers we can find. Now that's what I call a spectacle! Because the thing I want to see preserved for the future, against all odds and common sense and better judgment, is hope.

1. From the official Buffy the Vampire Slayer website: "Hellmouth...a portal to a rotted dimension that just about every slag wants to unlock and unleash hell on earth." The entrance to the Hellmouth is under the library of Sunnydale High School; it emits vampires, monsters and demons on a weekly basis.

From the Conceptual to the Political:

The Art of Political Protest in Argentina

by Dot Tuer

7.

On an overcast and chilly evening in late August 2002, 100,000 people converged in front of the Congress in Buenos Aires, waving flags and carrying banners, to protest against poverty, corruption, privatization and the global policies of the IMF. Amongst the demonstrators were the *picateros* — organized groups of the unemployed and the poor who have mounted increasingly intensive protests and general strikes by cutting access to roads and bridges. They had been marching under a pale winter sun since noon, gathering in the poorer barrios and walking for miles toward the city centre. As they reached the main avenues of the city, they were joined by political leaders of the left and centre, university and secondary-school students, union locals, middle-class women and men and children banging pots and pans, intellectuals, office workers, artists, hairdressers, shop owners, writers — in effect, the rich and the poor, the educated and the marginalized, the entrepreneurs and the workers had formed a vast mass of people. Together, they marched under the slogan of *que se vayan todos*: a collective demand that the entire political system be restructured and that

elections be called to reconfirm or replace every official in the country.

After the mass had assembled, political and cultural leaders mounted a podium in front of the Congress to denounce the government's indifference to the economic and political crisis, and to read from hundreds of notes, passed to them hand by hand by the crowd, sent from groups around the country who were mounting simultaneous protests affirming their determination that *se vayan todos*. To end the demonstration, the speakers announced the screening of a video. As the crowd fell silent, an image appeared on a huge screen behind the podium. It was of a hand waving, over and over again. This repeating image, framed by the enormous neo-classical columns behind it of a Congress built to reflect a European heritage of democracy wrought from dependency economics, foreign debt and the concentration of capital, was simple and austere: a single gesture repudiating a political and economic system in ruins. As the hand symbolically waved away corruption and cynicism, the mass slowly dispersed into the

winter darkness of the city. Far from the carefully packaged video installations of Documenta or the MOMA, in a country that has become a casualty of globalization, the conceptual minimalism of a Bruce Nauman or a Bill Viola was transformed into a profound political statement of resistance and indignation.

To arrive in Argentina from Canada is to pass through the looking glass of globalization. On the other side of money markets and multinational mergers and World Trade Organization squabbles amongst the G8 are countries so indebted to the First World that any additional loans the IMF might grant are only tender for the servicing of an already impossible debt load. Completing a vicious circle of repayment and soaring interest rates (57 percent in Argentina) are the austerity measures of the IMF. In return for their "pennies from heaven," the IMF insists upon the privatization of all public sector services (water, gas, electricity), cuts to education, social welfare and health services. In Argentina, compliance with IMF policies and financial dependency has been complicated by a drastic devaluation of the peso and a frightening spiral of massive poverty.

From December 20, 2001, when the country exploded in violent protests over hunger amongst the poor, cutbacks, rising unemployment and the freezing of all saving accounts in the country, until the march to the Congress on August 30, 2002, more than half the country has fallen below the poverty line. In the poorer provinces in the interior of the country, more than seventy percent of the population is now without enough resources to feed their families. In the shantytowns, there is not a dog or a cat to be found. Children search through garbage looking for scraps of food. Small babies have bloated stomachs. In the schools, children faint from hunger. As the protests

against such a brutal poverty escalate, so does police repression and the violation of human rights. Days before the Congress demonstration, the *picateros* cut access to the main highways and bridges leading to Buenos Aires to commemorate the assassination of two demonstrators by police during a previous demonstration in March.

In the face of such harsh deprivation, the question of art's future may appear to be incongruous with the social conflict that Argentineans are living through. Yet one of the great paradoxes of the Argentinean crisis is that the social convulsions of the last months have been accompanied by an explosion of artistic and cultural expressions of protest. In the grand avenues of Buenos Aires, in the dirt roads of the barrios, in the city plazas, people have taken to art as they have taken to the street. In the poorer barrios, communities have organized *asambleas populares* (open assemblies) where they discuss politics and culture and social change. Abandoned public buildings have been taken over to create neighbourhood cultural centres. Theatre groups travel to the outskirts of the city to perform in open-air squares. Video artists and photographers, together with the protestors, roam the streets taking pictures. In the major cultural centre of Buenos Aires, La Recolecta, an open call for a major photography exhibition was organized to collect images from everyone who had documented the months of protest. Argentinean films of the 1970s, such as Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas's epic political manifesto, *Hour of the Furnaces*, considered the founding work of Third Cinema, are being screened throughout the country. In response to this affirmation of art as a vehicle for historical memory and political action, Solanas has begun a sequel to *Hour of the Furnaces*, traveling the country to film the unfolding of an unprecedented economic crisis and demands for political change.

In this convergence of art and protest, the forms of cultural expression that have emerged are distinct from a traditional conception of art in the sense of works exhibited in galleries and museums and bought and traded by wealthy patrons. For the rich of Argentina, the relevance of this type of art remains intact. In times of economic instability, the wealthy put their money in gold and land and paintings. For the poor, who are now the majority of Argentines, this conception of art is at best a diversion or solace, no matter what claims are made for its role as a form of social critique. The reality that Argentina is now experiencing is not reflected in the preservation of a cultural heritage in galleries or museums, but in the spontaneous artistic expressions of protest that capture the urgency of the present. The inspiration for this form of art lies in a political struggle for social change; its execution is collective rather than individual in nature. On the streets of Argentina, artistic interventions transform the conceptual premises and avant-garde strategies of performance art and video installations into a popular art of the people: an art that is at times humorous, at others deadly serious, but always imaginative and original.

Take for example, a "performance action" that occurred during the first month of the *corralito* — a term used to describe the seizing of all the Argentines' savings accounts. A middle-class family, unable to go on vacation because they could not withdraw their money from the bank,

decided instead to take their holidays inside the bank. One morning early in January, they arrived at the bank with lawn chairs and tents and tangas and sunglasses and picnic baskets, and set up their beach oasis. Their protest was so ingenious, and appealing to the public, that the bank could not risk the tumult that would have occurred if they had tried to remove them. So there they sat, drinking beer and tanning under fluorescent lights, the cameras of national television trained upon them, as strangers and friends alike brought them holiday treats to eat and red wine to drink.

By March, as it became clear that there was no resolution to the crisis in sight, and repression against the protestors mounted, demonstrators organized an act of cultural critique in front of the residence of the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, the titular head of Argentina's extremely powerful and conservative Catholic church. As hundreds of protestors converged upon the Archbishop's residence, and hundreds of riot police formed a line of defense between his ornate dwelling and the poverty of the street, each of the protestors held up large pieces of reflective mylar that had been cut into the shape of glasses. As they stood there, in silence, and in defiance, holding up a wall of mirrors, they reflected back to the police and the church their own image as the image of repression in Argentina. As eloquent and as simple as the hand waving away political corruption outside

the Congress, the use of mirrors to protest the abuses of power combined the performative elements of contemporary art with a social message that reverberated throughout the society.

In Mayan mythology, there is a legend that in the beginning of creation, humans had a mirror through which they could see into the past and the future. However, as the time passed, the gods dimmed this mirror, so that the past and future became opaque and indiscernible. Perhaps the moment that Argentina is now experiencing — a moment in which the nation is considered by some of the G8 as a *país perdido*, a country lost to globalization, is one in which the ancient powers of the Mayans are returning. The view of the past and future from the other side of the looking glass, in which spontaneous acts of artistic protest reflect an ever-increasing social and economic crisis, is not a utopian one. In Argentina, people are fighting for their basic human rights, their identity and their lives. And the popular art of protest reflects this convulsive reality. The vibrancy and urgency with which people are using forms of artistic intervention that were once the terrain of the elite and the intelligentsia reasserts a future for art as a collective expression of social conflict. What remains to be seen is whether this Mayan-like mirror of projection and prediction can reach back to the other side of the looking glass — where globalization is still a dream of reason from which we have not awakened.

THE FUTURE

IN THE FUTURE THERE WILL BE MORE BAD ART.
 IN THE FUTURE THERE WILL BE LESS BAD ART.
 IN THE FUTURE 'NEW MEDIA' WILL BE SIMPLY KNOWN AS 'MEDIA'.
 IN THE FUTURE THERE WILL BE EVEN NEWER MEDIA.
 IN THE FUTURE PAINTING WILL BE DEAD.
 IN THE FUTURE VIDEO WILL BE DEAD.
 IN THE FUTURE INSTALLATION WILL BE DEAD.
 IN THE FUTURE SCULPTURE WILL BE DEAD.
 IN THE FUTURE PERFORMANCE WILL BE DEAD.
 IN THE FUTURE ART WILL BE GENETICALLY PRE DETERMINED.
 IN THE FUTURE GENETICS WILL BE ARTISTICALLY PRE DETERMINED.
 IN THE FUTURE ART WILL LOOK GOOD.
 IN THE FUTURE EVERYTHING WILL LOOK GOOD.
 IN THE FUTURE THE SMELL OF AN ARTWORK WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT.
 IN THE FUTURE MORALITY WILL BE A MEMORY.
 IN THE FUTURE EVERYTHING WILL BE TELEVISED.
 IN THE FUTURE THE BEST ARCHITECTS IN THE WORLD WILL REBUILD OUR DILAPIDATED CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS.
 IN THE FUTURE CONTREVERSY WILL BE BORING.
 IN THE FUTURE THE PAST WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
 IN THE FUTURE THE PAST WILL COME BACK TO HAUNT US.

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Always Nice to be Recognized

by Tom Sherman

8.

The key to the future is privacy. Privacy is not just a territory to protect, it is the essence of our personal existence — a space that must be developed, expanded and maintained. Information-control systems — such as families, religions, schools, States, political parties, corporations, community-based organizations — will seek to define our private, psychological space, attempting to limit and conform our inner worlds. We must resist.

In the future, our identities will continue to be shaped by communications technologies. The wireless, digital revolution of the late twentieth century was only the beginning of a massive assault on private, individual autonomy. Creative, critical thinking is built on a foundation of imagination and unorthodoxy. Minds must continue to wander, to ponder the inconceivable and to investigate the improper. When we muck around freely in the privacy of our own minds, we frequent territory off-limits to others. In the long run, this internal exploration will help us to know who we are and what we want, instinctively and intellectually.

Connectivity with others is valuable as a means for sharing the bounty of our private worlds, but connectivity itself must be moderated or the blood-life of privacy will be drained off.

The central issue lurking throughout these thoughts is the disadvantage of not having a private space within which to regroup or restructure. Private space must be nurtured and protected, as privacy is an insurance policy against psychological and emotional incarceration.

Privacy is important because it allows us to pretend we are something, anything, that we are not. It gives us the space we need to practice things we would like to be good at someday. Privacy makes us secure by letting us know we are very different from how others perceive us. It is the extra space within which we grow new "parts," repairing ourselves from the daily dismemberment we experience in the brutal, real world. We need an inner space where we can be true to ourselves, no matter what the consequences outside. There is so much compromise required outside.

The erosion of privacy places dangerous restrictions upon personal growth. This limits critical perspectives, diminishes the depth of our analyses and evaporates hard-core (psychologically rooted, anti-social, self-sustaining) creativity.

Because I know that people are listening to my inner voice, I cannot afford to feel the way I once did.

In the future we must never undervalue mental health — and should instead promote continuous, perpetual, personal growth. Societies are comprised of the dynamic interplay between individuals and social groups. A society is a mix of psychological states and social organizations.

In a healthy society individuals sometimes become organizations and organizations become individuals, and there are other such transformations. Information-seeking organizations categorize individuals for various levels of exploitation, and individuals actively seek damning information from and about the corporate environment.

Artists extend themselves by revealing explicitly defined social and psychological positions. As the information economy becomes more obviously based on private or personal information, as the spiritual engine of the economy is decentralized to a cellular level, all individuals will have to become experts at managing the input and output of personal information.

The work of artists will be increasingly important as they are encouraged to develop and expose their private worlds in broad daylight, for all to see.

Building aggregate communities from diverse minorities is important. Alliances with others must be fused with frequent communication bridging the gaps, splitting the differences. Redundant compromise can add up to a tedious culture that must be continuously challenged by the radical interventions of relative extremists. Social hybridity must not result in a dilution of its original, constituent components, but should spawn a new vitality based in recontextualized traditions and anomalous, ahistorical trends. Without recognizable historical roots, hybridity will drift away from the reality of the street, turning in on itself in oscillating, wave-like patterns, inevitably heading toward abstraction.

It is possible that more and more individuals will function like artists in terms of psychological extroversion. We will see the widespread return of impressionism. The distortion of normal visual and aural perception through a reduction of sensory information will become the norm. We could call this "disnormalism." And there will be additive, expressionist tendencies where emotional tone spills out into the world colouring everything with melancholy, depression and rage. Distortion, and hence abstraction, will rise up against the explicitness of life under surveillance. There will be a need to reduce complexity, to discard needless detail, to uncover the essential forms and rhythms of the street and the mind. Many will learn how to read and write the most abstract code.

Will artists become scarce in societies governed by surveillance and psychosocial engineering? It may make less and less sense to externalize that which is better kept inside. Creativity may be

driven far underground, into a wholly psychological domain. Or will the proliferation of digital tools result in a tremendous increase in the volume of art, to the extent that everyone will become part-artist?

Information technology will enable and encourage more and more people to externalize their private lives. Networked, web-based, on-line publishing and digital cameras and camcorders with non-linear editing systems and sound packages galore will continue to offer ubiquitous opportunities for the production and distribution of previously invisible material.

Wireless, networked technologies will encourage the exchange of inane information previously kept private.

It will be hard to build momentum for change when every single gesture is exposed, and compromised by moderation.

So many people today, when told they are under surveillance in the war against terrorism, seem pleased to be scanned by facial-recognition software. It is always nice to be recognized. They feel secure being part of the databank. They have nothing to hide.

This is in itself an existential dilemma, as many of us exist only in records of consumption, a trail of information transactions. I burn energy, and accumulate material possessions, and am totally wired, therefore I am.

When we say we have nothing to hide, we are submitting ourselves to a future of global totalitarianism.

I refuse to provide my image, or a brief profile of myself.

thief in the night

modern life Imagine being outside time. That the past and future are revolving around you, and you cannot place yourself properly. That your body, your receptacle, has been numbed free of history. Because I feel this way, I can see clearly when and where the evil started ...

Richard Zimmer, The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon What we are dealing with is an imbalance, a distortion of communication, in which personal input mostly from media is too high and output too low in modern life. The media system has helped bring about this imbalance in which people listen more than they talk and sing: the load from the media is so heavy that it is stifling human expression; while overwhelming our ears it denies us a voice.

Orrin E. Klapp, Overload and Boredom **dissatisfaction** The artist's book marks a moment of dissatisfaction with art's outreach, a declaration of independence by artists who speak, publish, and at least try to distribute themselves, bypassing the system. The fantasy is an artist's book at every supermarket checkout counter, or peddled on Fourteenth Street ("check it out"). The reality is that competing with mass culture comes dangerously close to imitating it, and can lead an artist to sacrifice precisely what made him or her choose art in the first place. The artist's book is/was a great idea whose time has either not come, or come and gone. As a longtime supporter of and proselytizer for the genre, it pains me to say this. But all is not lost, just misplaced. *Lucy R. Lippard, Conspicuous Consumption: New Artists' Books*

self-expression "Authorship"—in the sense we know it today, individual intellectual effort related to the book as an economic commodity—was practically unknown before the advent of print technology. Medieval scholars were indifferent to the precise identity of the "books" they studied. In turn, they rarely signed even what was clearly their own. They were a humble service organization. Procuring texts was often a very tedious and time-consuming task. Many small texts were transmitted into volumes of miscellaneous content, very much like "jottings" in a scrapbook, and, in this transmission, authorship was often lost. The invention of printing did away with anonymity, fostering ideas of literary fame and the habit of considering intellectual effort as private property. Mechanical multiples of the same text created a public—a reading public. The rising consumer-oriented culture became concerned with labels of authenticity and protection against theft and piracy. The idea of copyright—"the exclusive right to reproduce, publish, and sell the matter and form of a literary or artistic work"—was born. Xerography—every man's brain-picker—heralds the times of instant publishing. Anybody can now become both author and publisher. Take any books on any subject and custom-make your own book by simply xeroxing a chapter from this one, a chapter from that one—instant steal! As new technologies come into play, people are less and less convinced of the importance of self-expression. *Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Massage*

storage and retrieval I would like to think of a text, whether book, paper, film, painting or building, as a kind of thief in the night. Furtive, clandestine and always complex, it steals ideas from all around, from its own milieu and history, and, better still, from its outside, and disseminates them elsewhere. A conduit not only for the circulation of ideas as knowledges or truths, but a passage or point of transition from one (social) stratum or space to another. A text is not the repository of knowledges or truths, the site for the storage of information (and thus in imminent danger of obsolescence from the revolution in storage and retrieval that information technology has provided as its provocation in the late 20th century) so much as a process of scattering thought, scrambling terms, concepts and practices, forging linkages, becoming a form of action. A text is not simply a tool or an instrument; this makes it too utilitarian, too amenable to intention, too much designed for a subject. Rather, it is explosive, dangerous, volatile. Like concepts, texts are complex products, effects of history, of the intermingling of old and new, a complexity of internal coherences or consistencies and external referents, of intension and extension, of thresholds and becomings. Texts, like concepts, do things, make things, perform connections, bring about new alignments. *Elizabeth Grosz, Architecture from the Outside*

the food chain Somebody asked Debussy how he wrote music. He said: I take all the tones there are, leave out the ones I don't want, and use all the others. *John Cage, Silence* In nature, detritus is dead plant and animal matter that makes new life possible. The very bottom of the food chain, detritus is the rotting leaves in the forest, the silt on the bottom of the pond, the thick dark mud in the salt marsh. It sticks to your shoes, it smells, but someday it will be food for something else, and that something will be food in turn, on and on up the food chain until you pick it up in the supermarket and put it in your

mouth. Our society spends a lot of time telling us that there is some brand new, fresh cultural produce, generated from thin air and sunshine, slick and clean. They package it with pretty plastic & ribbons and then feed it to us. A lot gets thrown away: the ribbons, the wrapping; culture becomes garbage, or it dies, and rots behind the refrigerator. But the new fluffy shiny stuff still gets churned out, and it gets forced between our teeth. And we are told to swallow it. We will not swallow. We will chew, and then spit. We will play with our food, and create something new and interesting from it. *www.detritus.net*

significance In my effort to divine the meaning of the universe I've traveled, analyzed fables, loved once or twice and have read 64,138 books. Now, what this means is that I've had very little time for reflection. Thus I confuse the true and false, equate curiosity with significance and mistake knowledge for wisdom. So much the worse. *Evan S. Connell Jr., Points for a Compass Rose* For Nodier's struggle was, of course, that of the librarian, torn between a fetishistic bibliophilia and a bibliophobia born of his hatred for the relentless multiplication of books in the era of printing: see, for example, his short story "Le Bibliomane," *Oeuvres*, 11:25-49. *Anthony Vidler, The Architectural Uncanny*

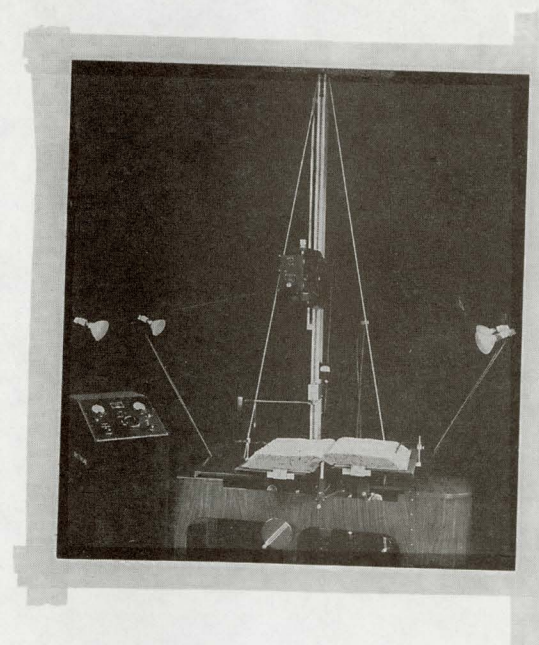
ars poetica If an artist chose to join a human head / To a horse's neck and to cover with many-hued feathers / Limbs assembled in one from all over the place, / So that what was on top a lovely woman, below / Ended ugly and black in the shape of a fish, / Could you, my friends, refrain from bursting out laughing, / If you were allowed a private view of the thing? / Take my word, you Pisos, a picture like that / Would be perfectly matched by a book whose meaningless fancies / Were shaped like a sick man's dreams, so that nowhere within it / Could foot or head be assigned to a single shape. / Perhaps, too, you know how to paint a cypress— / That's no good if they've paid you to do a sailor ... *Horace, Ars Poetica*

practical use So we are faced with a new space for public culture somewhere between reality and simulation, between action and acting—and this holds not just for latent psychotics but for the rest of us as well. *Thomas de Zengotita, The Gunfire Dialogues: Notes on the Reality of Virtuality* "Now, these are useful books," he said, looking around his cabin. "So far as I'm concerned, no book's worth reading that doesn't offer information of practical use to the reader. What kind of books do you like, Andy?" *Eric McCormack, First Blast of the Trumpet*

Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women Some people are in the vanguard, others are being left behind. There are some who are aware of how much the times and the nature of art have already changed, and there are those who will be informed of it in ten years' time, through reading books.

Andrea Branzi, Learning From Milan

This photograph shows how a rare old book is microfilmed, page by page, to preserve the contents when the book has crumbled. The turning of the pages and the focusing of the camera are done automatically. *Book of Knowledge Children's Encyclopedia*



Rob Kovitz is creator and publisher of Treyf bookworks and online projects (www.treyf.com). At present, he is working on a large book project called Ice Fishing in Gimli.

by rob kovitz

**Articulating
the Vanishing
Indian**

Jeffrey Thomas



Cheyenne leader Two Moons, photographed by Edward S. Curtis. Two Moons was veteran of the Little Big Horn battle with George Armstrong Custer in 1876. National Archives of Canada/C-019769

Perhaps among no tribe has the encroachment of civilization wrought greater change than among the Sioux or Dakota. A proud, aggressive people, they depended wholly on the chase and the indigenous vegetation. Powerful in

numbers and vigorous in spirit, they roamed almost at will. But in brief time all was altered. The game had vanished; under treaty stipulation which the Indians ill understood they were concentrated on reservations beyond the boundaries of which they must not wander, and became dependents of the Nation, to be fed and clothed according to our interpretation of the compact.

Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian*, volume 3, 1908



Culture Revolution. Bear photographed in Toronto, 1984, wearing a baseball cap with the a reproduced photograph of Two Moons.



Two Moons on tee shirt. Photograph taken at the Kahnawake Powwow grounds, 1994



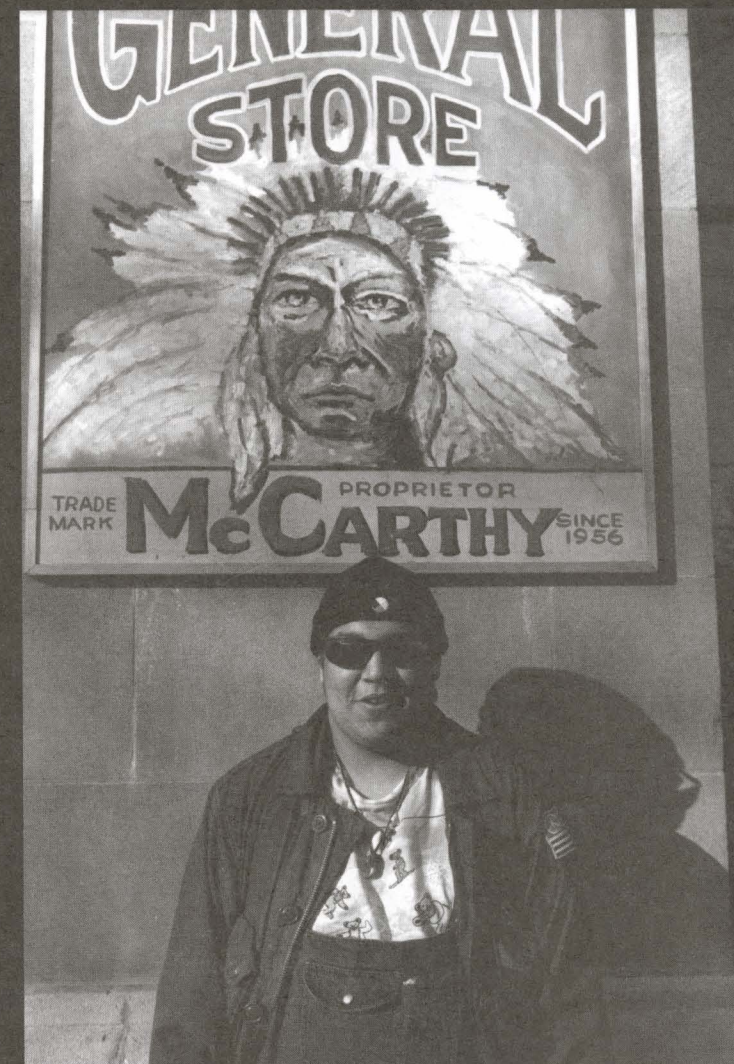
Prototype Warrior. Six Nations Reserve, the fall of 1990.

Mr. Hayter Reed. Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and his step son Jack Lowery, dressed in Indian costumes for a historical ball on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, February 1896. William James Topley/National Archives of Canada/PA-139841

On February 17th 1896, a costume ball was held in the Senate Chamber on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. The theme of the ball was "Canadian History" and the planners were hoping to encourage Canadians to learn more about their history. Reed's was dressed as the 16th century Iroquois Chief Donnacona, who had met Jacques Cartier as he descended the St. Lawrence. Yet Reed's outfit is not representative of Iroquoian dress, but appears instead to be the type of attire worn by the Plains people. Most likely Reed collected it during his tenure as Indian Agent in the Battleford Saskatchewan area. Reed stepson's outfit is constructed from paper and his skin has been darkened with makeup.

Hayter Reed's statement in his 1897 annual report for Indian Affairs:

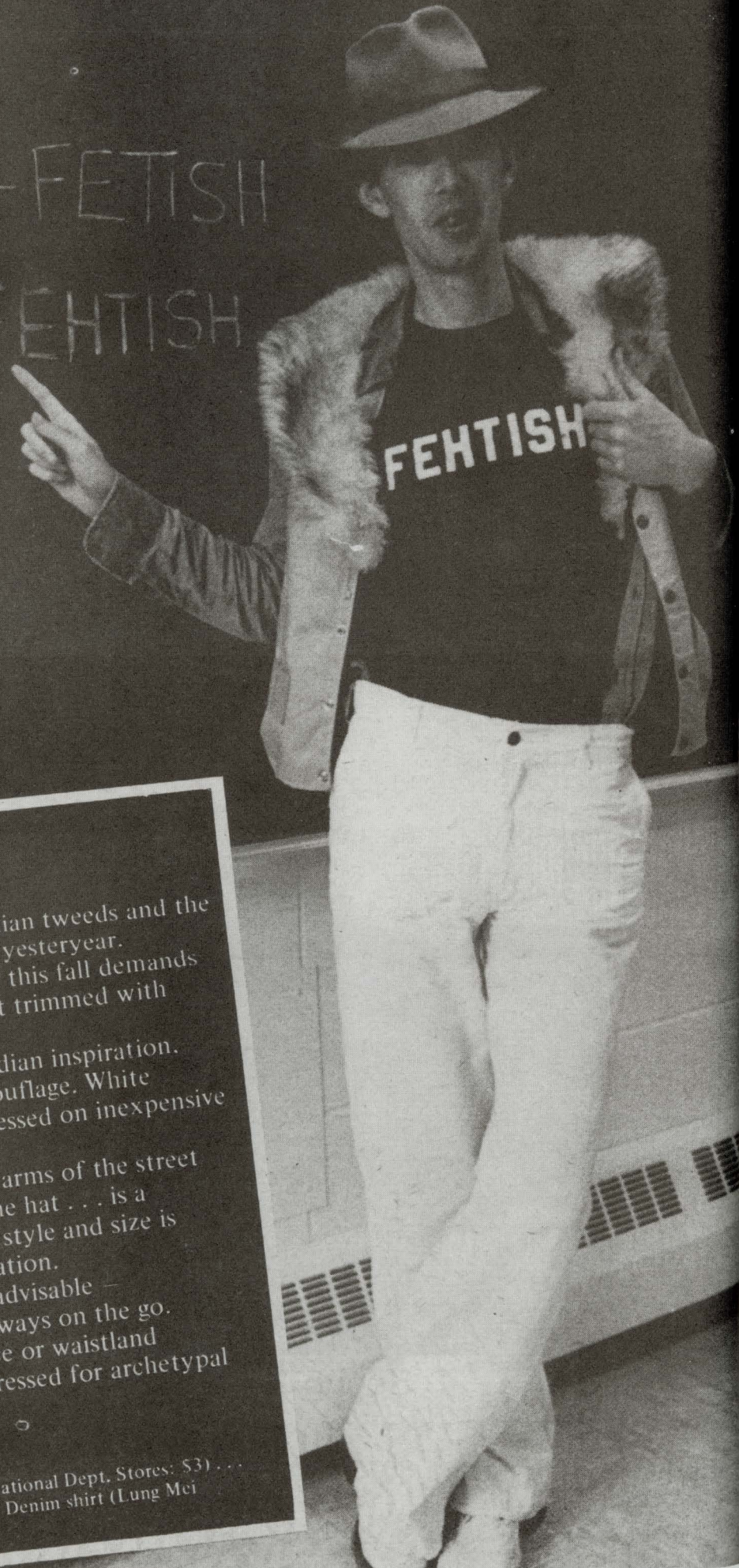
The year just passed has shown the department that the sun dance has become an Indian ceremony almost, if not quite, of the past. For a long time the department's policy has been in the direction of suppressing it by moral suasion, and step by step, it has been robbed of its most revolting ceremonies, so that in the end it has afforded little attraction to a great proportion of the Indian population.



Auditions
How do you measure up?

e-mail Jeff Thomas at: jmthomas56@hotmail.com

FAT + FETISH
= FEHTISH



Simple pasts and future perfects?

Casual and professional "art lovers" should not be denied their pleasures. Their broader policy ambitions are another matter.

by Clive Robertson

Gone are the Edwardian tweeds and the shiny-seat pants of yesteryear. Instead the academy professor this fall demands attention with his hunting vest trimmed with unfastened fur. The T-shirt is a German-Canadian inspiration. write-on-black: the G.I. camouflage. White fat-splashed pants hang unpressed on inexpensive split white shoes. Covering the otherwise bare arms of the street is a blue denim overshirt. The hat . . . is a necessary accessory but the style and size is open for personal interpretation. Two sets of this outfit are advisable — one in the wash and one always on the go. For classroom magnificence or waistland performance this man is dressed for archetypal readiness.

photo: David H.

Hunting vest (\$6.95) . . . Pants (National Dept. Stores: \$3) . . .
White Shoes (Super S: \$5.00) . . . Denim shirt (Lung Mei
Trading Co.: \$16.00)

11.

In 1970 the Vancouver Art Gallery mounted a landmark exhibition [by Lucy Lippard] which placed fledging Vancouver conceptual artists, such as [Jeff] Wall and the collective N.E. Thing Co. alongside American artists. . . More than 30 years later we are still waiting for that kind of programming in Toronto.

— from "A Tale of Two Art Worlds"
(Why can't Toronto produce artists Like Vancouver?)
Sarah Milroy, Visual Arts Critic, *Globe and Mail*
(20 June 2002)

I can't separate the star system from a social and economic apparatus that alienates the image of doing something from the being or doing of it. The usual cycle of "art stardom" — of coverage in the elite art press, of participation in the expanded circuits of curatorial clamour for "breakthrough" and "landmark" works — lasts about three years. . .

— from "How do you launch an international art career?" (Invitational feature),
C magazine (Summer 2001)
Christina Ritchie, Director, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver

Sarah Milroy's public simplifications of the histories of Vancouver and Toronto art-making and institutions found in the *Globe and Mail* this summer sat alongside other unanswered national media messages. In the *National Post*, Robert Fulford claimed that Foucault and Sartre were "wrong about everything." Fulford was upset that Foucault "paid no attention to data and instead sprayed the air around him with ideas informed by paranoid fantasies" and he was slightly more than upset that "armies of art critics, feminist rhetoricians, and postcolonial theorists spend their days quoting him." *Globe and Mail* arts columnist and playwright John McLaughlan Gray proposed a different way to provide public support of the arts in a Canada Council-less world where arts grants would be turned into arts credits, as redeemable and tradable as "Canadian Tire" money. This "future perfect" would see "public support going, not to the producers, but to the consumers of Canadian arts." The promise being: "No arts

25 Years

“ Toronto is the only Canadian city in which the art scene is continually fracturing, and thrives by that fracturing.”

AA Bronson

bureaucrats. No jury. No outcry over the meat dress. No proposals. No whiff of cronyism.² The voucher method of public funding “combining equality of funding with true accountability” is fast becoming an MBA-favorite in educational funding politics.³ Voucher funding is not the most likely or the only threat to arts funding for individual artists, but the policy politics between producer and consumer public funding preferences should not be ignored.

Back in the world of “present perfects,” the former owner of the *Globe and Mail*, Canadian art collector and philanthropist Ken Thomson, and his former managing editor, now ROM director William Thorsell, were the happy, shining people whose efforts brought public federal infrastructure monies to both the AGO and the ROM. These impending acts of architectural mediation — which channel social knowledge and institutional agency to audiences — brought obvious nibbles from two *Globe* writers who could not quite figure out who such targeted monies might otherwise benefit. The watchful local contemporary art community (who hadda-sorta promise from the AGO that they would kick their addiction to the needs of private collectors and phased expansions) were left to seeth in silence. Would Frank Gehry have been equally interested in designing an old-age-home-cum-youth-centre, a *Merzbau* complex for Toronto artists? We might never know.

Where FUSE's anniversary turns its attentions to the work overloads that the counterpublic geometries of art-and-culture discourses are expected to undertake — you have your spheres, we had our *Parallelogramme* — I offer the following:

1. ART FUTURES

Given the lasting fascination with the YBA (Young British Artists) phenomenon — particularly the

theatrics of corporate art collectors who purchased and primed access to both museum and media space — I'll revive a suggestion I made in the mid-eighties. At the time, the National Gallery was drawing more criticism than praise from both artists and critics for its periodic national contemporary surveys. An inter-museum curator solution was the instigation of a biennial of contemporary art that would be rotated among larger art museums. Continuity failed through a lack of corporate sponsorship interest. The YCA proposal was based upon the precursor to the YBAS, which were the Young Contemporaries exhibits held in London in the fifties and sixties. Participants were selected by a national committee of art-school student representatives. As a bonus, the prizewinners invariably were awarded art dealer contracts and teaching lectureships though instant national celebrity status did create career casualties. It's an institutional solution that requires overcoming the shibboleths of curating-by-committee or what such projects do or don't do to invalidate institutional curatorial responsibilities. Given that such a project focuses upon “youth” and “achievement,” I predict you would now have to beat willing corporate sponsors off with a stick. And if it were to become a venue for provocation and controversy — which is part of the grease that keeps the contemporary art machine running — so much the better. Where this should take place, who should host it, or who most needs this history-grabbing gimmick is not up to me to suggest. A smart national committee of art students would put the project up for bids.

2. ART PASTS

Sarah Milroy's “A Tale of Two Art Worlds” begins with the author-line “Sarah Milroy isn't being rhetorical when she asks: Why can't Toronto produce artists like Vancouver?” This was followed four days later by Milroy's “Stories of the

World” review of Documenta 11. The opening caption states: “This year's Documenta show hasn't pleased the art glitterati, but in its intelligence, integrity and global reach, it left Sarah Milroy elated.” What connects both stories is the opportunity for Milroy to unnecessarily isolate and overstate the contributions of Jeff Wall: “Wall seemed to set the stage for much of the narrative work in the exhibition.”

The predictable if narrow role of the mainstream media to put “faces to Canadian art” appears to require stuffing much of Canadian contemporary art history back into selective founding narratives. These are shouted in accounts of Vancouver's production of “philosophical objects,” or NSCAD's early artist residency pedagogies, or in “whispered art histories” of the Fluxus-conceptual influence on models for artist-run centres. What all such narratives write against (even within a limited Toronto-Vancouver axis) are the attempts of a necessary horizontal inclusivity found in *Vancouver: Art and Artists 1937-1983* (Vancouver: VAG, 1983) or AA Bronson's *Sea to Shining Sea: Artist-initiated activity in Canada 1939-1987* (Toronto: The Power Plant, 1987).

One small step away from the PR mesmerizations of value — Jeff Wall joins Cindy Sherman in *ARTNews*' 1999 top-ten list of important living artists — we find more credible accounts of art practices (and therefore communities) that are melancholic and schizophrenic.⁴ Such a politics of belonging claimed for Vancouver's textual community — brazen where it appears to want acknowledgement of both its influences and the rejection of those influences — can then be better articulated to AA Bronson's statement: “Toronto is the only Canadian city in which the art scene is continually fracturing, and thrives by that fracturing.”⁵

The admittedly popular “utopias gone bureaucratic” story (as told variously by Lum, Bronson and others) gives momentum to a very different “art-vacuum” interpretation that Milroy and others supply. What goes missing is that it is not just in Canadian art's formal strategies but in its social embeddedness of unruly subjects and useful citizens that (an exportable) distinctiveness can be found. A local politics of identity and representation necessitated a bootcamp for artists, independent critics and curators in and around the artist-run centre movement and emerging cultural communities. This critical pedagogy requiring a thinking about aesthetic, social and cultural matters of importance had occupational stakes that usefully (sometimes painfully) disrupted the linearity of careers. What is distinctive about the “Canadian experience” and its contribution to art discourse here and abroad is where and how this took place. To the extent that fully-accomplished examples of Canadian performance, video, audio art, photography, some painting and installation, some magazines and policy interventions can be tied to, or are the product of, this “fracturing” provides a more apt collaborative focus for historical discussion.

Aside from burying past and present international exchanges that take place outside of the official foreign affairs exchanges of contemporary art, Milroy, and those for whom she speaks, are left with wanting statements of connoisseurship and sociology. To wit, from a total sampling of six artists showing this summer at the Power Plant we are asked to believe that current Vancouver artists are typically “energetic, optimistic, and fancy-free” while Toronto artists are “grim, constrained, even defeated.” Where conceptual art history lives on as a “demonstration of the futility of making art” (Milroy's interpretation of Germaine Koh's recent work) it is slapped down. The many top-down and bottom-up ways of caring about art can become conflictual.

Within the rust-protection of art-loving (please remember visual arts critic, John Bentley Mays's desire to not see Robert Mapplethorpe's work publicly displayed) artists can be made to appear among the worst philistines.

Was there anything in the many credos of conceptual art that one should decline “art stardom” or work to undermine the museo-critical complexes of validation? Yes and no—and therein lies the rub. The prevailing argument was that we should *not* give up our rights of public address in precisely those traditional art institutions like museums that create publics but that are, or act like they are, privately run.

So where does one shop if not at WallMart? If brushes with conceptual art trumps all, then what of the work of Toronto artists Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge, whose art of the last two decades has gone uncollected by public museums, who are a decade past a deserving retrospective in one of “our” six major museums? It is Condé and Beveridge who made art and history in New York working with Lucy Lippard, participating as members of Art & Language and editors of *The Fox*. It is Condé and Beveridge whose photo-tableaux actually engage with their represented subjects both as collaborative storytellers and as primary audiences for their work. Such works actually do and do more than provide “a masterful play of a semiotic across the reified surface of a painting in the guise of photography.” As the only American or Canadian artists whose works around health care — here and in the USA — drew attention in both national elections, would they not have made a better choice for Okwui Enwezor's edition of Documenta?

3. POLICY PRESENTS

I do have policy objections to visual arts trajectories that suggest it might be best if we

The predictable if narrow role of the mainstream media to put “faces to Canadian art” appears to require stuffing much of Canadian contemporary art history back into selective founding narratives.

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concentrated both private and public resources into a very limited number of nationally-recognized and internationally acclaimed artists. Such a project would probably survive cuts to public arts funding. It would also harmonize the "sector" with the writing community, who in English Canada can be said to successfully own *public appreciations* of an artistic culture: famous authors known, books read, book supplements, TV shows, paths of arts journalism, and so on (despite appearances, film culture comes in second).

Within and definitely outside of the arts community there have been those embarrassed or angered with the degree of public funding and administration deemed necessary to produce "good" artists. The evidence of a mixed contemporary art economy elsewhere stimulates a desire for missing market or private patronage alternatives. In the hubris of the eighties, the reality that Canadian artists existed through arts funding as contracted public employees with rights to a guaranteed income was seen to be a Marxist hangover offensive to those who over-invested art with a bohemian or an entrepreneurial spirit.

While the current weaknesses of the peer-assessment funding system are given scant art and news media attention there are regular public accounts of the "historical distortions" such a peer-juried system produced. There is now a shared sense in the enlarged contemporary art field that peer juries as community representatives have lost agency in their abilities to oppose arts council's unhealthy efforts to micro-manage their more marginal clients: particularly organizations nominally or actually run by artists or independent cultural producers. Let's just say I am suspicious whenever visual arts institutional interests are being proxied in public interpretations of what matters in contemporary art. The

overlap of concerns that I share with other interests is this: where and how does important work get done?

Ken Lum's essay "Canadian Cultural Policy: A Problem of Metaphysics" (*Canadian Art*, Fall 1999) repeats the popular historical assertion/hypothesis of a "cradle-to-grave" funding scheme that artists have enjoyed. If such a fiction is to be floated in a national publication that "instructs its readers in ways of seeing and understanding contemporary art in Canada" then it was narrowly enjoyed by artist professors who received Canada Council grants (there was never a means test) and who sold their work to public and private buyers. How long this miracle lasted, and, whether or not its light still shines in small corners of the country, I do not profess to know.

The role of artists in key decisions affecting the funding of institutions of primary and secondary validation including their own has frequently been overstated. (I currently sit on the board of a performance programming and publishing collective that finally is the recipient of \$9,000 in operational monies. How many \$50-\$100k salaries typical of working arts journalists, arts funding officers, academics or museum curators can be extracted from such a sum?)

The Lum essay for *Canadian Art* also argues that "artist-dominated juries resulted in a concomitant weakness in terms of the quality, size and dedication of Canada's corps of critics and curators." Lum points to "the complete absence of any book that critically and theoretically addresses in a historically comprehensive manner developments in Canadian art over the last thirty years." The model Lum has in mind he names as Dennis Reid's *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* (1983) which he characterizes as "the last useful book to comprehensively

examine an important component of Canadian art." I do not entirely disagree with the need for such a shaky master narrative. My preference in such analyses is not to write out the usefulness of the twenty or more key texts published by Artex, Art Metropole, YYZ, Artspeak, Arsenal Press, Éditions Intervention, and the Banff Press, among others. It is the latter that fight for shelf space in local bookstores where "myopic" British and American authored and published survey texts hold court. It is not just the expected exclusion of Canadian art achievements that irks, but the unnecessary non-appearance of published Canadian art theory and historical research in their extended bibliographies that speaks against the chatter of a new internationalism.

I do not sense a crisis now in the abundance of critics and curators who currently work through the multi-layers of visual and media arts institutions that have been peculiar to our historical needs. There are growing tensions between artists, independent and institutional curators over who is actually authoring the thesis content of collaborative projects. Over and above expected gatekeepings it is invariably those not playing the role of artists who announce "It's not me, it's the institution I am working for that makes me say and do these crazy things."

As we have witnessed over the last decade, there has been an attitudinal shift in production/validation/enjoyment funding priorities as arts councils and arts foundations address issues of cultural and social policy. A common policy message is that while "arts issues have been addressed in terms of the needs of the arts and artists...the arts can and do meet the needs of the nation and its citizens." In the pre-September 11 United States, after years of arguing that the country was "too differentiated" to warrant the uniformity of a cultural policy,

CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION
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control

the public purposes of the arts are now seen in terms of national identity formation, "advancing democratic values at home...and democratic values and peace abroad."⁶

In Britain all government agencies have been required to conform to Tony Blair's social exclusion policies including the Arts Council of England. This has been a policy to "tackle poverty and promote social inclusion." It includes the professional arts addressing issues of "truancy and social exclusion, street living and problem estates."⁷

Demonstrating how specific arts-funding initiatives meant to address issues of cultural diversity and equity can be turned inside out we have witnessed domestic arts councils shifting their attentions to other "stakeholders" be they audiences, philanthropists and volunteers. Much though I have disapproved of the way in which the Canada Council in particular has been coy about their "losses of autonomy" from government, I do fully understand that to defend their continued existences there is a need for greater public approval of arts councils. One way or another this asserts a policy shift from the production of, to the "enjoyment of" the arts. Such thinking, particularly in the visual arts, supports the desire for a commerce of art products over a concept of paid-for services.

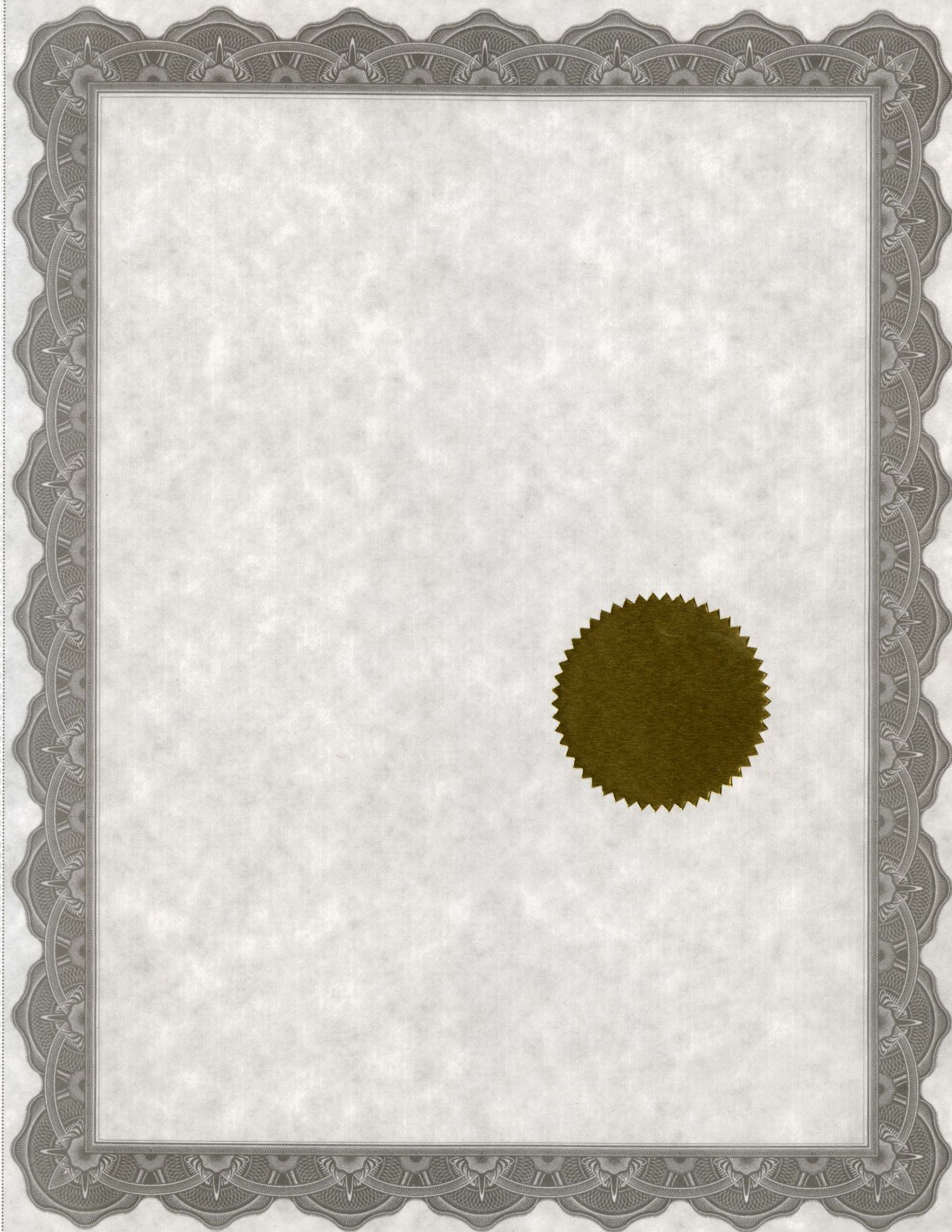
It is therefore that slice of the arts-funding pie which is not annexed to government-driven social or cultural policy, or furthering enjoyment, or pyramid schemes of international worth which concerns me most. I continue to value (at times above all else) a network of workspaces for cultural production and exchange, including magazines like FUSE, where the rhyme that begins: "This little artist went to market, and this little artist stayed home..." does not become a national anthem.

Notes

1. Robert Fulford, "French intellectuals don't age well." *National Post* (27 July 2002), A18.
2. John MacLaughlan Gray, "A cure for the arts: Canadian Tire money." *Globe and Mail*. (25 June 2002), R1-2.
3. Dan Mader, "End-run the boards: Bring in vouchers." *National Post* (27 August 2002) and Reginald Stackhouse, "School boards belong in the history books. It's time to give vouchers a try." *Globe and Mail* (29 August 2002), A15.
4. see Trevor Mahovsky, "Radical, Bureaucratic, Melancholic, Schizophrenic: Texts as Community," *Canadian Art* (summer 2001), pp.50-56.
5. Quoted in Ken Lum, "Canadian Cultural Policy: A Problem of Metaphysics," *Canadian Art* (fall 1999), p.82.
6. see Gigi Bradford, Michael Gary, Glenn Wallach, *The Politics of Culture: Policy Perspectives for Individuals, Institutions, and Communities*, (New York: the Center for Arts and Culture, 2000).
7. Various policy documents from Arts Council of England website, 2002.

Over and above expected gatekeepings it is invariably those not playing the role of artists who announce "It's not me, it's the institution I am working for that makes me say and do these crazy things."

Official Printout Janis Deimkw / FUSE Volume 25 Number 4



Ohmygod!

The Bad Guy is Native??

by Skawennati Tricia Fragnito



14.

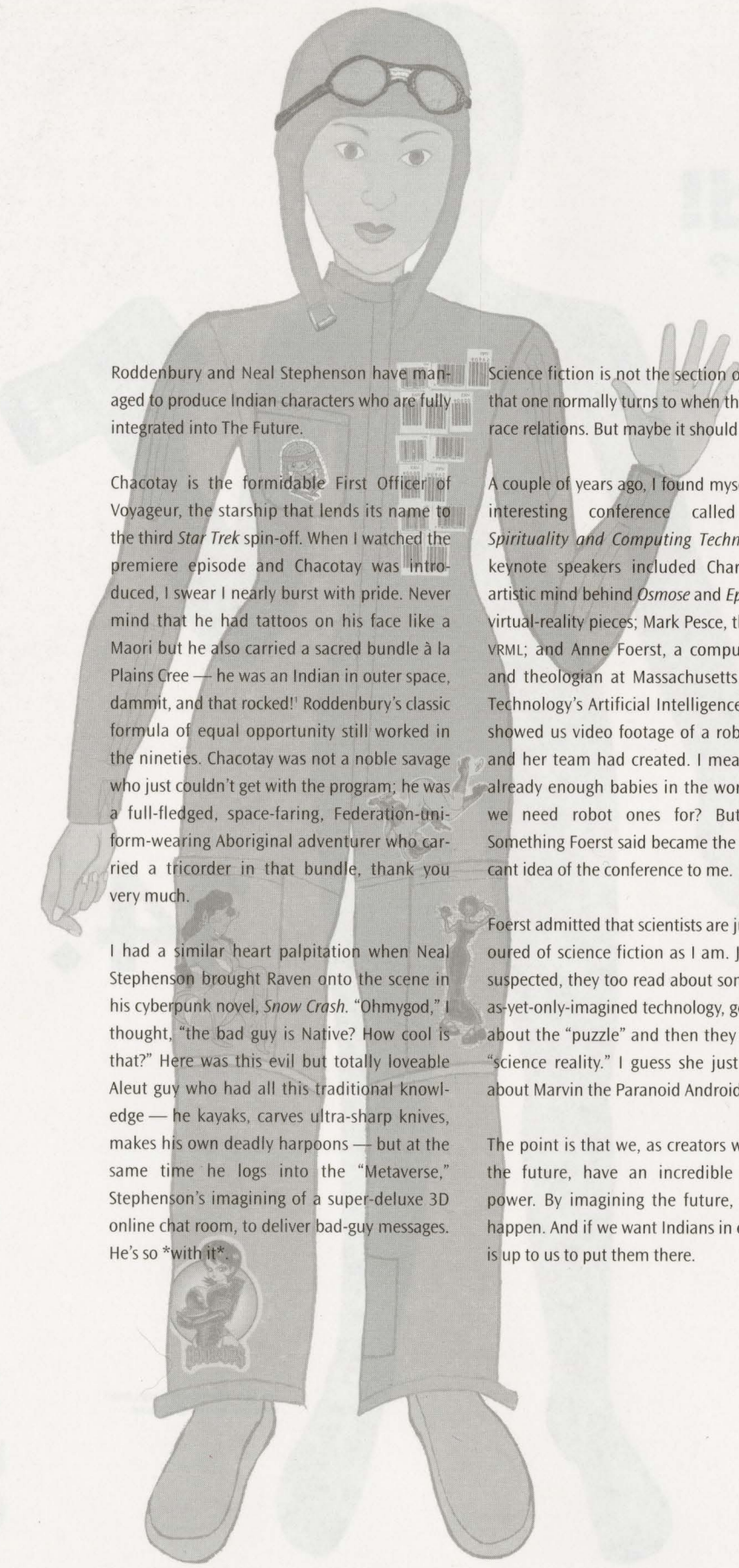
I love science fiction. It doesn't make a difference to me if it was written in the fifties and blathers on about how the human race has grown up to be a planetful of kind and generous self-actualized beings, or if it's from the disenchanted eighties and describes scenarios of a dystopian, apocalyptic, it-only-gets-worse Earth. Either way, we get to imagine our future.

And what a rich and diverse place the future is, filled with every manner of personal device, such as the exoskeleton that Sigourney Weaver puts on to punch out the monster in *Aliens* or the teleporter in *Star Trek*. There is every kind of being, too, from the hyper-intelligent shade of blue we (sort of) meet in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* to good ol' Chewbacca in *Star Wars*. But where, I ask, are the Indians?

I have found only two Aboriginal people in science fiction. Perhaps most sci-fi writers do not see a place for First Peoples in the future. We usually represent the past, after all. Or maybe they think that the future is an era without race or ethnicity. Whatever it is, only Gene

This page: Chacotay. Next page: Raven. From www.ImaginingIndians.net

Official Pullout Janis Demkiw / FUSE Volume 25 Number 4



Roddenbury and Neal Stephenson have managed to produce Indian characters who are fully integrated into The Future.

Chacotay is the formidable First Officer of Voyager, the starship that lends its name to the third *Star Trek* spin-off. When I watched the premiere episode and Chacotay was introduced, I swear I nearly burst with pride. Never mind that he had tattoos on his face like a Maori but he also carried a sacred bundle à la Plains Cree — he was an Indian in outer space, dammit, and that rocked! Roddenbury's classic formula of equal opportunity still worked in the nineties. Chacotay was not a noble savage who just couldn't get with the program; he was a full-fledged, space-faring, Federation-uniform-wearing Aboriginal adventurer who carried a tricorder in that bundle, thank you very much.

I had a similar heart palpitation when Neal Stephenson brought Raven onto the scene in his cyberpunk novel, *Snow Crash*. "Ohmygod," I thought, "the bad guy is Native? How cool is that?" Here was this evil but totally loveable Aleut guy who had all this traditional knowledge — he kayaks, carves ultra-sharp knives, makes his own deadly harpoons — but at the same time he logs into the "Metaverse," Stephenson's imagining of a super-deluxe 3D online chat room, to deliver bad-guy messages. He's so *with it*.

Science fiction is not the section of the library that one normally turns to when thinking about race relations. But maybe it should be.

A couple of years ago, I found myself at a most interesting conference called *Creativity, Spirituality and Computing Technologies*. The keynote speakers included Char Davis, the artistic mind behind *Osmose* and *Ephémère*, two virtual-reality pieces; Mark Pesce, the creator of VRML; and Anne Foerst, a computer scientist and theologian at Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Artificial Intelligence Lab. Foerst showed us video footage of a robot baby she and her team had created. I mean, there are already enough babies in the world. What do we need robot ones for? But I digress. Something Foerst said became the most significant idea of the conference to me.

Foerst admitted that scientists are just as enamoured of science fiction as I am. Just as I had suspected, they too read about some fabulous, as-yet-only-imagined technology, get all excited about the "puzzle" and then they try to make "science reality." I guess she just never read about Marvin the Paranoid Android.

The point is that we, as creators who imagine the future, have an incredible amount of power. By imagining the future, we make it happen. And if we want Indians in our future, it is up to us to put them there.

I did a piece about the future of North America, called *Imagining Indians in the 25th Century*. It's a bit of web art that allowed me to work out a scenario in which this continent could once again be populated and run by Native people. I was surprised to realize that, far from mass genocide, all that was really required to achieve this goal was a shift in our thinking. Instead of seeing inter-racial marriage as diluting Indian blood, we could just see it as a means of increasing the number of people we call Indian. In other words, we would have to adopt a policy of inclusion rather than the blood-quantum-measuring policy of exclusion we currently have to contend with. I know there are a lot of people out there who want to be Indian, so what is the problem here?

Quite possibly, the problem is a lack of imagination. Native people are so busy trying to regain what was lost in the past that there is little time to see what we'll look like in the far future. The Agreement in Principle recently signed by the James Bay Cree and the Quebec and Canadian governments was eagerly adopted by the Cree mainly because it would mean they could get jobs building hydro-electric power plants. Hydro-electricity is on its way out, man! The Cree are advocating vocational training for their youth when they should be encouraging them to be computer scientists and astrophysicists. Or better yet, science fiction writers...

Endnote

1. If you do a little Googling, you find that Chacotay is actually Mayan, from the jungles of South America.

FUSE was the Future

by Rinaldo Walcott

This year, the Mas Bands Association — the new proprietors of what was formerly known as Caribana — banned reggae and hip hop from the parade, in an attempt to return to what they have called the roots of carnival. Even the name change (temporary though it may be) to the "Toronto International Carnival" signals a desire to recapture something that organizers felt had been lost in previous years. The name change and the banning of reggae and hip hop flag an anxiety within the Mas Bands Association about the ways that a living festival might evolve. The truth is that the carnival tradition, as practiced in the Caribbean, can have very little space in North American societies, hell-bent as they are upon controlling the use of public space by coloured bodies in a way that serves to limit self expression of all kinds. The nostalgic lie of a return to a more "pure" carnival tradition is a fundamental denial of the creole roots of carnival itself; in short, it is a retrograde move.

Holding onto these creole roots, with their emphasis on complexity in relation rather than

universal sameness, would lead to a more interesting attempt to better place, enhance and position reggae, hip hop and calypso within the carnival. To position them, that is, within a continuum of new world musics — as a fundamental part of the liberatory attempts by those from what Sylvia Wynter has called "the archipelago of poverty" to venerate them as very much within the tradition of carnival. Lacking in this consciousness, the ban on reggae and hip hop represents a fundamental failure of the festival to have an impact upon its surroundings in ways that matter — beyond the spectacle of economics. The ban signals the Mas Bands Association's conservative view of what a living carnival should and might be and how a vital living carnival might help to reshape and remake its surroundings. For, over the last twenty some years, Caribana's presence *has* indelibly reshaped Toronto, helping to make it one of Canada's most creole cities, as this city has undergone a sea change of social, political and cultural upheaval.

Over that same twenty-something years, FUSE magazine, with its home-base in that same

15.

25 Years

Toronto, has been publishing on the topics, issues and concerns facing those interested in the arts and culture, broadly defined. FUSE has chronicled the making of this creole city and its reach across the country. While it might be premature to call FUSE a creole magazine, it is undeniable that FUSE has played a fundamental and vital role in helping to move us closer into relation with one another and thus creolization. In the magazine, articles on race, class, gender, sexuality, war, art, music, film, video and food have sat alongside each other, crisscrossed one another and spoken back and forth in complementary and antagonistic fashion. All the articulated and enunciated identities of 1980s political correctness and identity politics found a space and a home in FUSE, not always easily, but a home nonetheless. The importance of this cannot be diminished, particularly given that FUSE is a small magazine, run largely with a small part-time staff, who actually volunteer more than they get paid, and a volunteer board of directors and editors who believe in the project. The work of FUSE has been to open up the arena of what Canada can actually sound and look like, an attempt to provide space for both the dominated and the not-dominated. Thus, the magazine has often been the site of heated contestations, as well as ground-breaking innovation. Few projects of this kind exist in Canada, yet it is exactly projects of this kind that bring us into relation and move us toward the moment of creolization.

Charles Taylor in his famously important essay on the politics of multiculturalism made the case that what was really at stake in these efforts was a politics of recognition. Taylor, however, stopped short of articulating what recognition might mean once it happened. FUSE has demonstrated what happens after recognition. Other voices add to the story, contest the story, attempting to articulate and

define other and new stories. This is a story of creolization. FUSE is not cosmopolitan; it is, rather, a crude attempt to speak into a vacuum of dissent and to wedge open some space for that dissent to be heard in its most incomplete, and yet articulate, form. FUSE is an experiment in the risky pleasures of politics and culture as each overlaps and constitutes the other. This is not really a grand story — but it is an important one.

The question of impact is always a difficult one to place. Reshaping and remaking surroundings always sounds grander than it really is. This process of make over is rather a gradual process, catching us unawares, but piercing us with its insistence upon being noticed — once and for all. The future of FUSE lies in its continued ability to use its creole homebase as the site for exploring our relations one to another. Such a commitment means that FUSE must continue to push cultural, social, political and artistic buttons as those realms overlap and cross each other. In this regard, FUSE was the future. Now, FUSE must make that unintended future-past its conscious present. This is a far different politic to the one that initiated a parade name change from Caribana to Toronto International Carnival — a naming and a moment that is both literally and metaphorically out of step with the city. The attempt to ban reggae and hip hop will, I hope, result in a failure; for, the attempt to ban these other musics speaks to the direct inability to acquire a language for speaking about the new realities of Toronto and, by extension, urban Canadian life. Let us for the moment call this life, creole, and bless FUSE with the task of pointing out to us what the present and future debates concerning our humanity in this city, this country, and beyond might look and sound like. But FUSE has been there before — 'cause FUSE was the future.



Roula Partheniou
Dave Dymnt



The Fast-Line Forward

by Kathy Walker

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, blast off, off out of this world, off this earth, off into another space ... and my feet lift lightly and I'm rising, up up, up, up and it's a long way up but ahead, waiting, is everything that dreams are made of, the utopian fantastical. It's beyond my imagination and I'm overwhelmed with a sense of anticipation, so I stay the course...and the course, well, it's a trip of five stories. It's one of the longest escalators in Canada, and I'm off to the movies — the Famous Players Paramount theatre in Toronto.

Plasma screens of self-promotion, panoramic views, a glass palace iced with light, a shining choreography of futurist design: everything is slick and smooth, polished, gleaming aluminum columns — and the ground glows as I'm spun through color-morphing lights and curves traced in cool neon. Futurism of the new millennium, and those fast, young dreams of the first Futurists are here still. Tradition is heavy and slows us down and we want maximum elasticity and lightness, plastic dynamism and so the ghosts of the new — Marinetti, Balla, Boccioni — echo.

The first theatre to be built in downtown Toronto in more than fourteen years, the award-winning building designed by the International Design Group, a subsidiary of the Watt Group — a company famous for adeptness in branding and marketing — houses Toronto's most spectacular movie experience. The theatre opened in 1999, aptly, with the release of the big daddy of futurist film, *Star Wars: Episode One the Phantom Menace*. During the theatre's first week, it ranked the fifth highest box-office gross in North America. And its popularity continues; the theatre regularly ranks among the continent's top-grossing.

Thinking about the future and how to get there, cultural theorist Ernst Bloch, from the dark space of twentieth-century, warring Europe, was staunch in the view that hope or some principle of desire is necessary. We need a utopian spirit to energize our lives and our projects. We need a reason to keep going and there has to be a light at the end of the tunnel...But, how much light? Could it happen that we find ourselves blinded?

17.

25 Years

The slick and clean of the future is covered over with a layer of dust and grime and grodiness.



Courtesy: K. Walker

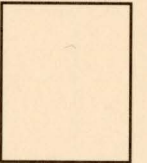
Walking into the Paramount I'm met with the smell of nachos, and french fries, and pizza, and popcorn; an olfactory experience not dissimilar to that of vomit. Then, I set my feet on the ridged metal of the escalator launch pad and embark upon that journey up into a hyper-real tomorrow, there's this train-wreck moment where I'm confronted with the shiver of a pure peopleness. The slick and clean of the future is covered over with a layer of dust and grime and grodiness. The escalator handrails — rubbery, tacky, sticky — feel just like those of the transit underworld. Fingerprints mark the windows, the grease of hands mars the shine of the steel pillars, and the rubbing, touching, dragging of skin, muddles the reflectiveness of the metallic tiles that follow alongside my ascent.

It's not that they don't try to clean the place or that some health-inspection standard is not being met. And it's not even a repulsion to dirt that grabs me—since I know that “clean” was invented to sell detergent and since I'm hip to the passé-ness of anti-bac soap. It's that I'm winded — just for an instant — by the sheer force of the contrast between the max-out futurist aesthetic and the flaking-off bits of real-life, little grooves where scales of flesh and dribbles of soda pop collect and group together into a primordial-redux sludge of existence, a series of small stoppages in the fast-line forward.

What is to be Done? Stephen Morton and Susan Kelly / FUSE Volume 25 Number 4

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?





What is to be done?
The Lenin Museum
Hämeenpuisto 28, FIN-33200
Tampere, Finland

WHAT IS TO BE DONE? QUESTIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Lenin's description of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism now seems like a self-fulfilling prophecy. After the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the total spread of unregulated global capitalism is seen as inevitable. With this spread, a third of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day and the poorest countries in the world owe a \$422 billion in debt that can never be paid. Yet, events in Seattle, Genoa and elsewhere show that global capitalism might be resisted. Do you think that Lenin's ideas are of any use today? What are the burning social and political questions of our time?

When Lenin wrote *What is to be Done?* In 1902, he mainly wanted to distinguish between radical revolutionary politics and the reformists who just wanted to patch things up. Lenin was intolerant of a politics that failed to really challenge the dominant order. How can we provoke significant change today? Do you think any real shift is possible under our present system?

The Lenin Museum in Tampere is the site of Lenin and Stalin's first meeting. Lenin's ideas are often seen as leading inevitably to Stalinism and the terror of the Soviet Empire. This has been called the Leninist Tragedy. Is it possible to rescue some of Lenin's ideas from this fate? How can we prevent social change from turning into a situation where the same structures of power are re-established with different players at the top?

In Tampere, 1906 Lenin made a pledge to honour the Finnish right to self-determination after the Bolshevik Revolution. Lenin believed that Marx's revolutionary ideas had to be adapted to the local and national conditions of workers rather than being imposed from above. In Lenin's time, this mobilisation of local worker's movements was an effective way of achieving international solidarity. The phrase 'workers of the world unite' may now seem like an impossible ideal since late capitalism has crushed union power and pitted the workers of the world against one another. Despite this gloomy picture, from where you stand right now, what are the possibilities for social change today?

IN SHORT, WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Please e-mail or write down your response on the time cards provided in not more than 300 words and return to: whatistobedone@excite.com or
What is to be Done, The Lenin Museum,
Hämeenpuisto 28, FIN-33200 Tampere, Finland

WHAT IS TO BE DONE? QUESTIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

NAME:	CITY/COUNTRY:
WEEK ENDING:	TIME IN:

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

What is to be done?
 The Lenin Museum
 Hämeenpuisto 28
 FIN-33200 Tampere
 Or e-mail to:
whatistobedone@excite.com

Can we make copies of your
 response for Museum visitors to take
 away with them? (Please circle)

YES NO

Uaajeerneq

A Belly Laugh in the Face of Fear

by Sarah Laakkuluk Williamson



I once dragged a small woman on stage and sat on her face. I pinned her down with my ass and then tickled her. I think she was both terrified and tantalized. Another time I slid under a table and appeared between someone's legs, my tongue slicing through the air toward his crotch. He was so startled he knocked his chair backward and fell. An old lady tried to run away from me at another performance, but she tripped. When she was on the ground, I grabbed her legs and humped them as she struggled. Not so long ago, I tried to tease a whole crowd of people at the same time. They stampeded out of the room, pushing each other to get away from me. The other day, I heaved a young man onto my back and threw him back and forth with another performer so that he was riding both of us, his arms flailing in the air. Sometimes I make kids cry, mothers protecting them from my grotesque face. Other times, brave kids laugh at me and push me away when I try to scare them.

I perform when I was about fourteen. *Uaajeerneq* has been performed for a very long time, but when missionaries settled in Greenland in the eighteenth century, it practically disappeared. It was too "sinful" for them. As Greenlandic self-governance took shape in the 1970s, *uaajeerneq* was revived and has become a fundamental source of dramatic expression.

There are several themes that generate the dance. The dancer's face is painted black to symbolize the unimaginable immensity of the universe. The total of human knowledge and experience is little more than a speck in the entirety of the universe. The blackness also symbolizes fear. *Uaajeerneq* can bring forth panic, one of humanity's basic instincts. It teaches children to rationally overcome their panic — to gain control in dangerous situations in real, everyday life.

This form of performance is called *uaajeerneq* — a mask dance from Greenland. My mother is an Inuk from Greenland and she taught me how to

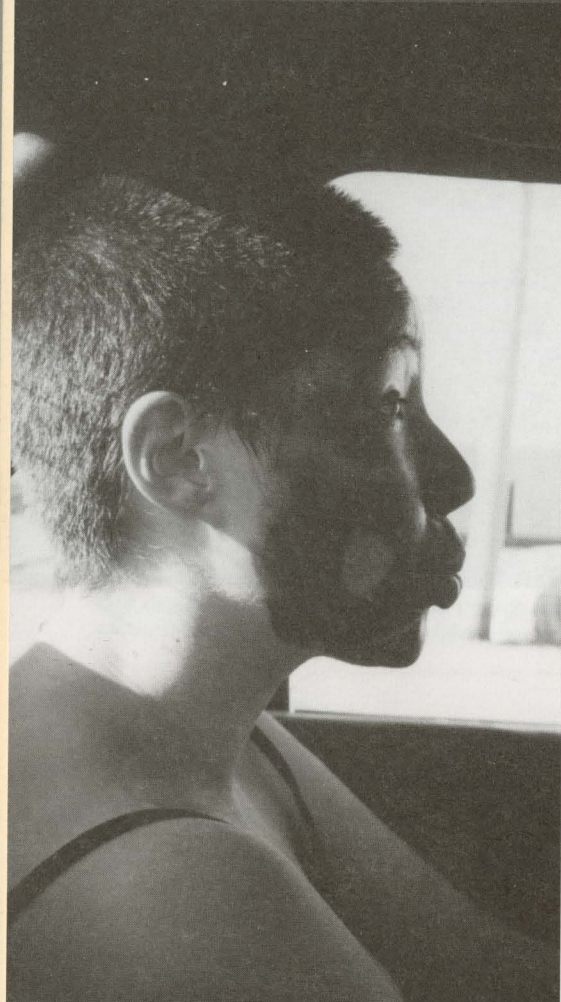
White lines are drawn onto the black background of the painted face, celebrating the knowledge that we do have. White symbolizes the bones of the ancestors that gave birth to us,

19.

25 Years



All images courtesy: S. Williamson



as well as the bones of the animals that give nutrients to us.

Uajaernejq is a celebration of the fact that we are sexual beings. People would not exist without sex and sexual expression. Protruding cheeks in the mask are reminiscent of male genitalia. Red lines evoke female genitalia. The dancer "itself" has no single gender or sexuality — all are expressed as a commemoration of our essential humanity. *Uajaernejq* helps you feel proud of your body and your sexuality and opens your mind to the innumerable sexual expressions available to human beings.

Language can hardly exist without humour. We all relish good times, good stories and good laughs. *Uajaernejq* dancers are impish provocateurs. Spanning humour, fear and sexuality, *uajaernejq* provides audiences of every age with something to relate to.

While the dance is an explicit and jocular way of challenging people about their identities and their relationships with others, it also provokes questions about culture and sexuality. It is very puzzling to a number of people that Inuit, of all people, should be so sexual. Analyzing the stereotypes, you'd almost think that Inuit made babies by rubbing noses! A couple of months ago, I performed with the rest of my dance troupe at the Vancouver National Aboriginal Day Festival. It was an open-air event, with a lot of people drifting between the stage area and the retail tents. Unfortunately, this made it quite easy for people to miss the explanation of *uajaernejq* that preceded my performance. A number of people were shocked by the lewdness and complained to the First Nations organizers, who at that point hadn't seen me perform. Quite perturbed, they approached me. They asked, "Are you sure that's part of your culture? Don't you think your elders will have

something to say about what you do?" I quietly explained that my mother taught me how to perform and firmly reassured them that this was definitely a legitimate cultural experience.

Isn't it too outrageous to be indigenous? Would my elders approve? Is sex a "traditional" value? Because of Christian prudishness, the appreciation of "indigenous" sexuality has been masked almost to the point of extinction. People have been stripped of ownership over their own sexual bodies. Many Canadian Aboriginal people are still suffering from and perpetuating the memories of sexual abuse in residential schools and other national institutions. Unwanted and teenage pregnancies are common, the rate of STDs is high and moreover, suicide and its relationship to poor self-esteem are all too familiar.

I dance because my mother helped make me proud of who I am. I want to undo the stereotypes and the pornographic values imposed on sexuality. I dance because sex is fun and funny. I perform for all ages — shame only exists because we will it to. Audiences tell me that they feel different after they have seen a performance. They say that sex has been shown to them without the ever-present commercialization or the repressive secrecy that our society cloaks it with.

Earth's creatures have been having sex ever since the first two meiotic cells collided. Humans have always been obsessed with engorged penises and wet labia. Just because we've survived the Victorian era doesn't mean we were never sexual! Having just emerged from the constrictions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we are re-exploring our bodies as landmarks for memories and experiences. Culture is never quite the same from one day to the next, but one thing has always been certain: our ancestors definitely had at least one thing on their minds...

No Where Near the



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PO BOX 15357 STN BRM B
TORONTO ON M7Y 2W1

...the world did not end.

Only then did a strange fear of my own demise, one I had not known before, enter me. Or maybe I knew it very well, maybe all too well, because it has been with me for a long while and yet I had not recognized its dark grasp. I began to think about apocalypse. Of "The End." And I began to fear all over again.

When I was eight, not of my own accord, I entered the world of evangelical Christianity. It promised that I would be saved, all against the backdrop of a future heaven, a future end and a present danger of losing my life. This coincided with migration to a new country, a new father, a new language, but more so, to a new world-view bound by a vision that God worked through individuals to remake history and that

erits. There was no answer. I sat on the front steps, fearing that Christ had returned and that I had been left behind. Four short years had inculcated me with fear. When Jesus comes back, his followers would meet him in the air; I had obviously not been worthy.

Now I prove my unworthiness. I question it all, albeit with a lot of fascination still. I enter a secular culture, rejecting religious dogma but seeking spiritual truths. The line seems very thin. Vestiges of apocalyptic convictions are everywhere. It may not be Christ's return that signals the end, but we do believe in an end. We, those of us, unbelievers, deniers of a religious apocalypse; we, refugees of almost every one of the West's and East's monotheistic cults, the cult of a god who would punish or destroy all of his creation; we still believe that the end is nigh.

20.

CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION
ARTEXTE
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25 Years



All images courtesy: S. Williamson

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challenging people about their identities and their relationships with others, it also provokes questions about culture and sexuality. It is very puzzling to a number of people that Inuit, of all people, should be so sexual. Analyzing the stereotypes, you'd almost think that Inuit made babies by rubbing noses! A couple of months ago, I performed with the rest of my dance troupe at the Vancouver National Aboriginal Day Festival. It was an open-air event, with a lot of people drifting between the stage area and the retail tents. Unfortunately, this made it quite easy for people to miss the explanation of *uaajeerneaq* that preceded my performance. A number of people were shocked by the lewdness and complained to the First Nations organizers, who at that point hadn't seen me perform. Quite perturbed, they approached me. They asked, "Are you sure that's part of your culture? Don't you think your elders will have

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No Where Near the End, or, Notes Towards Trading the Future

by b.h. Yael



From Trading the Future (working images) b.h. Yael

A few years into the millennium, the memory of its hyped and threatening beginnings is still close. Before 2000 I had attempted to avoid the hype, all the soothsaying and predictions. We passed the midnight hour, without calamity. Few computers wreaked havoc; the world did not end.

Only then did a strange fear of my own demise, one I had not known before, enter me. Or maybe I knew it very well, maybe all too well, because it has been with me for a long while and yet I had not recognized its dark grasp. I began to think about apocalypse. Of "The End." And I began to fear all over again.

When I was eight, not of my own accord, I entered the world of evangelical Christianity. It promised that I would be saved, all against the backdrop of a future heaven, a future end and a present danger of losing my life. This coincided with migration to a new country, a new father, a new language, but more so, to a new world-view bound by a vision that God worked through individuals to remake history and that

history brings us one more step closer to Christ's return.

When I was twelve, on a buzzing summer day I emerged from the basement calling for my parents. There was no answer. I sat on the front steps, fearing that Christ had returned and that I had been left behind. Four short years had inculcated me with fear. When Jesus comes back, his followers would meet him in the air; I had obviously not been worthy.

Now I prove my unworthiness. I question it all, albeit with a lot of fascination still. I enter a secular culture, rejecting religious dogma but seeking spiritual truths. The line seems very thin. Vestiges of apocalyptic convictions are everywhere. It may not be Christ's return that signals the end, but we do believe in an end. We, those of us, unbelievers, deniers of a religious apocalypse; we, refugees of almost every one of the West's and East's monotheistic cults, the cult of a god who would punish or destroy all of his creation; we still believe that the end is nigh.

20.

25 Years

CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION
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Apocalypse is born of trauma, of a paucity of vision. It is the possibility that God gives up, rather than a god that values abundant life.

Apocalypse is inevitable and though we don't look to predictions of a specific end, marked in time, we know it is coming quick and coming sooner than we would like, but maybe not quite in our lifetimes. We are grateful that we won't be around. We have accepted that we cannot change these forces; they are completely out of our hands.

Cosmological theories assume an end of the world, but most predictions are millions and billions of years hence, almost incomprehensible. We believe that this is much more imminent. We accept that the earth will not sustain life; we are quickening the end as we believe in it.

We believe in the end more than any other thing we believe. Perhaps because we cannot imagine beyond death. Perhaps because we have accepted that life is limited, we assume it is for the earth as well. We have not been able to see death as an intrinsic part of life, not as the end, but rather as woven into the whole of life. Perhaps we have not been sufficiently loved, and therefore we cannot love the earth enough to sustain its nurturing resources. Maybe it is the concept of infinity that is so difficult. Maybe it is the fact that everything has a beginning and an end, a rise and a fall. This rise-and-fall metaphor however is inadequate, as history has shown that new forms have developed out of old ones. It may be that apocalyptic warnings of the past were not so much prophetic visions of a cataclysmic and final end of the world, but instead premonitions or warnings to specific and localized corners of the world, addressed to specific elements that preoccupied specific lives and specific geopolitical regions. Historical narratives tell us that there have been many prophecies and many destructions, that the world has ended many times over. In fact, we have had floods and genocides, volcanic eruptions and numerous disasters and colonizations that have

wiped out whole civilizations. These warnings, reified dreams or prophetic truths, these narratives of fear become visions of the future. Whatever the reason, these residual visions always point to death.

Apocalypse is born of trauma, of a paucity of vision. It is the possibility that God gives up, rather than a god that values abundant life. It is a vision that I distrust but one I know well; it is marked by hopelessness and powerlessness. The vision tells me I cannot affect change in the world, that nations will continue to war, that the earth will lose its ability to sustain life. These visions are both religiously and secularly formed; one becomes the other. The latter is devoid of a Messiah, someone who will save either a part or all of earth's inhabitants. The secular version is a technological disaster on an ecological or cataclysmic level. The secular messiah is science and technology; it is also the apocalyptic vehicle. We know that we have all the means and technologies by which to cause our own destruction.

The secular version of apocalypse is not so different from the religious one. The fact that we live in a secular culture can be questioned. Though Canadian statistics may vary significantly, American ones tell us that two in three have no doubt that Jesus would come to earth again, and that four in five are certain they would appear before God on Judgement Day. A recent *Time* magazine article noted that thirty-six percent of Americans listen to the nightly news for end-times news. We are neighbours to a nation whose president invokes God's blessing with every military strike on a foreign nation.

Apocalypse is a not a religious reality or even the future. It is a political struggle.

Apocalyptic narratives, especially films, reinforce an idea of salvation, one that is often

divine, but more so imperialistic. America always saves itself. America has the technology.

In the last two years I have been working on a video and thinking about these apocalyptic narratives and in the course I have become totally overwhelmed by the gravity of it all. I have been caught in the middle of a spiritual war, not unlike that invoked by preachers, a fight for my soul.

I have been taken over by apocalyptic dreams, and by intense personal fears of cancer and death, and by a dread for all the environmental repercussions of our current consumption, let alone the nuclear sabre-rattlings. The question in the process was not about an analysis of apocalyptic narratives, but a question of choosing life over death. The narratives, however, became significant when I recognized that this was not only a singular, individual struggle.

It is dangerous to use the pronoun "we" in a text; inevitably someone will exclude themselves. The "we" here must acknowledge that it is not an individualized and personal consciousness that will change our visions of the future. I do not deny the power of individual convictions and visions of hope to affect others and to affect change. The main issue is that "we" work and live in collectives. Global survival does not distinguish between individuals. Collective actions speak louder than individual words.

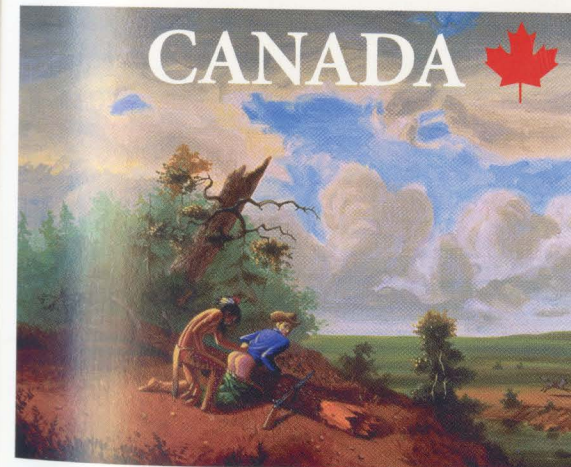
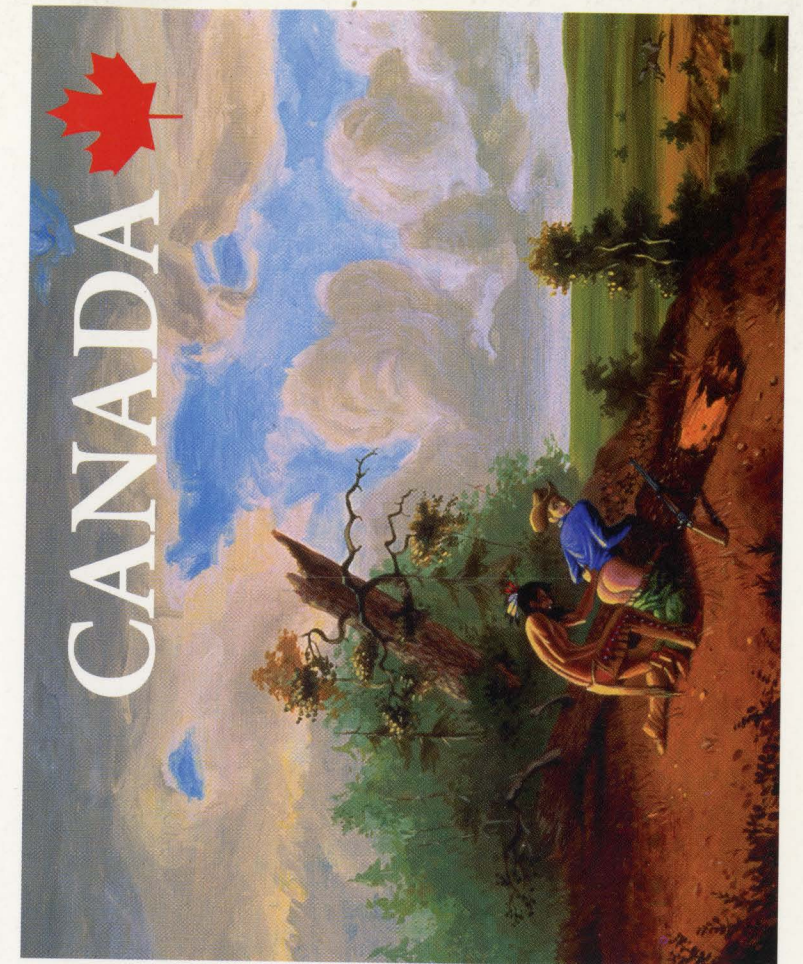
The possibilities are endless. But the first thing is to imagine the future as endless. What would it look like? And would it be a vision that celebrates our natality, the fact that we are born, and would it recognize that death, as Thomas Merton noted, happens in the midst of life? It is not the end.

You might ask why we've reproduced the images on these postcards twice.

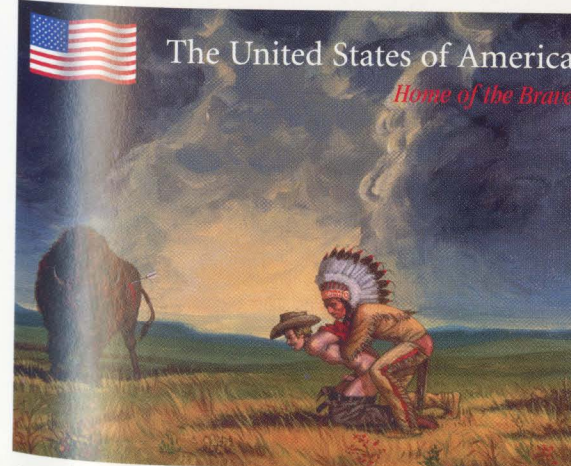
Maybe it's because we so rarely print in full colour that we wanted to fill the page.

Maybe because we think this work is so great.

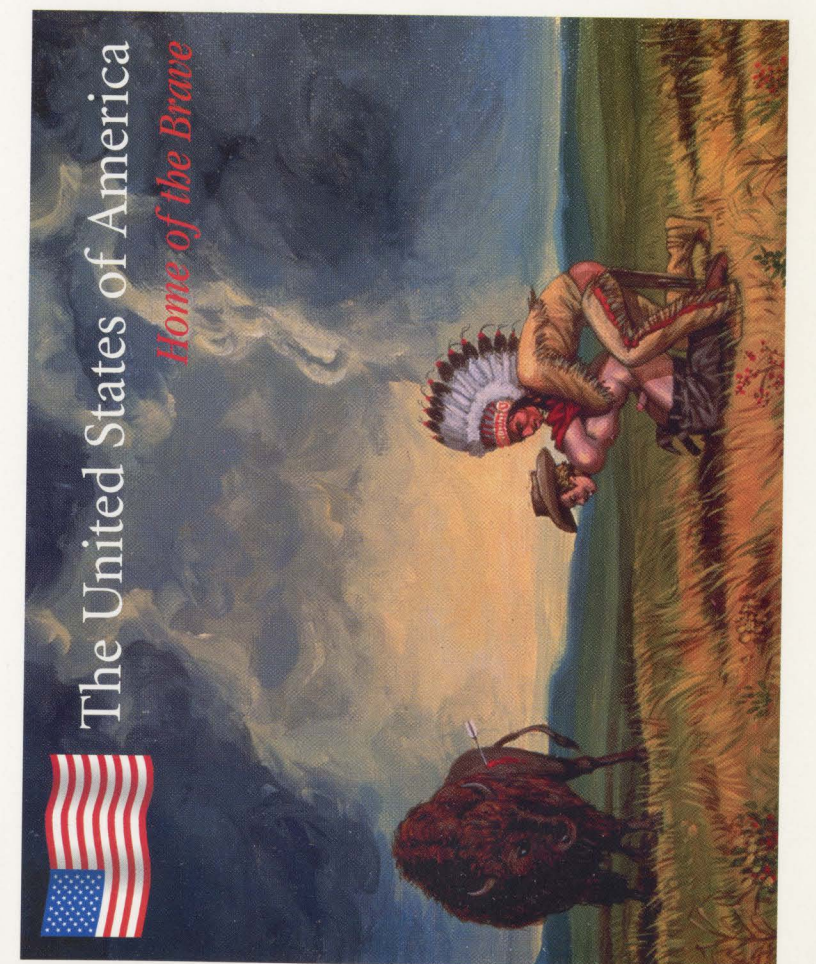
Or maybe, just maybe, it's so you'll be able to send the postcards and still have the images for yourself.



Ceci n'est pas une pipe, Kent Monkman

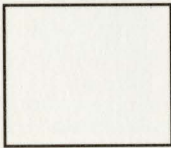


Homo on the Range, Kent Monkman



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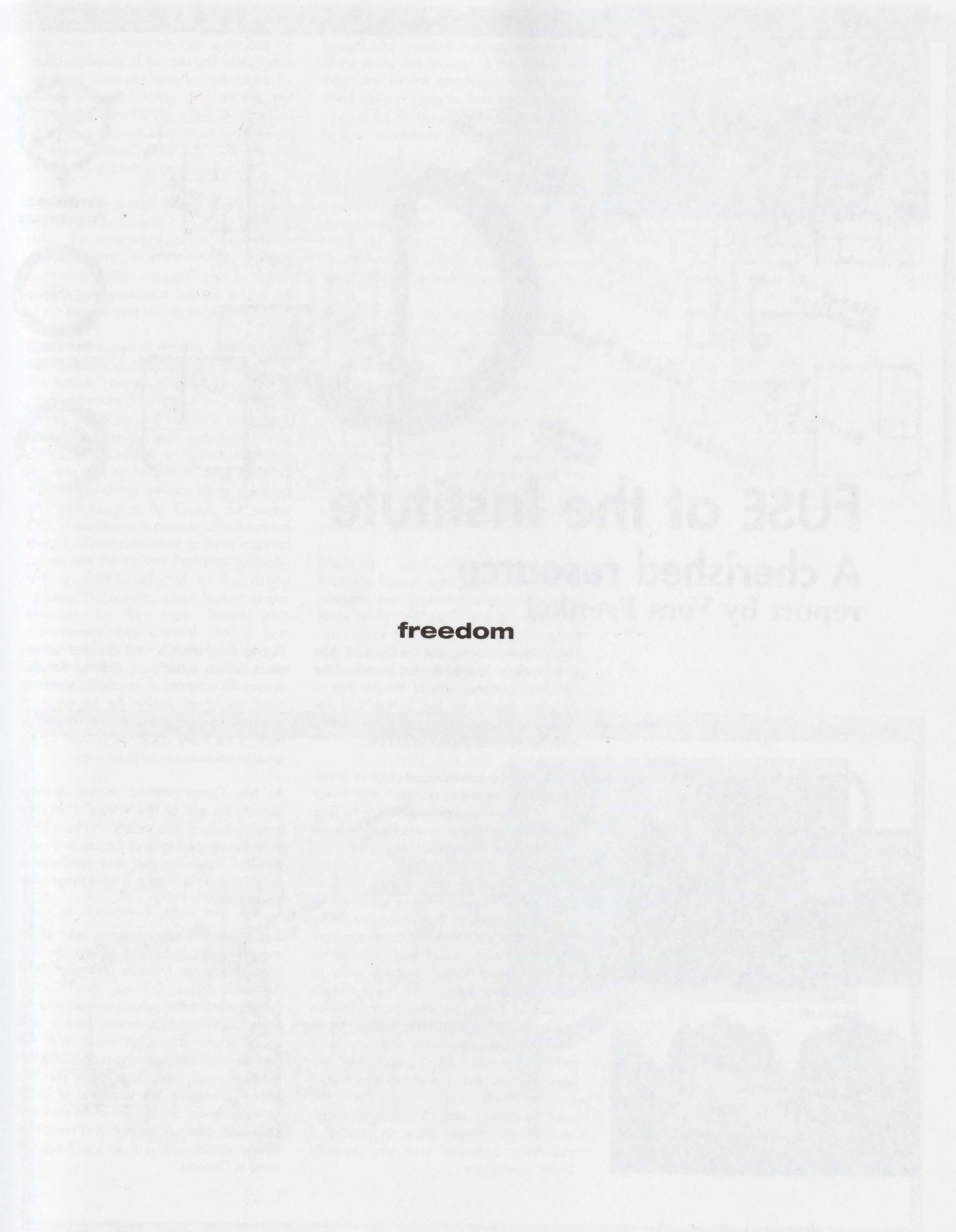
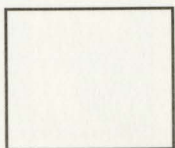
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- Facilities & Programmes
- Internal Relations
- Studio Practices

FUSE at the Institute™

A cherished resource

report by Vera Frenkel

When Sheila Copps, our minister of culture and heritage, opened the first branch of the NIA (The National Institute for the Arts — popularly known as The Institute™) in her hometown of Hamilton, we didn't realize what the national impact would be.

As the first of a coast-to-coast chain of artists' residences destined to occupy former hospitals, the policies and programmes of the flagship Institute™ — Hamilton would understandably be under several kinds of scrutiny.

Many of the initial group of forty residents listed below have national or even international reputations in their respective fields. The Institute™'s Outreach Programme connects their work and thought to creative worlds beyond former hospital walls or provincial boundaries, and The Institute™'s prestigious Visiting Lecturers' Programme (as mentioned in the CBC radio series, *Art on the Web*) permits residents and their guests to hear in person the most gifted artists, brilliant scholars and charismatic speakers of our day. Members of the larger public will soon be able to read the lecture transcripts at their own convenience on Institutem — Hamilton's dedicated web site, currently under construction.

Among The Institute™'s most attractive features are its facilities. In addition to a dining room that ensures the company of remarkable people at meal time, these include the full range of spaces, equipment and assistance required for each of the many disciplines pursued by the artists in residence at any given time.

As Ms. Copps stressed in her opening speech, the staff at The Institute™ comprises erstwhile cultural bureaucrats who have been carefully retrained to serve the arts in a more personal way, bringing their hard-earned insight and experience to a wide range of in-house tasks.

This potent arrangement is the result of an award-winning Hull-based programme that transforms former Museum Directors, Visual Arts and Music Officers, Arts Council Publicists and other cultural workers into the chefs, librarians, gardeners, nurses and social workers a prestige residence of this kind requires. The retraining programme has received major recognition for its effectiveness in harnessing this force-field of know-how into service occupations of the most sensitive kind, and is a destination of choice for foreign visitors, curious about how things are done in Canada.

One of the main centres of energy at The Institute™ is, of course, the library. Lilly Letourneau, the librarian, has embraced the multidisciplinary of her role and supervises a range of resources and special rooms for study, listening (analog and digital) and screening (all film formats, video, DVD), as well as a New Media Centre where work is continuing on Institutem — Hamilton's web site and on its future publishing programme.

The reference section of the library is quite impressive, as indeed it must be if it is to reflect the complex visions of those doing research there. Plus there is a growing archive of artists' papers: photos, manuscripts, correspondence and the like, which Lilly is steadily and skilfully augmenting.

(Fair use of copyright remains a vexed question still under discussion at this writing, with The Institute™ claiming rights to whatever is produced under its auspices, and the artists, writers, composers, film makers, choreographers, etc., asserting independent ownership of their own creative work and intellectual property. It is an unresolved issue, in some instances involving anxious family members and their lawyers. Bill Everell, the current CEO, is working with considerable discretion toward private settlements of these disputed claims, but the debate flourishes internally, and is already reflected in the Visiting Lecturers' Programme, which features a presentation by Dr. Joost Smiers [Arts Administrator and Cultural Theorist from Amsterdam] on the abolition of copyright, one of the texts soon to be posted on the web site.)

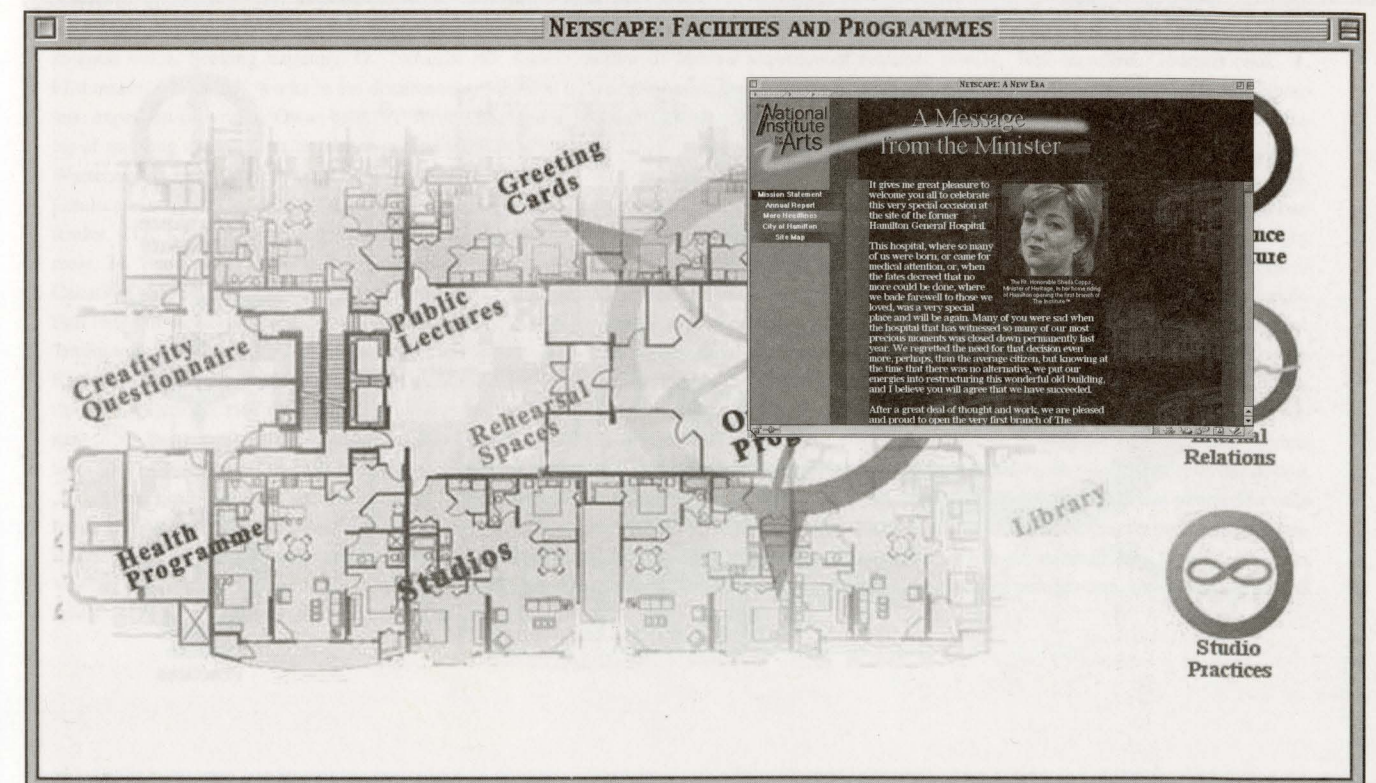
In addition to its new media and viewing facilities, its reference materials in several languages and its multidisciplinary archive, one of the many fine features of the library is a magazine section boasting a highly developed roster of journals, from popular magazines of the day to specialty publications difficult to find elsewhere.

On a recent visit, it pleased me to see — prominently displayed near *Fanfare* (the newsletter for brass performers and instrument makers) and *Fitness after Fifty* (a spa and health club monthly for fiction writers) — the most recent issue of FUSE, one of the country's leading cultural publications.

I was even more impressed when Lilly took me down a long corridor to the archive and showed me the shelves where the full twenty-five-year run of FUSE was housed. "The twenty-fifth anniversary issue should be coming off the presses any minute now," she said, "And then we'll have the complete quarter-century set!"

This means that visitors and residents can examine and enjoy the full trajectory of this remarkable publication and gauge its influence over the years on cultural theory and art practice in this country.

Much as I appreciate the access to the Hamilton Branch afforded me as a Board Member, and Ms Letourneau's friendly assistance when I'm there, I look forward to the opening of the planned second branch of The Institute™ in Toronto, which I understand will have its very own FUSE archive. There



are signs already of a longing for access to early and recent issues of FUSE — a need that should be met. (Lilly recommends that we gather all related manuscripts, illustrations and correspondence, whether in the form of hard copy or on disk, so that the archive may be well-supported by original working documents.)

In a related vein, we were also pleased to learn that a group of Torontonians has recently announced its intent to commandeer other unused building sites in the region (the Ford plant in Oakville being one suggested venue), for purposes not dissimilar to those described in The Institute™'s 1998 Charter.² It is heartening to see that the principle of repurposing or adapting obsolete buildings continues to invite imaginative attention.

FUSE, and what it represents, is at the heart of these new developments, having always been a vehicle where social engagement and cultural issues meet. The Institute™ can be described simply as the realization in concrete form of the wisdom emanating from the magazine's pages over the years. It is not surprising, therefore, that ancillary projects of a similar kind are being proposed, and we at The Institute™ commend the Oakville initiative.

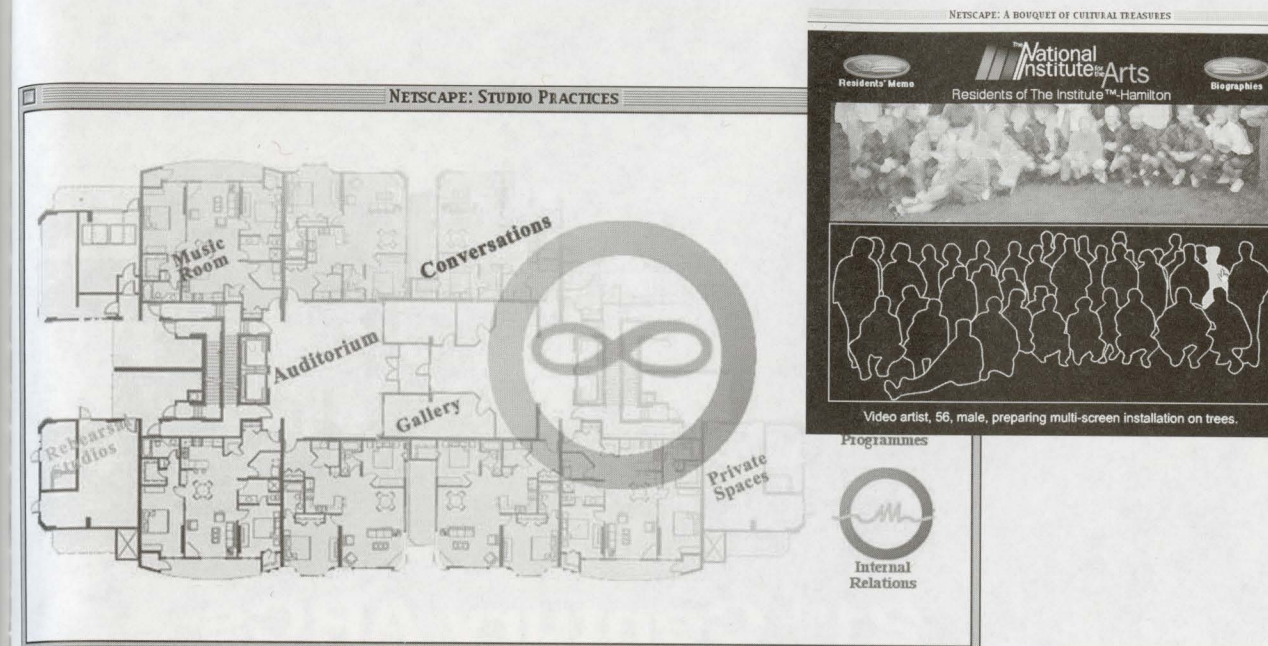
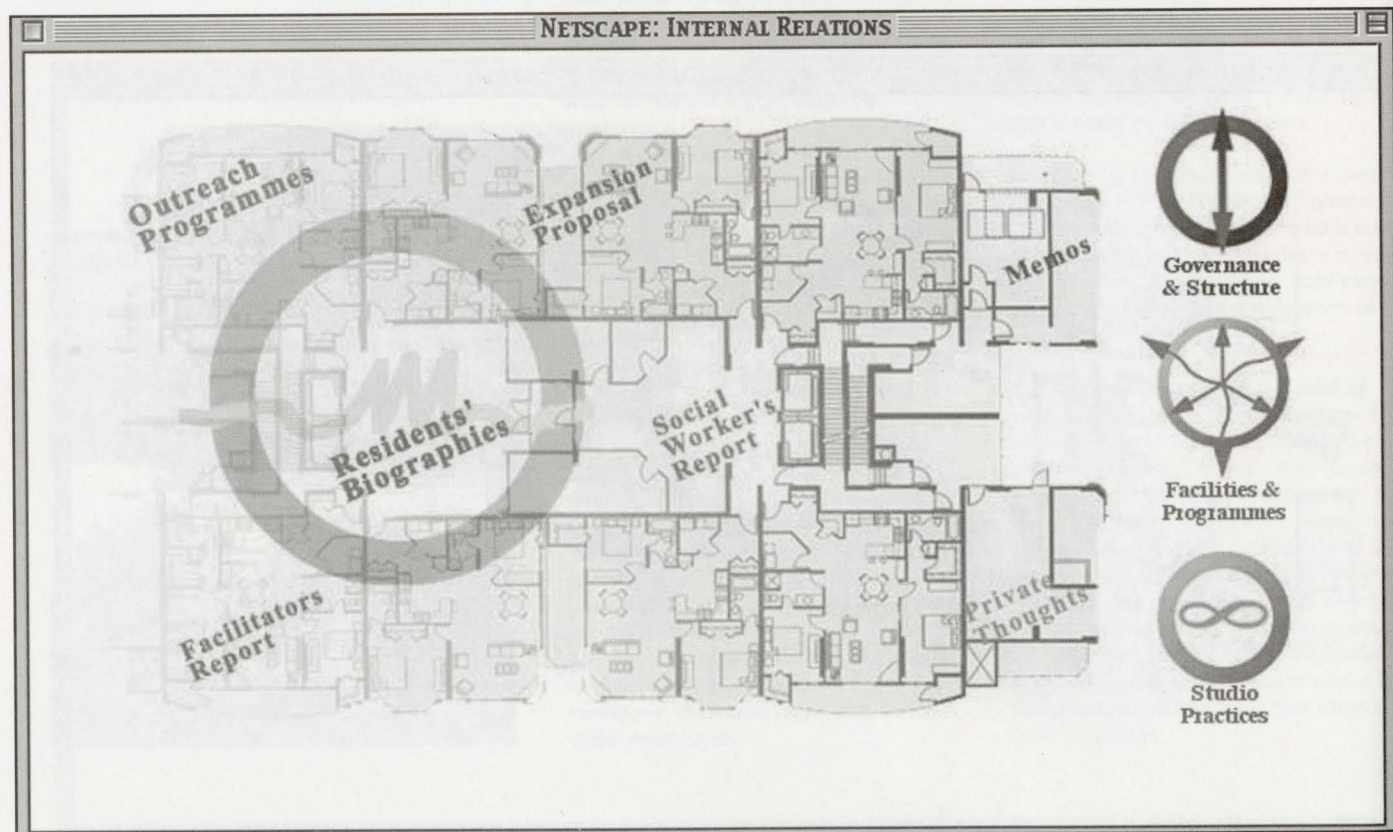
FUSE has always supported collective endeavours and collaborative projects, and The Institute™ Board is satisfied to see its influence at work, relishing the prospect that in the present cultural and economic climate,

artists will find havens of one kind or another for their activities in different parts of the country. In this spirit, it would be a fitting celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary if the Hamilton and Toronto branches of The Institute™ could reach out to the sister project in Oakville or other sites in transition and consider together how best to adapt abandoned physical plants to the changing demographics of the digital age.

For The Institute™, Ontario is just the beginning. While FUSE may have come of age in Toronto, there was a strong whiff of Calgary in the early days due to the vision and contribution of artist and writer Clive Robertson, one of the magazine's founding editors. Where there is Calgary, can Banff (suspected by some to be an early model for the Institute™) be far behind? Furthermore, with news of organizing initiatives in Trois-Rivières, Kelowna and St. John's, we can be assured that The Institute™'s national network is forming quite quickly.

In the meantime, it's a comfort to know that at the core of each location will be the full array of FUSEs, up to and including the most recent issue.

Mindful of its contribution and influence, we at The Institute™ would like to wish FUSE a very happy twenty-fifth anniversary! Thank you FUSE and many happy returns of the day! We look forward with enthusiasm to your thirtieth!



Endnotes:

1. See <http://cbc.ca/artstoday/artontheweb/frenkel.html>.
2. *n.paradoxa*, London, vol 2, 2001, pp. 39—44; or, *So, To Speak*, Editions Artex/Prendre Paroles, 1999, Sylvie Gilbert, Jean-Pierre Gilbert, Lesley Johnstone, eds., pp. 38—43.

3. Residents at The Institute™ — Hamilton.

Hamilton: Resident Biographies:

As the Director has explained elsewhere, The Institute™ protects the privacy of its residents on request. These brief biographical notes are taken from our Annual Report. Their inclusion here is not mandatory. It is The Institute™'s policy to publish the Residents' own descriptions unless any of these are found to be overly modest or exaggerated in some way, in which case they are modified by our public relations department.)

1. Painter, male, 51 years old, casual dresser, dedicated abstractionist. Prefers gin to scotch.
2. Violinist, male, 61, tall, longstanding orchestra member, formerly married. Now solo in every sense.
3. Poet, female, 59, active in the Canadian Writers Union and PEN Canada. Working on new book.
4. Choreographer, male, 55, highly respected in the dance world, in process of establishing national association.
5. Singer, male, 72, bass-baritone in good voice. Seeking harmony.
6. Novelist, 67, female, author of famous sequence of romance novels. Well-travelled. Gourmet cook.
7. Filmmaker, female, 57, works in the documentary tradition of John Grierson. Currently on location.
8. Composer, 60, male, known for early quartets, expert on copyright. Owns boat.
9. Writer, 63, female, specialty, children's books. Looking for new illustrator.
10. Dancer, 50, male, initiator of morning workouts at his branch of The Institute™. Very fit.
11. Conductor, female, 58, should know the score by now.
12. Poet, 62, male. Westerner by birth. Lyrical bent.
13. Arts journalist. Male, 70. Distinguished career. Continues to publish. Specialty: the performing arts.
14. Landscape artist, 59, male. Sculpts earth. Re-designing the access route to The Institute™-Hamilton.
15. Television writer, 58, male. Licensed bartender.
16. Choreographer, 67, female, developing project on spatial awareness and interpersonal non-verbal communication.
17. Playwright, male, 74. Team player. Values sense of humour above all else.
18. Writer, renowned anthologist, female, 63, committed to curriculum reform in Canadian schools.
19. Sculptor, 60, female, welding and sautéing skills. Public monuments a specialty.
20. Portrait photographer, 52, female. Full range of techniques.
21. Percussionist, male, 59, small and large ensemble experience.
22. Flautist, 53, female. Remarkable breath control. Traditional repertoire.
23. Cabaret singer, age uncertain. Strong international presence. Several languages.
24. Fiddler, traditional, 76, male. Known to his friends as Mr. Stamina.
25. Composer, song-writer, 58, female. Satirist, with a tender heart.
26. Actor, 55, female. Stratford, Shaw, CBC experience. ACTRA member.
27. Writer, 62, male. GG winner. Planning autobiography.
28. Landscape photographer, 66, male. Large format.
29. Painter, 67, female. Student of Borduas.
30. Theatre designer, 61, male. Sets, costumes, publicity. Special interest in touring productions.
31. Visual artist, 58, female, collage favourite medium.
32. Print designer, 64, male. Prizewinning book, brochure, custom calendar design.
33. Dancer, 53, female. Career in classical ballet and teaching. Bilingual.
34. Video artist, 56, male, preparing multi-screen projection onto trees.
35. Writer, 79, male, deconstructs the family romance, war illusions, blind faith.
36. Printmaker, 71, male. Lithography preferred medium. Building a new studio. Handles stones well.
37. Watercolourist, 63, male. Makes own paper and paints. *Plein air* training.
38. Lyricist, 62, male. Veteran of musicals, TV commercials, greeting cards. Natural rhymer.
39. Pianist, 64, female. Conservatory certification. Individual tuition, all levels.
40. Jazz singer, 61, female. Standards with a twist.

23.

21st Century ARCs

by Andrew James Paterson

I can't remember the precise date or year, but I recall reading a *Village Voice* issue in the early nineties focusing on America's National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and its precarious situation. This was, of course, the era of Senator Helms, Anne-Imelda Radice and politically motivated denials of funding to both individual artists and organizations. As is typical, the American crisis was definitely reverberating north of the border.

I recall a young computer hacker being indifferent to the fate of the NEA, since art by this point in history was not on gallery walls and floors but instead on the net, which was considered public space in a way that galleries weren't.

Already, I had become well aware of indifference and hostility among younger artists toward grants and "grant art." I recall a member of Toronto's anarcho-collective The Purple Institute gleefully asserting to Toronto Star art critic Christopher Hume that the Purple gang wished to maintain spontaneity by avoiding grant syndrome. Governmental maintenance

was for those oldsters already privileged (and trapped) within that hegemonic system.

Artist-run centres (ARCs) had long become institutional and were perceived as inaccessible and irrelevant — and not just by young artists. Arguably, the ARCs lost their initial energies and "alternative" status when they became incorporated. Non-profit organizations could no longer exhibit work by their own board members and pay honoraria. However, the artist-run centres had initially been formed as constructive responses to the lack of exhibition possibilities for particular artists and/or disciplines: don't just complain, get off the pot and start your own gallery. And a lot of artists had done exactly that, but now their function was to administer and institute policy, while themselves exhibiting in other — frequently commercial — galleries.

So, if artist-run centres were already an inflexibly inaccessible establishment in the early eighties, then why do they still exist in the twenty-first century and what might be their

roles? Can they perform constructive roles aside from continuing to continue?

It is important to remember that there have long been different models or definitions of "artist-run" and "non-profit" galleries or organizations. It is also important to note that the term artist-run was not always initially synonymous with non-profit and arguably hasn't been for some time.

The earliest ARCs emerged, in the sixties and early seventies, in tandem with emerging artistic disciplines initially perceived as being counter to established, commercially viable practices. Video, performance, experimental film and installation art were indeed messy and confusing to art dealers. With a utopian fervour, the prototypical ARCs proudly proclaimed themselves oppositional and (often) political. The ARCs were also indebted to the Canada Council and its provincial and municipal cousins, which had been established in the fifties to nurture and maintain a distinctly Canadian cultural realm independent from the laws of the American-dominated market. Times have changed, yet histories persistently resonate.

These once-provocative disciplines or practices have long become entrenched not only within the ARCs but also within public galleries and their commercial cousins. The ARCs main value for many is as a farm system for the major leagues.

And terms such as "outside," "uncompromising" and even "political" are advertising clichés. The mad artist has long been a staple of liberal individualism, and the arms-length state and other governmental funding systems have always been situated in vulnerable space, only theoretically safe from political pressures as well as those of "the market." The doppelganger of the market is of course the taxpayer. Autonomy from both market demands and taxpayer anxieties has proven difficult, if not impossible, for most artists and arts organizations. Despite its frequent political posturing, vanguardism has historically been proudly elitist. Aggressive modernism has been making a comeback both locally and beyond. But what seems a regeneration to some might appear as nostalgia to others.

How can non-profit ARCs offer anything in the twenty-first century that doesn't reek of discredited idealism, serve as a recruiting system for public and private galleries or simply provide services for competing special and other interest groups? I would suggest that ARCs commit themselves to serious and critical programming that would be unlikely — if not impossible — within commercial and public spaces.

This would, I believe, require an abandonment of the ARCs suspicion of "the curator," while not abandoning calls for submissions that just might reveal at least one fascinatingly talented relatively unknown artist. Volunteer boards do

not have the time or energy to undertake full-time programming responsibilities. Several British Columbia ARCs (Or, Artspeak and others) already employ a model involving a resident curator carefully selected by the artists comprising the gallery's board of directors.

It is a truism that not all ARCs can afford to employ curators for two- or three-year contracts, and that salaries are more attractive in the public galleries. It is also a truism that curators would likely pass through the ARC system on their way to more lucrative pastures. This might suggest that artist boards should themselves take on greater curatorial initiative, but there is an inherent risk that an ARC's board would consist of competing individuals reducing the gallery to their own service. However, boards could seek out more curatorial proposals, even while still maintaining open-call procedures.

If the twenty-first century did indeed commence with the events of September 11, 2001, then roles of art in public spaces (and also private ones masquerading as public) would seem to provide a highly provocative subject terrain for imaginative, activist curating that would engage and not merely entertain. The ARCs must avoid both lethargic introversion and bean-counter capitalism disguised as populism. They must present strong and well-articulated programming, visually engaging and seriously worthy of debate.

The Future Demands

by Anthony Kiendl

24.

The future demands a re-imagining of boundaries, proximity, relationships and difference.

Hieronymus Bosch's *The Ship of Fools*, a painting from sometime between 1480 and 1516, illustrates the means by which the mad, psychotic, brain-damaged, pathetic, weak, sick, handicapped or undesirable of Europe were packed off to distant shores. It released a community of its commitments to the troubled, yet the mad were not all inevitably expelled. Foucault points out that there was a symbolic or ritual aspect to this practice. There were sym-

bolic associations with water and insanity, and the "Ship of Fools" provided an image of the individual search for the soul, health and meaning to those who witnessed its arrival or departure. Despite this practice many in the early Renaissance treated the ill with kindness and felt that they belonged with their families. There even emerged a perception of wisdom and profundity associated with the mad or the fool. Value was sometimes assigned to the "ravings" of a "lunatic."

Other treatments for the mentally ill in Europe are with us today. These include various forms of incarceration, whether in hospitals, asylums or prisons. While varied and changing over time, our disposition toward those who are different is based at a fundamental and historical level upon a degree of distance between us and the other. Today's fashion, to have the mentally different in homes among a "normal" community sometimes benefits the individual, but when prescribed as the only placement for all, may cause hardship for those who need more rigorous attention and care.



Detail from Hieronymus Bosch's *Ship of Fools*

Whether a ship of fools, an insane asylum, hospital, community living or even walking the streets, the central principle of our relationships seems to be based on the proximity of mental illness to "us." It assumes a kind of self-centred position in the treatment of mental difference that is based on the position of normalcy.

The future demands that society look to artists for insight about what might be the beginning of a different relationship to those who are mentally different. Artists with their skilled perception, collaborative experience, understanding of spatial relationships, empathic abilities, unconventional thinking and openness to the abnormal, illogical or overlooked will lead the way to a richness of social research that is currently underused. I am not suggesting a moral imperative to art, or that art be only in the service of therapy. I am not suggesting a relationship to mental illness where one simply imagines oneself in the other's shoes. The future demands a kind of sharing that starts with, but asks more than, empathy, sympathy or identification with the other. The future demands relationships that are neither legal, contractual or institutional. It demands a re-imagination of space, habitation and relationships informed by art and artists.

If art becomes widely received as a critical element of understanding ourselves and each other — as social agent and research — we may see the possibility of art as a critical and integral base of knowledge in broader aspects of society. Beyond this, art may be seen not only as an object, but as mental space, a means that may also imagine a different proximity to and understanding of those among us who also see things differently.

The future demands that society look to artists for insight about what might be the beginning of a different relationship to those who are mentally different.

now!

by Jessica Wyman

I've been thinking about the future. Mostly, I've been thinking about other people's conceptions of the future, whether they involve utopic or dystopic anticipations, psychic anamnesis, cyborgian fantasies, telematic obsessions, colonial irritations or interplanetary designs. All this future-thinking has set me past-thinking, and makes me realize that we do the least of our thinking about the present. This makes a kind of sense—because of a temporal glitch, the present disappears behind us even faster than it unravels before us. There are no definitions of when history becomes history, no particular moment when the present becomes something that has already passed by. The past is “all time before the present,” and the present is “that which is before one” (Oxford English Dictionary, second edition, 1989).

Historical discontents and future fabulations have closed us to the possibilities of Now: our moment, the moment that is not transient but eternal because it is the one we are always in, the one that is before us. The future may well

start with the past, but can only be entered and engaged through the present. Now.

The “future focus” in which we find ourselves does provide a sense of purpose; it is a thing to work toward, a goal, a reason for action, even if that reason is attainment, the fulfilment of our desires, the sense of being ourselves, only better. Without a sense of imminent (or at least possible) completion, what would motivate us? My local YMCA recently had posters on the walls proclaiming itself as “aware of our past, focused on the future.” The slogan caught my eye not just in its whole-hearted announcement of itself, so earnestly, as operating on a narrative, historical continuum, but also for semantic reasons. The past is “ours,” the future is not. For all our supposed, collective, mediated desires to possess the future, to know and understand what it holds and our places therein, and certainly despite the alternately enthusiastic and nihilistic media rhetoric about settlements on Mars, population projections and “progress! progress! progress!” the future belongs to no one. This is precisely its appeal and its threat.

We are granted absolution in the future that never is; for the future is beyond nostalgia for a mis/remembered and re/constructed past, and we are not yet accountable for errors (sins?) of omission, neglect, ineptitude. Presentism is, in theory if not in actuality, consequence-free (a conundrum, for consequences can only exist in moments after the ones we are permanently in). Freed from anticipations of repercussion, we would then be released to concentrate on the (em)betterment of the moment we are in. If this sounds utopian (mostly a term of denigration these days, but still called by Henry Giroux a form of “educated hope”), I'd rather think of it as a form of meliorism, though that may seem just as objectionable to some. Hoping that a focus on the present may make us and the worlds we live in better through a kind of humanism or humanitarianism may be seen to open the door to anarchy, but given our current states of government, that might not be an entirely bad thing.

If F. T. Marinetti's conception of futurism included claims to the more-than-human (both celestial and machine-like) and the bestial (pulsating, powerful) together, presentism seems a little more laid back, a little less stressful. The sprint forward (“progress” only moves in one direction) is ever so exhausting.

Me? I spend my time these days reading and writing, and teaching people to read and to think. And maybe I do those things with a future goal in mind more than just the present (which might be as well spent watching cartoons), and maybe that just reinforces that the desired outcome of education is to produce good (read: responsible) citizens; but I still like my kind of responsibility, my kind of citizenship, my kind of presentness. On my planet, at this moment, it is only me who is accountable.

Freed from anticipations of repercussion, we would then be released to concentrate on the (em)betterment of the moment we are in.

Karma Clarke-Davis is an artist who lives and usually works in Toronto, although she is currently living in Berlin being glamorous.

Richard Fung is a Toronto-based videomaker and writer. His latest video is *Islands* (2002), and he has recently published *13 Conversations about Art and Cultural Race Politics* (Montreal: Artex, 2002), co-authored with Monika Kin Gagnon. He coordinates the Centre for Media and Culture in Education at OISE/UT, and among other honors has received the Bell Canada Award for outstanding achievement in Video Art.

Annie Gérin is assistant professor of art history at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan. Educated in Canada, Russia and the UK, her research interests encompass the areas of Soviet art, Canadian public art and art on the world wide web. She is especially concerned with art encountered by non-specialized publics, outside the gallery space.

Dave Dymant is a Toronto based artist/writer. He works at Art Metropole and sits on the board of directors for Mercer Union and 7a11d.

Alex Snukal is an artist who lives and works in Toronto.

Michelle Jacques is currently on a leave-of-absence from her position as assistant curator, contemporary art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, where her recent projects include the year-long video series, Video Primer (2000-2001) and Present Tense shows with Niki Lederer (2001) and Karma Clarke-Davis (2000). Her independent projects include the group exhibitions *Digitalized: Inside the Electronic Dream* curated for Gallery TPW (2000) and here, presented at Robert Birch Gallery, Toronto (1999). She recently contributed to "The Big Picture Feature" in *Lola*; interviewed artist Brent Roe for the catalogue for his exhibition *Who Means What* (Kingston, Ontario: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2002); and is a contributing editor with FUSE Magazine.

contributors

Robin Pacific takes time out from watching Buffy reruns to work on a collaborative art project with security guards at the Art Gallery of Ontario, raise grant money for a training program in Cultural Animation, paint, and sit on various committees. She chairs the Board of Art Starts Neighbourhood Cultural Centre, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. She recently joined the Red Head Gallery.

Dot Tuer is a writer, cultural historian and professor at the Ontario College of Art and Design who divides her time between Toronto and Corrientes, Argentina. A book of her collected essays on culture and art is forthcoming from YYZ books.

Tom Sherman refuses to provide an image or a brief profile of himself.

Rob Kovitz is, among other things, creator and publisher of Treyf bookworks (including *Pig City Model Farm*, *Room Behavior*, *Games Oligopolists Play*, and *Death Wish, Starring Charles Bronson, Architect*) and online projects (<http://www.treyf.com>). Treyf (*adj. [Yiddish] – not kosher*) is cooked up using texts and images collected from various sources that are recombined through a process of meticulous but highly subjective editing, ordering and juxtaposition. He is currently working on a big book called *Ice Fishing in Gimli*, which is taking somewhat longer to complete than first anticipated. He currently lives in Winnipeg because it has very interesting weather.

Jeffrey Thomas was born in Buffalo, NY and now lives in Ottawa. He is a member of the Onondaga nation, part of the Six Nations Confederacy. Issues of First Nations identity and representation foreground his curatorial as well as artistic practice. Most recently, he curated an exhibition at the National Archives of Canada, *Where Are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools*. His work has been collected by numerous institutions in Canada and the United States. In 1998, he was awarded the Canada Council's prestigious Duke and Duchess of York Photography Prize.

Artist and critic, **Clive Robertson** has satisfyingly graced the cover of three international art magazines: twice impersonating Joseph Beuys and once impersonating television advertising. He currently teaches contemporary art history and policy studies at Queen's University. For a free copy of the anniversary sequential set of performance postcards, "W.O.R.K.S. Plays History, 1972-2002," send your name and address to cr16@post.queensu.ca

Michael Fernandes is a mixed media artist who lives in East Dover, NS and teaches part time at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. His email is mickeyfernando@hotmail.com.

Janis Demkiw thinks a lot about frames and spaces. Current projects include *Beauty*, a residency at The Banff Centre, and an upcoming show at Solo Exhibition in Toronto. Demkiw graduated in 1999 with a BFA from York University, and is a member of the board of directors of Mercer Union. She lives and works in Toronto. janis.demkiw@sympatico.ca.

Skawennati Tricia Fragnito is a content developer who uses both new and not-so new media for writing, art and curatorial projects. These include *CyberPowWow*, a recurring, online event plus virtual gallery and chat space; *Blanket Statements*, an exhibition of art quilts; and *The People's Plastic Princess*, a survey of Barbie art. Recently she launched *Artist for the Ethical Treatment of Humans*, her own personal subvertisement campaign, and now she is quite excited about a web-based digital-video jukebox called *80 Minutes, 80 Movies, 80s Music*. The piece she talks about in this article can be seen at <http://www.imaginingindians.net>. Please visit <http://www.skawennati.com> to learn more.

Rinaldo Walcott is a writer and cultural critic who lives and works in Toronto. He's published more than we can keep track of, but continue to be inspired by his call to "think differently."

Roula Partheniou is a Toronto-based multi-disciplinary artist. She is a recent graduate of the University of Guelph and is currently employed by Art Metropole.

In the future, **Kathy Walker** will complete her doctorate in social and political thought. She will continue to work as a freelance writer and gesture artist. In addition she is hoping to figure out the all of the everything. You will be able to find her at www.yorku.ca/kathy.

Susan Kelly was born in Kilquigan, Ireland. She received a ba in fine art from the National College of Art and Design in Dublin and an ma in cultural studies from the University of Leeds. From 1998 - 2001, Kelly lived and worked in New York, where she participated in the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Programme, the World Trade Centre's 91st floor studio residency and the Sixteen Beaver Street Collective. Kelly's work has been included in exhibitions at Art in General and the Kent Gallery New York, The Brewster Project and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's World Views exhibition. Kelly currently resides in the UK and is working towards a PhD at Goldsmith's College as well as projects for the Contemporary Museum, Skopje, Macedonia and the *Amorph!* performance festival in Helsinki 2003.

Stephen Morton is a lecturer in English philology and visual culture at the University of Tampere, Finland. Morton completed his PhD at the University of Leeds in 2000 and participated in the critical studies component of the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Programme in New York 2000-2001. He has published widely on post-colonial theory, literature, Canadian Studies and visual culture in journals such as *Radical Philosophy*, *Interventions: An International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, *Circa: Irish and International Contemporary Visual Culture* and *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*. His forthcoming book, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, part of the Routledge Critical Thinkers Series, will be published in November of this year.

Sarah Laakkuluk Williamson (Sarah Nya Laakkuluk Jessen Williamson to the furthest extent of her name) is an undergraduate student at the University of Calgary. She studies International Relations, Political Science and Russian. She is an Inuk of Greenlandic and English ancestry, happily mingling with all her cultural backgrounds. For approximately ten years, Sarah has performed *uaajeerneaq* – Greenlandic mask dancing for audiences all across Canada, the United States and Europe. She has performed independently, with her mother, with Aqsarniit (a group based in Iqaluit) and Sikumiut (a Calgary-based group). These days, Sarah is busy creating her own dance troupe with two other Inuit women and another "Inuk-inspired" man. The group's name is Mitaartut: Inuit Dreams and Voices.

Kent Monkman is a filmmaker and visual artist who began his exploration of the arts as a painter; his paintings have been shown in galleries across Canada, the United States, and Mexico. His installations have been exhibited in such venues as the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Art Gallery of Hamilton. He has designed sets for theatre and dance and illustrated various books including a children's book by the celebrated Canadian author, Thomas King.

b.h. Yael is a Toronto-based filmmaker, video and installation artist. She is associate professor and chair in the integrated media area of the Ontario College of Art and Design. She is currently working on an hour-long piece, *Trading the Future*, which addresses a number of issues simultaneously: apocalypse, environment, activism, water, Western "secularism" and globalization. She is also actively involved in Coalition for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel.

Vera Frenkel is an internationally recognized artist and video producer. Her installations, videotapes, drawings, graphics and performances have been presented in major festivals and galleries throughout Canada and in many of the world's leading art centres.

Andrew James Paterson is an interdisciplinary artist and writer based in Toronto. He is co-editor of *Money, Value, Art* (YYZ Books, 2001). He dedicates his essay to the memory of Susan Kealey in gratitude for her article, "As Alternative as You Want Me To Be" (FUSE, vol. 21, no. 4).

Anthony Kiendl is director of visual arts and Walter Phillips Gallery at The Banff Centre.

Jessica Wyman is an art historian and an independent curator and art writer who recently moved back to Toronto.

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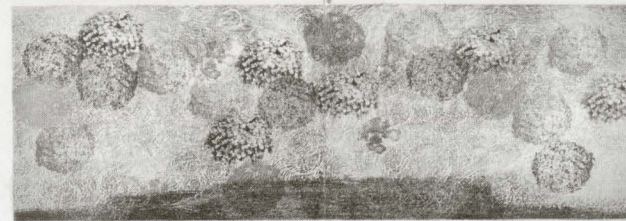
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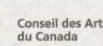
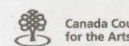
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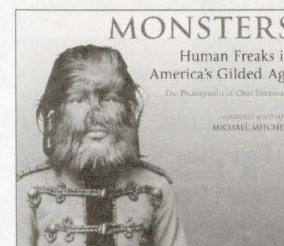
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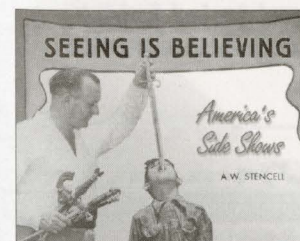
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October 31 - December 7, 2002

MAIN GALLERY Julie Andreyev and Thomas Kneubühler *Optica*
VITRINES Emily Muir *Inside Looking Out*
PROJECT ROOM Julie Andreyev *Dustclouds*

January 4 - February 1, 2003

MAIN GALLERY Celine Messier *Reflection*
VITRINES Alex Homanchuk, Recipient of Verant Richards Scholarship
PROJECT ROOM Guilherme Maranhão *Plural III*

February 6 - March 8, 2003

MAIN GALLERY Vid Ingelevics and Patrick Altman *Codicologie(s)*
VITRINES Nicola Woods

Exhibition Submission Deadlines: September 15 • January 15 • May 15



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Image: Julie Andreyev, video stills from *Dustclouds*, 2002.

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James Luna
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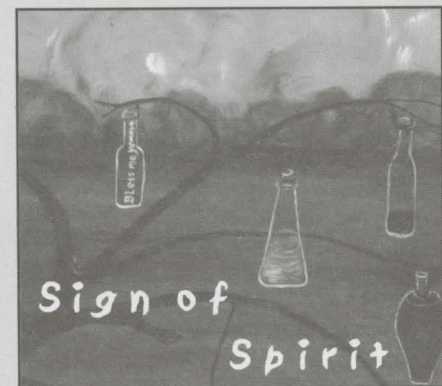
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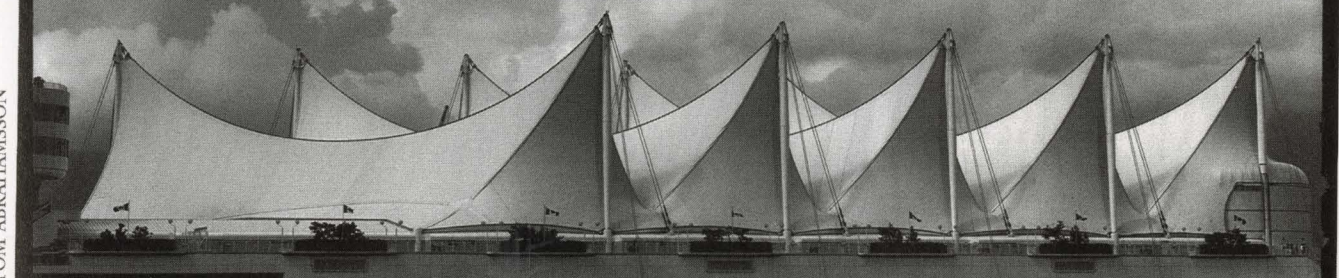
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