

Volume 19 Number 3 \$4.50

A magazine about issues of art and culture

FUSE

MAGAZINE

Flagging Cultures

Kyo Maclear on Japanese Contemporary Art and the "Japan Today" exhibition

Susan Crean on Cultural Nationalism and the Arts

Canada, Mexico, NAFTA and Culture
by José Springer

David McIntosh on Futurism, World's Fairs and the Phantom Teleceiver



plus reviews of Ron Benner, "From Memory to Transformation" and *Black Noise*



CKLN 88.1 FM



**[I] made a vow
That day**

**To be great in all learnings,
No more uncertain.
My pride lives in my education,
And I will relate wonders to my
people.**

- Rita Joe

WARNING:

MORE PEOPLE HAVE GRANTA STOLEN FROM THEIR HOMES THAN ANY OTHER MAGAZINE

TEN REASONS TO STEAL GRANTA:

1. FICTION

T. Coraghessan Boyle, Martin Amis, Louise Erdrich, Richard Ford, Isabel Allende, Allan Gurganus, Jayne Anne Phillips, Italo Calvino, Margaret Atwood, Don DeLillo, Kazuo Ishiguro, Paul Auster, Tim O'Brien.

2. POLEMIC

Germaine Greer on Cuban women, Günter Grass on the German character, Gore Vidal on God, Martha Gellhorn on why she will never return to Germany, Neil Steinberg on the tragedy of spelling bees.

3. AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Ivan Klima on his childhood—in a Nazi concentration camp, John Updike on his stutter, Richard Rayner on his former life as a petty thief, Mary Karr's horrifying 'Grandma Moore', two murderers on what it's like to kill.

4. FIRSTS

Salman Rushdie's first statement after going into hiding; the first (and only), publication of Sappho Durrell's diaries revealing the dark side of her relationship with her famous father, Lawrence.

5. REPORTAGE

James Fenton on the fall of Saigon, Jonathan Raban on the flooded Mississippi, Amitav Ghosh on dancing in Cambodia, Helen Epstein on Aids in Africa, Nuha Al-Radi in Baghdad during the Allied bombing.

6. PHOTOGRAPHY

Gilles Peress in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, Eugene Richards in a Denver emergency room, Mary Ellen Mark on Spring Break at Daytona Beach, Steve Pyke's portraits of the very, very rich.

7. TRAVEL WRITING

Bruce Chatwin's unpublished notebooks, Bill Bryson with fat girls in Des Moines, Redmond O'Hanlon in the Congo in search of the last dinosaur, Paul Theroux in the New York subways and in a Malawi leper colony.

8. REVELATIONS

James Ellroy on the sexed-up, drugged-out world of LA in the fifties, Ian Buruma on memory and forgetting at Buchenwald, Mikal Gilmore's story of growing up with a homicidal brother—Gary.

9. PRIZE WINNERS

Nadine Gordimer, Ben Okri, Gabriel García Márquez, Saul Bellow, William Boyd, Jeanette Winterson, Mario Vargas Llosa, Tobias Wolff, Tracy Kidder, Heinrich Böll.

10. DURABILITY

Ninety-two percent of our 80,000 readers never throw a single issue away, ever. That's why we print each 256-page issue of *Granta* on high quality, acid free paper with a striking full-colour cover—it's meant to last.

ONE REASON TO SUBSCRIBE

1. YOU SAVE 30%

You'll save over 30% from the cover price with this offer. (Each issue of *Granta* sells for \$13.99 in bookshops.) Besides, stealing could get you into trouble.

'Granta: the most highly praised paperback magazine... the praise is deserved.'

—*New York Times Book Review*

'If there is a document of our time, *Granta* is it.'

—*Spin*

'An exciting index of the freshest international writing.'

—*Newsweek*

SPECIAL OFFER FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Enter my subscription to *Granta* at the special introductory rate of only **\$39.50** CDN (includes GST) for one year. I'll receive four 256-page issues and save over 30% from the price in bookshops. **Guarantee:** If I am ever dissatisfied with *Granta*, I can cancel my subscription, and *Granta* will refund me for all unmailed issues.

Name _____

Address _____

City/ Province/ Postcode _____ A6DFUD

\$ _____ enclosed.*

Check
(*\$39.50* CDN on CDN bank or *\$29.95* US on a US bank)

Am Ex MC Visa Bill me.

Card no. _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Credit cards will be charged at US\$ rates. Please allow 4 - 6 weeks delivery. Rates outside of Canada: USA \$26.25 CDN/\$19.95 US, Mexico/S.America \$35.50 CDN/\$26.95 US, Rest of World \$50.00 CDN/\$37.95 US.

GRANTA

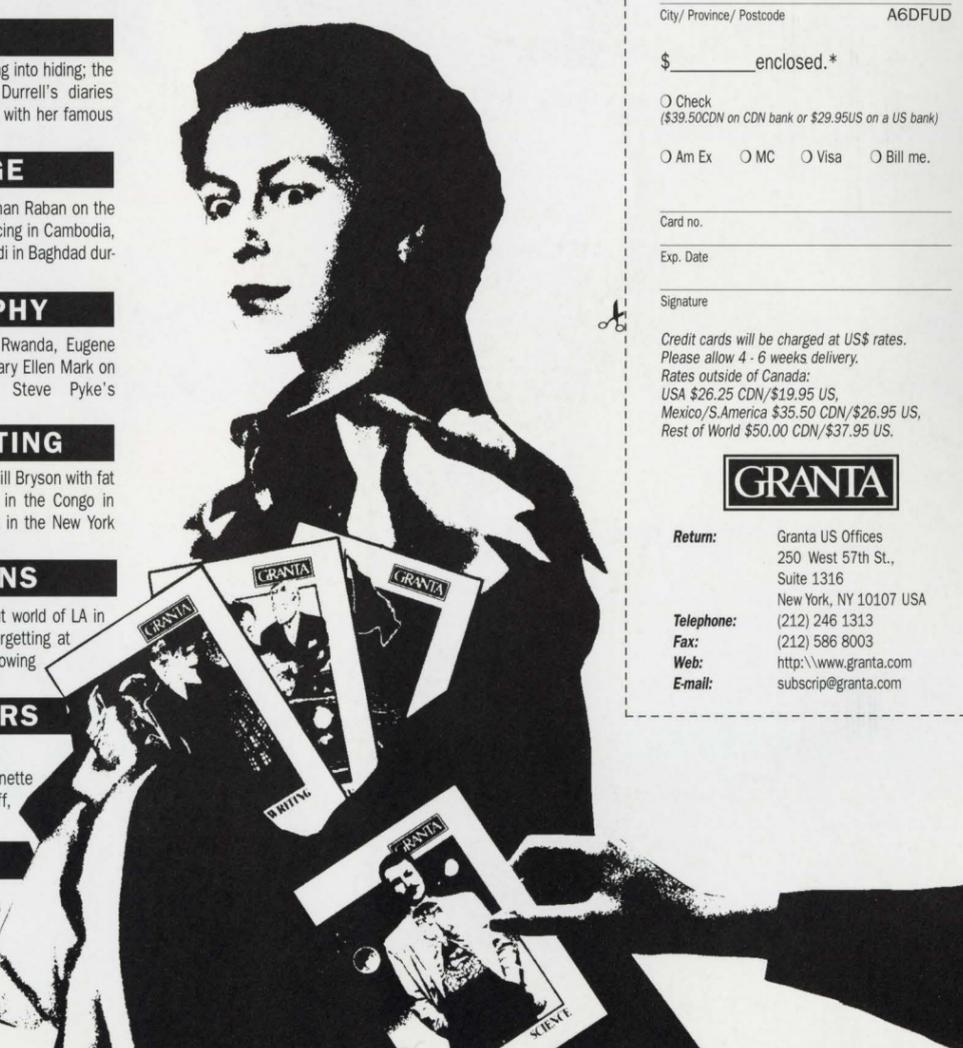
Return: Granta US Offices
250 West 57th St.,
Suite 1316
New York, NY 10107 USA

Telephone: (212) 246 1313

Fax: (212) 586 8003

Web: <http://www.granta.com>

E-mail: subscrip@granta.com



THE SUBVERSIVE NORMALCY OF THE GAZE

Italian Landscape Photographers of the Eighties
April 6 to April 20—Reception Saturday April 6, 2-5pm

IMAGES OF NOW

13 NOW Magazine Photographers
April 23 to May 24—Reception Saturday April 27, 2-5pm

BEST OF FOURTH YEAR

A Juried Exhibition from the Graduating Students of Ryerson University's
Film and Photography Department
May 28 to June 15—Reception Saturday June 1, 2-5pm

BE NOT AFRAID OF MY BODY

The Photography of Danny Ogilvie
June 18 to July 20—Reception Saturday June 22, 2-5pm

Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Friday 12-5pm Saturday 11-5pm

RYERSON GALLERY

80 Spadina Ave., Suite 305, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 2J4
(416) 703-2235

images may 2-11

9th annual festival of independent film and video
Toronto Canada

for info call (416) 971-8405
website <http://www.interlog.com/~images>
featuring over 100 indie films & videos + a new interactive media programme

Diasporic South Asian
Culture Politics Activism

DESH PARDESH
FESTIVAL/CONFERENCE 1996

Festival/Conference Mainspace:
Metro Central YMCA 20 Grosvenor Street, Toronto

For More Information:
Tel. (416) 504 9932 Fax. (416) 504 9973

June 5-9 1996 Toronto

Censorship and the Arts:

Law,
Controversy,
Debate,
Facts

by **Brenda Cossman**,
associate professor of law, Osgoode Hall

foreword by Robert Fulford

A multi-faceted examination of censorship and the arts in Canada,
published in 1995 by the Ontario Association of Art Galleries.

147 pages, soft cover, ISBN 0-9694987-9-9

Prepaid orders only:

\$17.12 per copy (\$12. + \$4. shipping + handling + \$1.12 GST); cheques payable to OAAG. VISA orders also accepted. (Please include your card number and expiry date.)

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ART GALLERIES

489 King Street West, Suite 306, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1K4
Telephone: (416) 598-0714; Fax: (416) 598-4128

À l'est de l'Outaouais, Part I
videos by Robert Morin & Lorraine Dufour
March 13 - April 13

A Maze of Complicity
Anton Vidokle, Dianna Frid & Luca Buvoli
essay by Laura Marks
March 20 - April 13

John Porter
Toy Catalogue
April 17 - May 18

Whipped Cream, Percentages & Pink Noise
work by Anda Kubis & Laurel Woodcock
April 24 - May 18

La Femme écran|The Reflexive Woman
Cathy Sisler curated by Nicole Gingras
May 22 - June 22

Ed Pien
work from the Image Bank
May 29 - June 22

CONTACT YYZ FOR FILM, VIDEO &
PERFORMANCE SUBMISSION DEADLINES.

YYZ

YYZ Artists' Outlet
1087 Queen St. West
Toronto, Canada. M6J 1H3

tel. 416-531-7869 | fax 416-531-6839

YYZ acknowledges the support of The Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Province of Ontario, through the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation; the City of Toronto, through the Toronto Arts Council; and the Municipality of Metro Toronto, Cultural Affairs Division.

Chuck Samuels and Bill Parsons
Psychoanalysis
Main Gallery
May 16 to June 21

Le Groupe Agriculturel
New Work
Main Gallery
May 16 to June 21

Representechnics
Projects Room(s)
May 16 to June 21

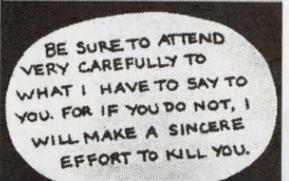
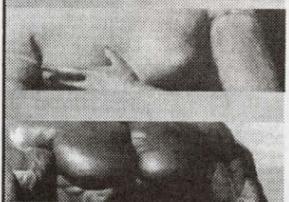
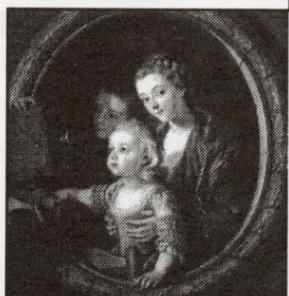
Donna Nield, Mole Countertops
Marc Behiels, Digital Landscapes
Germaine Koh, Witness

Emerging Artists Showcase
Main Gallery and Projects Room(s)
July 25 to August 23

A juried group exhibition featuring work by emerging artists. Up to 5 projects will be selected from an open call. Selectors include Diana Nemiroff, Curator of Contemporary Art, National Gallery of Canada. Please contact the Gallery for submission guidelines (deadline for submissions: May 3).

Gallery 101

319 Lesgar Street, Ottawa, Ontario - 613 230 2799



The MIT Press

GOOD LOOKING

Essays on the Virtue of Images

Barbara Maria Stafford

Citing the value of visualization in the information age, art historian Stafford laments the low status of images in our culture and critiques the automatic identification of images with vice and propaganda. 320 pp., 98 illus. \$30.00 (June)

Now in Paperback

ARTFUL SCIENCE

Enlightenment Entertainment and the Eclipse of Visual Education

Barbara Maria Stafford

"A scholarly and lucid analysis of the replacement of an oral-visual culture in favor of a text-centered one. Highly readable...a fascinating 'side-look' at the world of art." — *Art Times*
384 pp., 197 illus. \$20.00 paper

THE EVOLUTION OF ALLURE

Sexual Selection from the Medici Venus to the Incredible Hulk

George L. Hersey

This book brings Darwinism for the first time to art history, arguing that by showcasing human beauty, Western art has influenced the course of our evolution.

256 pp., 146 illus. \$40.00

OUT OF ORDER, OUT OF SIGHT

Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta-Art 1968-1992

Volume II: Selected Writings in Art Criticism 1967-1992

Adrian Piper

"Adrian Piper is one of the most provocative, insightful, and articulate of contemporary American voices." — Joyce Carol Oates

Out of Order, Out of Sight is an artistic and intellectual autobiography and an (occasionally scathing) commentary on mainstream art, American culture, and art criticism.

Volume I: 320 pp., 42 illus. \$35.00
Volume II: 320 pp., 42 illus. \$35.00

To order call toll-free 1-800-356-0343 (US & Canada) or (617) 625-8569. Prices higher outside the U.S. and subject to change without notice.

FUSE

MAGAZINE

Board of Directors

Millie Chen, Richard Fung, Marilyn Jung, David McIntosh, Francine Périnet, Deborah Root, Dot Tuer, Rinaldo Walcott, Chris Wodskou

Contributing Editors

Clint Burnham (Vancouver), Joane Cardinal-Schubert (Calgary), Thea Demetropoulos (Winnipeg), Allan deSouza (Los Angeles), Andrea Fatona (Peterborough), Sylvie Fortin (Ottawa), Anne Golden (Montreal), Jorge Luis Marzo and Tere Badia (De Calor Magazine, Barcelona), Ashok Mathur (Calgary), Ian Rashid (London), Clive Robertson (Montreal), Reginald Woolery (New York)

Contributors

Susan Crean, Kyo Maclear, David McIntosh, Catherine Osborne, Joan Richardson, José Springer, Chris Wodskou

Staff

Petra Chevrier (Production and Design)
Shawn Venasse (Advertising and Promotion)
Thanks to Millie Chen, Marilyn Jung, David McIntosh, Deborah Root, Dot Tuer and Chris Wodskou for copy editing.
Thanks also to Christine Ling for editorial assistance, Pamela Atkinson for image research and production assistance and John Maxwell and Shawn Syms for proofreading.

FUSE is published five times a year (includes one special issue) by Artons Cultural Affairs Society and Publishing Inc., a non-profit artist's organization. Our offices are located at 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 454, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 3A8, E-mail: fuse@intacc.web.net, tel: (416) 340-8026, fax: (416) 340-0494. All newsstand inquiries should be sent to this address. Publication mail registration No. 4455.

Copyright © 1996 Artons Publishing Inc. All rights reserved under International Copyright Union. Any reproduction without permission is prohibited. Artons Publishing purchases First North American Serial Rights and copyright reverts to the writer after publication. Artons Publishing assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts. Manuscripts not accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope will not be returned. A copy of our Writers' Guidelines is available on request. Publication of an advertisement in FUSE does not include endorsement of the advertiser by the magazine. Opinions expressed outside of specifically marked editorials are not necessarily held by members of the editorial board.

FUSE acknowledges financial assistance from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture and Communications, and the many hours of volunteer and partially paid labour that are provided by everyone listed on our masthead.

Subscription rates: \$20 per year; institutions \$32 per year (in Canada only). Outside Canada \$24 U.S. per year; institutions \$38 U.S. Decisions regarding who qualifies as an individual subscriber remain the right of the publisher.

Printed in Canada on recycled, acid-free paper with vegetable-based inks by The Rewco Printing Group.

ISSN 0838-603X

FUSE is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and is a member of the Canadian Magazine Publisher's Association.

CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION
ARTEXTÉ
DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

contents

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 3 SPRING 1996

5 Editorial

Column

- 6 THE LUCITE BOX
Futurism, World's Fairs and the Phantom Teleceiver
by David McIntosh

Features

- 12 NOW YOU SEE IT, NOW YOU DON'T
Two Decades of Cultural Nationalism and the Arts in Canada
by Susan Crean
- 20 FLAGGING CULTURES IN MOTION
Japanese Contemporary Art in the New World Order
by Kyo Maclear
- 31 BIRDS OF A FEATHER
Canada, Mexico, NAFTA and Culture
by José Springer

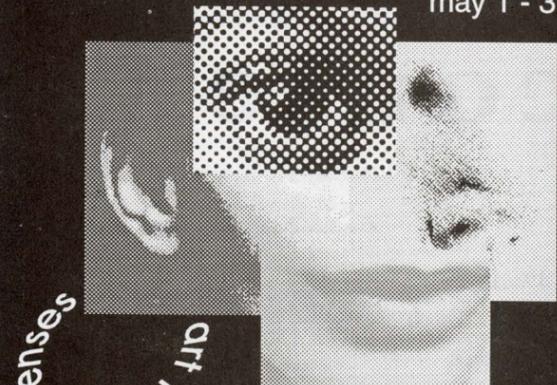
Reviews

- 41 FOUCAULT'S POTATOES
Ron Benner: All That Has Value
Review by Joan Richardson
- 43 FROM MEMORY TO TRANSFORMATION
Jewish Women's Voices
Review by Catherine Osborne
- 46 BLACK NOISE:
Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America
by Tricia Rose
Wesleyan University Press, 1994
Review by Chris Wodskou

Cover photograph:

Yasumasa Morimura, from the series *Psychoborg*, 1994,
Type C print. Photo courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine,
New York.

the 3rd annual
asian heritage month festival
may 1 - 31



Senses
art for the

Opening Weekend Events May 2nd to the 5th
Harbourfront Centre
235 Queens Quay West
Studio Theatre
For Tickets Call: 416.973.4000

Opening Gala Program - Art for the Senses

Ticket Prices: \$15 advance, \$20 at the door
Other programmes: Ticket Prices: \$6 members & seniors, \$8 advance, \$10 at the door
Harbourfront Festival Passes: \$30 members, \$40 non-members

Featuring works by: Rina Sinha, Wayson Choy, Denise Chong, Deepthi Gupta,
Donald Quan, George Gao, Paul Lee, Richard Fung, Farzad Sadrian, Paul Wong, Helen Lee

For all other events call (416) 598-7993

Annual lesbian & gay
film + video
festival of Toronto

May 23rd to
June 2nd 1996

presented by
the Inside OUT
Collective

for more information call:
977-6847



110-401
Richmond St W
Toronto ON
M5V 3A8
Telephone
416 979 9633
Facsimile
416 979 9683

April 27 - June 8
Joëlle Morosoli
The Engulfed City
Shadow Spectrum

June 11, 7:30 Jackman Hall, AGO
New Video from Chiapas and Oaxaca
curated by Ian Reid
on view at A Space to June 28

June 15 - July 27
unHuman Kind
Michael Alstad
Carel Moiseiwitsch
Camille Turner
Veronica Verkley

September 6 - December 13
The 25th Anniversary Project
organized by Tom Folland
archival installation
performance
concert & event series with
national and international artists

Canadian woman studies
les cahiers de la femme

**Women in Central &
Eastern Europe**

Volume 16, Number 1 (Winter 1995)

Canadian Woman Studies is proud to announce the publication of its Winter 1995 issue "Women in Central and Eastern Europe." Articles in this issue include: women, democracy, and nationalism after 1989; lesbians in Romania; women in Polish films; Hungarian women's groups; a Belgrade diary; women and social transformation in Germany; gender identity in Russia; women in the Ukrainian labour market; feminist organizing in Serbia, and much, much more!

**Women in Central & Eastern
Europe Issue: \$8.00 + \$0.56 GST**

Postage (per copy): \$2.25 in Canada; \$2.50 in the U.S.; \$9.00 overseas.
Ontario residents add \$0.64 PST.

Please make cheque payable to: Canadian Woman Studies, 212 Founders
College, York University, 4700 Keele St., North York, ON, M3J 1P3.
Tel (416) 736-5356. Fax (416) 736-5765.

EDITORIAL

Just as the rhetoric of globalization through economic and technological instruments has begun to settle around us like a scratchy blanket of accepted wisdom, the nation-state has resurfaced with new vigour to reconfigure and reassert itself. Despite a raft of agreements between Canada and the United States ranging from GATT to FTA and NAFTA, the United States seems to have fingered Canada as a suitable site for enacting expansionist policies. In the same week, U.S. legislative bodies passed measures of extra-territorial intervention that would punish Canadians for conducting business with Cuba and that lay claim to British Columbia's Inside Passage as waters of national strategic interest that join two states of their Union. In the cultural sector, the U.S. government continues to threaten trade sanctions if Canada doesn't welcome *Sports Illustrated*, the Time Warner empire's Trojan horse, with open arms. On the home front, Canada's newly appointed Minister of Heritage has proposed a \$6-million program to subsidize the purchase of one million Canadian flags to whip up national fervour while administering another round of budget cuts to many cultural agencies. The other major initiative for asserting Canada as a sovereign nation comes to us from beyond the grave, as witnessed in the current rage to plaster the Group of Seven on any willing surface.

In response to this flurry of heavy-handed thrusts and half-hearted parries, FUSE offers three feature articles that explore the specifics of global and local cultural interactions, and the underlying ideologies that position the nation-state as an arbiter of cultural activities. Kyo Maclear's "Flagging Cultures in Motion" delves into the recent "Japan Today" exhibition at Toronto's Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery and Harbourfront Centre to trace the intricacies of the global cultural projections and artistic responses. In "Birds of a Feather," José Springer peels back the layers of sedimented state culture to expose the inner workings of contemporary cultural processes in Mexico, while Susan Crean examines the history of cultural nationalism(s) in Canada and their relevance for artists both past and present in "Now You See It, Now You Don't."

Complementing the issues and analysis presented in the features, the columns and reviews address the ways in which technology, memory, history and popular culture circulate through specific sites of artistic practice and debate. Together, the writers in this issue underline the potential of envisioning culture as a complex and diverse activity of contestation, addressing the specifics of location as it speaks across the borders erected in the interest of the nation-state and global corporations. Finally, in keeping with FUSE's ongoing project of re-invention and reorganization, the editors are pleased to welcome an expanded roster of contributing editors from across Canada, as well as from England, Spain and the United States.



The Lucite Box

FUTURISM, WORLD'S FAIRS
AND THE PHANTOM TELECEIVER

by David McIntosh

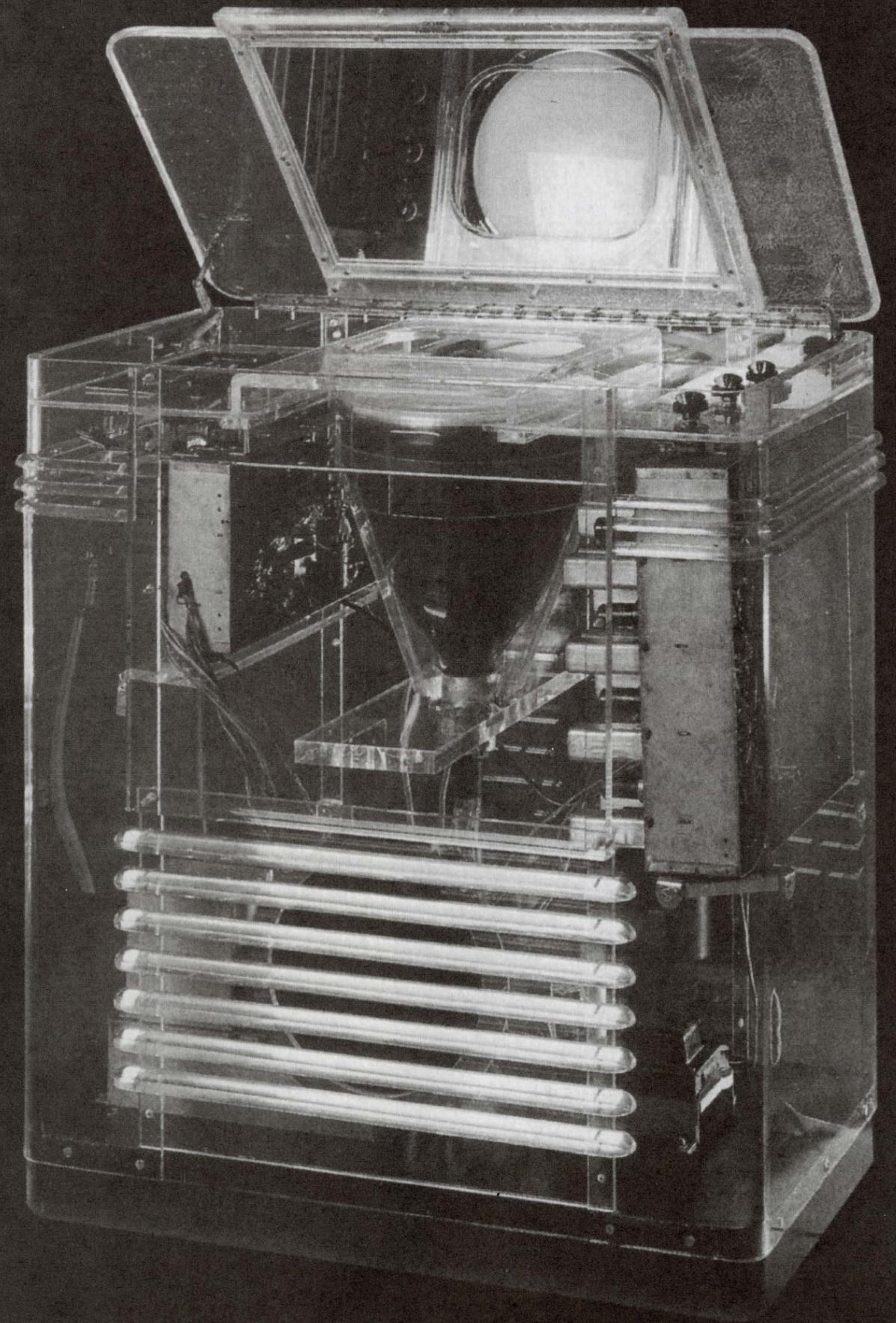
Today, a mere seventy years after its introduction, television has become the touchstone of personal, national, and world memory.... All over the planet there is a sudden awakening to television's significance, and very soon, no collection of fashion or manners or machines will be thought complete without a presentation of the boxes that brought us the world in perpetual flow.

—Moses Znaimer¹

In November of 1995, the Royal Ontario Museum's Institute of Contemporary Culture launched the year-long exhibition "Watching TV: Historic Televisions and Memorabilia from the MZTV Museum." Despite the global impact of the techniques and technologies of television that Znaimer quite rightly points out in his introductory catalogue essay, and despite the historical and artistic importance of his carefully assembled collection of television sets that constitute the ROM's display, the exhibition is disappointing and undistinguished. Comprised of sixty television sets that chart the history of design and construction of receivers from the 1920s to the 1970s, "Watching TV" has been crammed into an inadequate basement space where artifacts and documentation have been piled into an unintelligible jumble. Precious television relics are stacked three and four rows high into a wall of blank staring screens as intimidating as a phalanx of blind Cyclops. The only piece in this chaotic mortuary that has been suitably framed to allow its enormous evocative powers and vitality as historical artifact, industrial product, fetish object and embodiment of futurist ideology to be glimpsed or imagined is the RCA Phantom Teleceiver TRK-12.

Believed to be one of a kind, the Phantom Teleceiver was unveiled to the American public at the 1939 New York World's Fair by David Sarnoff, RCA's visionary but Machiavellian president, as he proclaimed the inauguration of the first regular television broadcasting service in America, a reality not actually accomplished for another ten years.² Conceived and created by renowned industrial designer Raymond Loewy specifically for the World's Fair, the massive cabinet of this machine was constructed from Lucite, DuPont's ultra-modern petro-chemical imitation of glass. Streamlined, glamorous and transparent, the Phantom Teleceiver set new standards of fashion for home appliances by assuming a seductive sculptural shape half-way between a wet bar and a Mayan temple, at the same time as it drew from the history of world's fairs by referencing the 1851 London Exposition's Crystal Palace. The colourful electronic guts of the Phantom visible through the Lucite were dominated by an upright cathode-ray tube, pointed to the sky, so that the screen image would be projected onto and reflected from a mirrored lid to viewers.

Simultaneously "a myth and a tool, a representation and an instrument, a frozen moment and a motor of social and imaginative reality,"³ the TRK-12 was an industrial commodity that stood at the crossroads of past, present and future in 1939. In 1996, it "occupies a privileged position in this time-warp, for it is a knock-out instance of the recently outmoded and the power thereof, a gorgeous billowing forth of superseded promise. It is one of the great signs of the recently outmoded... testimony to the power of ghosts embedded in the

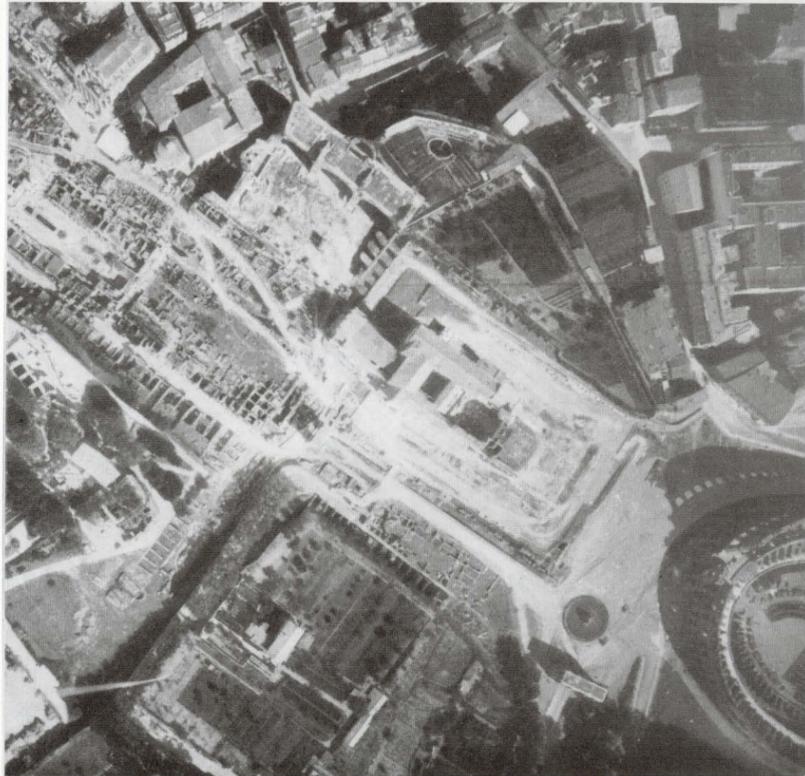


TRK-12

TRK-9

TRK-5

TT-5



Aerial view of the Colosseum and other archaeological sites in Rome, 1908.

Advertising poster designed by Italian Futurist painter Giacomo Balla, c. 1925: *The Car for Everyone*.



commodities created by yesteryear's technology."⁴ As a petrified historical marker of meaning and the passage of time, this machine emissary from the past is a crucial medium through which to summon up the ancient ghosts of futurism and identify their haunting traces in the neo-futurist present.

*We stand on the last promontory of the centuries! Why should we look back, when what we want is to break down the mysterious doors of the Impossible? Time and Space died yesterday. We already live in the absolute, because we have created the eternal.*⁵

Written in 1909 by Filippo Tomaso Marinetti, one of the key members of the Italian Futurist movement, the segment of the "Manifesto of Futurism" quoted above outlines the grandiose philosophical underpinnings of the movement. In addition to their obsessive dedication to the purity, beauty and destructive power of the machine, this manifesto also detailed their commitment to the glorification of patriotism, militarism and war—which they considered the world's only hygiene—and their scorn for women. They threatened to destroy museums, libraries, academies of every kind, and to fight moralism, feminism and every other kind of "opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice." Marinetti eventually found an amenable forum for his ideas in the Italian Fascist movement and became a great ally of Mussolini, who in turn dreamed of mounting a World's Fair in 1942 to celebrate the triumphs of Fascism. Mussolini's dream was never realized, but aspects of the futurist ideology turned up in modified forms in many American World's Fairs of the 1930s, most notably the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition and the 1939 New York World's Fair.

*Fairs were designed to restore popular faith in the vitality of the nation's economic and political system, and more specifically in the ability of government, business, scientific and intellectual leaders to lead the country out of the depression to material abundance [but] the future perfect world forecast at fairs was a conditional construct: conditional on popular acceptance of the modernizing strategies proposed by exhibition planners.*⁶

A decade characterized by the rise of totalitarianism in Europe and the Great Depression in the United States, the 1930s witnessed the incongruous proliferation of opulent exhibitions promising a better

future. Following in the tradition of American World Expositions held in Chicago (1933), San Diego (1935), Dallas (1936), Cleveland (1937) and San Francisco (1939), the 1939 New York World's Fair took as its grand theme "The World of Tomorrow." Symbolized by two enormous pure geometric forms that dominated the site—the Tylon and the Perisphere—the New York fair offered official exhibits such as "Futurama" and "Democracity," elaborate miniature models of utopian urban landscapes that would become reality in the 1960s. Both of these seductive and obsessively ordered exhibits of future abundance were sponsored by automobile manufacturers so the visions presented necessarily revolved around the vehicles they produced. Masses of children were routinely assembled outside of "Democracity," which was housed in the crystal ball Perisphere, to chant the official anthem of the Fair: "We're the rising tide coming from far and wide, Marching side by side, For a brave new world, Tomorrow's world, That we shall build today."⁷ While war raged in Europe and millions of Americans starved in hopelessness, this extravagant event conceived and produced by a wealthy corporate elite constituted an exercise in "cultural and ideological repair and renewal that encouraged Americans to share in highly controlled fantasies about modernizing."⁸

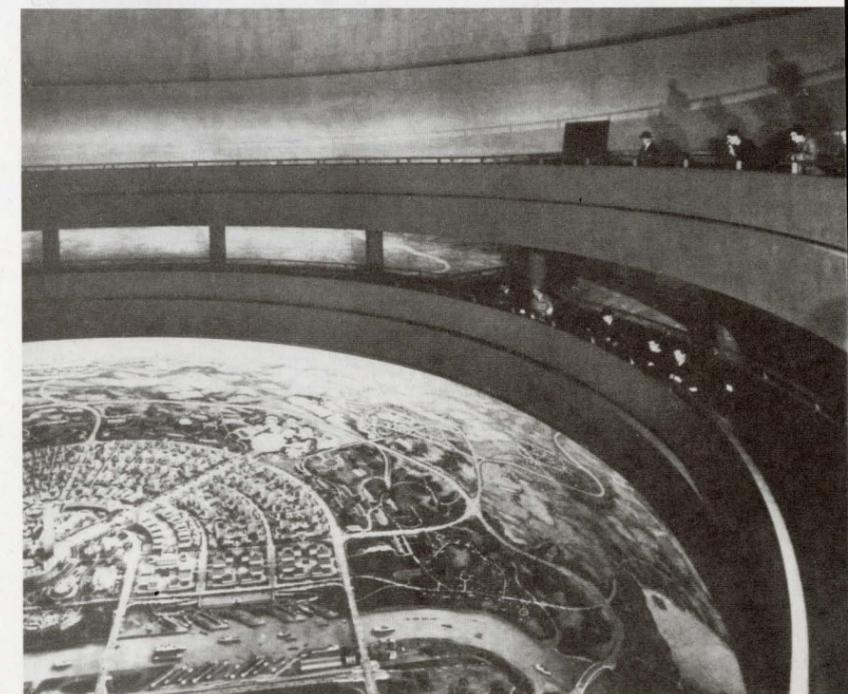
One of the most noxious streams of futurist ideology that percolated through American expositions throughout the 1920s and '30s was the eugenicist "race betterment" movement. Also known as the "fitter family" movement, racist and eugenicist programs were taken up and popularized by scientists, pseudo-scientists and writers like Madison Grant, whose best-selling book "The Passing of the Great Race" captured the public imagination. These notions were consolidated and legitimized to the point where the Second National Conference on Race Betterment, held as a sidebar of the 1915 San Francisco World's Fair, attracted such luminary participants as the presidents of Stanford and Harvard universities, a U.S. senator, and a U.S. judge. The president of this coven of racist thinkers was John H. Kellogg, breakfast cereal tycoon, who dazzled audiences in his discussions with plant breeder Luther Burbank, who proposed applying his plant breeding principles to the selection of the best individuals for continuing the race—the white race.

While no exhibit at the New York World's Fair was quite so overtly racist, eugenicist principles did inform one of its most popular exhibits, the "Typical American Family." Co-sponsored by the Ford Motor Company, the Johns Manville Company, the U.S.



New York World's Fair: Tylon and Perisphere as viewed from the Constitution Mall, 1939.

Below: General Motors' *Futurama* exhibit, New York, 1939. The multi-million dollar exhibit was designed to convince visitors of the desirability of superhighways in the city of the future.



Federal Housing Administration and world's fair authorities, this participatory promotional project took the form of an essay contest in which non-white families were explicitly ineligible to take part. The winners, all white, were awarded a free trip to the fair in a Ford automobile, and were housed on the site as an actual display in a single family dwelling built by the Federal Housing Administration and clad with the Johns Manville Company's new wonder product, asbestos siding.

These expressions of technological utopianism and eugenics were couched in yet another fantasy of progress—erotic stimulation. Formal exhibits of fully nude females with "world of tomorrow" themes were counterpointed by female striptease acts on the fair's midway. Norman Bel Geddes, designer of General Motors' Futurama, also designed the "Crystal Gazing Palace," a techno-porn extravaganza constructed from gigantic panels of stainless steel and crystal glass set in a reflecting pool, where one naked woman surrounded by mirrors would be reflected an infinite number of times. Dubbed "Sexorama" and "The Peep Show of Tomorrow," this official exhibit faced tough competition from the midway nudie shows with titles like "Dream of Venus," "Living Magazine Covers," "Extase" and "Prohibited Cuban Dancers." Eroticized female bodies served to enhance the desirability of futuristic commodities. While Fair organizers aspired to the purity of scientific legitimacy in having Albert Einstein throw the switch to illuminate the buildings on opening night, this earnest attitude became a source of parody on the Fair's midway, where in a show named "Congress of Beauties," stripper Yvette Dare trained a macaw named Einstein to remove her bra.

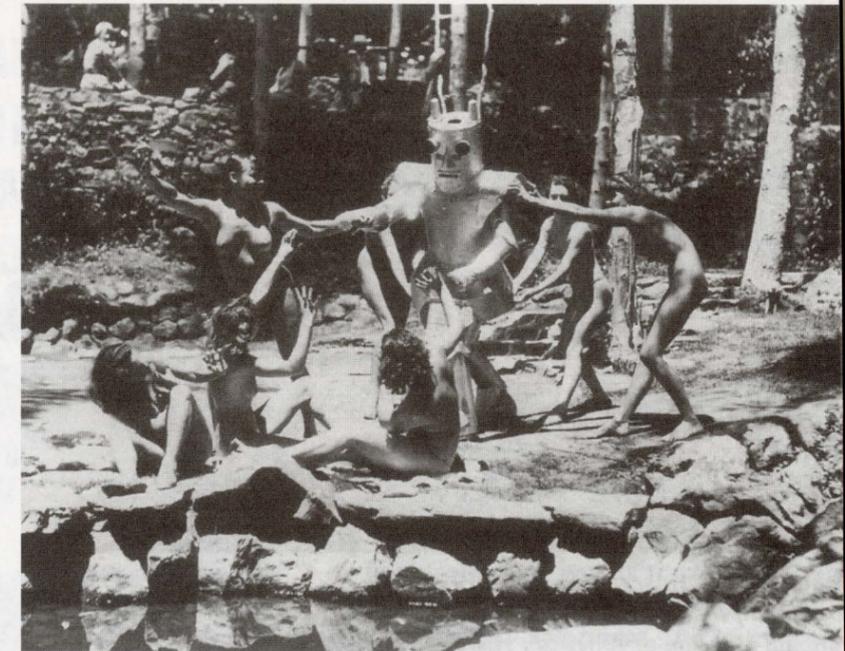
While women's bodies were being exposed in some parts of the Fair, they were being clothed in industrial designers' streamlined techno-fashions in other displays. Every leading American industrial designer, including Wallace Teague, Henry Dreyfuss, Donald Deskey, Norman Bel Geddes and Raymond Loewy, was invited by Vogue magazine to design clothes for the woman of tomorrow. Many of the resulting designs involved transparent machine age materials like Cellophane. When Raymond Loewy, designer of the Phantom Teleceiver, was asked if the designer's fantasies were suited to the actuality of women's bodies, he replied: "Eugenic selection may bring generations so aesthetically correct that such clothes will be in order."⁹ As transparent as the Lucite TV he designed, Loewy blithely revealed one of the fundamental objectives behind the New York World's Fair's utopian surface of

progress and development—the control and breeding of human's as functions of corporate and science based techno-aesthetic principles.

Built and torn down within a few years' time, world's fairs are telescoped models of industrial hyperdevelopment.¹⁰

While few physical traces of the 1939 New York World's Fair remain, its futurist blueprint for a "Better Tomorrow" continues to be played out. Corporate and scientific models of hyperdevelopment in 1939 rested on the dovetailing of technological utopianism, eugenics and commodification of the female body into an impervious condensation of futurist fundamentals that have resonated through the rest of the century. The Phantom Teleceiver also stands as a condensation point for the futurist blueprint for hyperdevelopment, but in as much as it has outlasted its original context, its sheer physical presence as an obsolete but symbolically over-determined commodity disrupts delineations between past and future, between reality and imagination. The revolutionary energy exuded by the Lucite box is like a waking dream; it evokes nostalgic hunger for a future perfect world buried in memories of ephemeral "Futuramas," even as it foregrounds the failure and pathos of our less than perfect neo-futurist present. A rare and precious cultural artifact that collapses myth and prophecy with science fiction tropes and machine aesthetics, the RCA Phantom Teleceiver TRK-12 has become a metaphor for the way we envision the world.

David McIntosh is a Toronto critic and curator, and a part-time film instructor at York University.



Notes

1. Moses Znaimer, *Watching TV: Historic Televisions and Memorabilia from the MZTV Museum*, (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum and MZTV Museum, 1995), p. 9.
2. A comprehensive history of the development of television and Sarnoff's role can be found in Laurence Bergreen's *Look Now, Pay Later: The Rise of Network Broadcasting*, (New York: Mentor, 1980).
3. Donna Haraway, *The Cyborg Handbook*, ed. Chris Hables Gray (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 1.
4. Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*, (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 232.
5. Kathryn Hiesinger & George Marcus, *Landmarks of Twentieth Century Design: An Illustrated Handbook*, (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993), p. 52.
6. Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions*, Robert W. Rydell, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 10.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
10. Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1991), p. 158.



"Living Magazine Covers" exhibit, New York World's Fair, 1939.

Opposite: Nudists in Zorro Gardens, San Diego, 1935.

ask rude questions of the art establishment: queries about why so many non-Canadians were hired to run public art galleries, and why so little Canadian work was exhibited or purchased by them.

During this period I was researching and writing a book, *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?* and working for Canadian Artists' Representation Ontario (CARO), which was then organizing around the province. Many of the arguments I eventually wrote about were developed in association with people like Jack Chambers, Greg Curnoe and Joyce Wieland, who were activists as well as intellectuals; painters who thought, wrote and theorized about art and Canadian culture in a vein that can only be described as nationalist but that grew out of a firm attachment to the region and regionalism (nascent feminism in Joyce's case) as a way of life and art-making rooted in community. They understood these spheres of human life to be interconnected, or as dub poet Lillian Allen has conceptualized, "There is no art without culture. There is no culture without community."¹ They also saw the necessity of drawing artists together to act politically in defence of their economic and legal rights as creators. Visual artists weren't alone, of course. Composers, writers, musicians, actors and filmmakers were all addressing the same issues. Moreover, the early '70s was a period of political expansion in Canada generally. It was the heyday of the nationalist Waffle movement in the NDP, of the New Left and Women's Liberation. National liberation movements were happening all over the world, including here. As the '60s generation came of age, we had theory and writings of Franz Fanon, Herbert Marcuse and Angela Davis. We also had the practice of Pierre Vallières, a radical *indépendantiste* jailed during the War Measures Act of 1970 and the author of *White Niggers of North America*. We had the powerful example of Anna Mae Aquash, an American Indian Movement (AIM) activist who described herself as a female warrior and was at Wounded Knee in 1973 and killed by FBI agents in 1976. We had the Red Power movement on the prairies, the Radical Feminists in Toronto, the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA)

organizing across the country, and the Canadian Liberation Movement, a national Left group based in Toronto with a serious following across the country, and its own publishing house, NC Press, which still exists.

Cultural nationalism was part of that mix, but it represented something more than an analysis of public policy, and the term was not often used except as the title for a subset of ideas relating to the broader issues of nationalism—as in economic nationalism, political nationalism and so on. It worked as a framework for elaborating a set of principles concerning the rights of peoples to self-determination and cultural integrity, principles that were made manifest in policies dealing on the one hand with bricks and mortar projects and on the other hand with ephemerae like identity and justice. It was also connected to a political idea, a vision of Canada as a self-sustaining culture and a society that values its artists and understands the importance of art, imagery and memory. And this was a vision that galvanized a movement, for if existing institutions were not prepared to perform, publish or exhibit Canadian works, artists could and would do it themselves.

Which is what happened. Playwrights and actors set up a string of alternative theatres and separate stages dedicated to producing Canadian drama; writers and editors established publishing houses and magazines to publish Canadian writers, painters and performance artists created a network of parallel galleries cum artist-run centres to exhibit local art. The operative words here were alternative and parallel. Canadian culture in 1976 was an underground culture; official culture was almost completely foreign. To read the programmes of the major arts institutions was to learn that real art was irrefutably European in background and invariably came from somewhere else. Nobody in charge on the boards and arts councils could say how or where Canadian was supposed to fit in.

This situation led artists and cultural workers to gather their research and rhetoric together to contest the aesthetic assumptions of the art establishment and to protest the exclusivity (and the very existence) of Official Culture. Originally, they had to do this from the sidewalk, as a form of social protest that typically combined the class politics of the '30s with the confrontational theatre of the '60s. The police were frequently called in. For some time, the very idea of nationalism in the arts was treated as subversion. In 1976, when I published *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?*, it was trashed in the mainstream press from coast to coast for suggesting that contemporary art by Canadian artists ought to be given some sort of pride of place by art institutions like galleries, theatres and opera companies. Even the financial pages chimed in. Kildare Dobbs was detailed by *Maclean's* magazine to deliver the *coup de grâce*, which he did with vitriolic delight. Anyone who would propose symphony orchestras perform R. Murray Schafer instead of Beethoven obviously hated art. Excellence, I was supposed to understand, didn't respect national borders. Nevertheless, it mixed so rarely with "Canadian" that to propose we pay our own artists particular attention was to pander to mediocrity or, worse, socialist realism.

None of the books I have written since *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?* have attracted anything like the sustained attention and contempt it did, not even the book I wrote with Marcel Rioux, the noted Quebec socialist and

indépendantiste, in which we made a plea for two independent countries, or *Deux pays pour vivre* as we put it in the French version. As Rioux and I saw it, the challenge to the northern nations of North America is to defy the American Empire, to comprehend how imperialism functions in this age of transborder data flows and the global marketplace, and to construct our two societies in common cause and in opposition to corporatist values. Looking back, it seems fairly obvious the trouble with *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?* wasn't so much that my arguments about art and the operation of American cultural imperialism in Canada were kooky, extreme or marginal, but that some people feared they weren't. CBC Radio's "As It Happens" did an interview, and then found it necessary to lacerate my commentary by airbrushing out all the forbidden phrases—like "American imperialism" and "cultural oppression." I was, after all, writing neither fiction nor theory.

Nowadays, I expect I'd be pilloried for political correctness or for daydreaming for writing about cultural nationalism, but then I was writing about a group of citizens armed with an idea and in command of an image, seeking power. Sometimes with unexpected eloquence. For example, in 1973, the Canadian Conference of the Arts convened a national meeting to debate arts policy that followed upon a series of regional soundings intended to reach out to the arts community beyond its membership. Only a handful of practising artists were invited to the CCA's Direction '73 conference, along with legions of administrators, directors and voluntary board members. The group of artists who did attend made their presence and displeasure about this known, and they took a stand on the issue of artists' representation on arts boards. "It is no longer a question of *IF*," growled playwright Tom

Hendry into a mic, "it is a question of *WHEN*." But it was Ottawa Valley poet Jim Brown who did the performance piece.

Imagine the scene. Thirty or so individuals are seated around a huge circular table in the centre of the converted railway station convention centre in downtown Ottawa. Everyone is sedately attending, earphones in for the translation. Brown suddenly stands up, rips the plug from his ear, and begins pacing up and down behind his chair delivering an oration that sounds more like a song than a speech, which he punctuates by hurling a water pitcher into the centre space of the table. The people sitting opposite, including Ontario's deputy minister of education, are showered with ice and broken glass. No one stirs, except the security police who silently move in. Brown is dragged from the building yelling "Canadian culture to the Canadian people!" Hendry was right. Gone were the days when museum curators, dealers, and deputy ministers of culture could tell artists to go back to their studios and leave the driving (responsibility for artistic programming, public policy, their careers and most of the proceeds) to people who understood the ways of the world—and live to see morning. Artists would speak with their own voice and have their say about all matters—including copyright, censorship, libel law, and the constitution—that directly affected their lives.

By 1982, only six years later, that on-the-barricades militancy had disappeared, although the ideas informing it lived on. When the Applebaum-Hébert Committee reviewing federal cultural policy presented its report, the rhetoric of cultural nationalism had become accepted wisdom. "If we fail to make the stimulation of our own creative imagination the heart of our cultural policies, we will continue to live in a country dependent on the products of other cultures and will never elevate life in Canada to a space essentially its own."² I guess you could say it had come to make irrefutable sense that public policy and public money ought to serve Canadian culture. But what did it signify?

On one front, you could say that nationalist issues were put on the table because



Right: poster project by Elizabeth Schroder and Andre Sorenson.

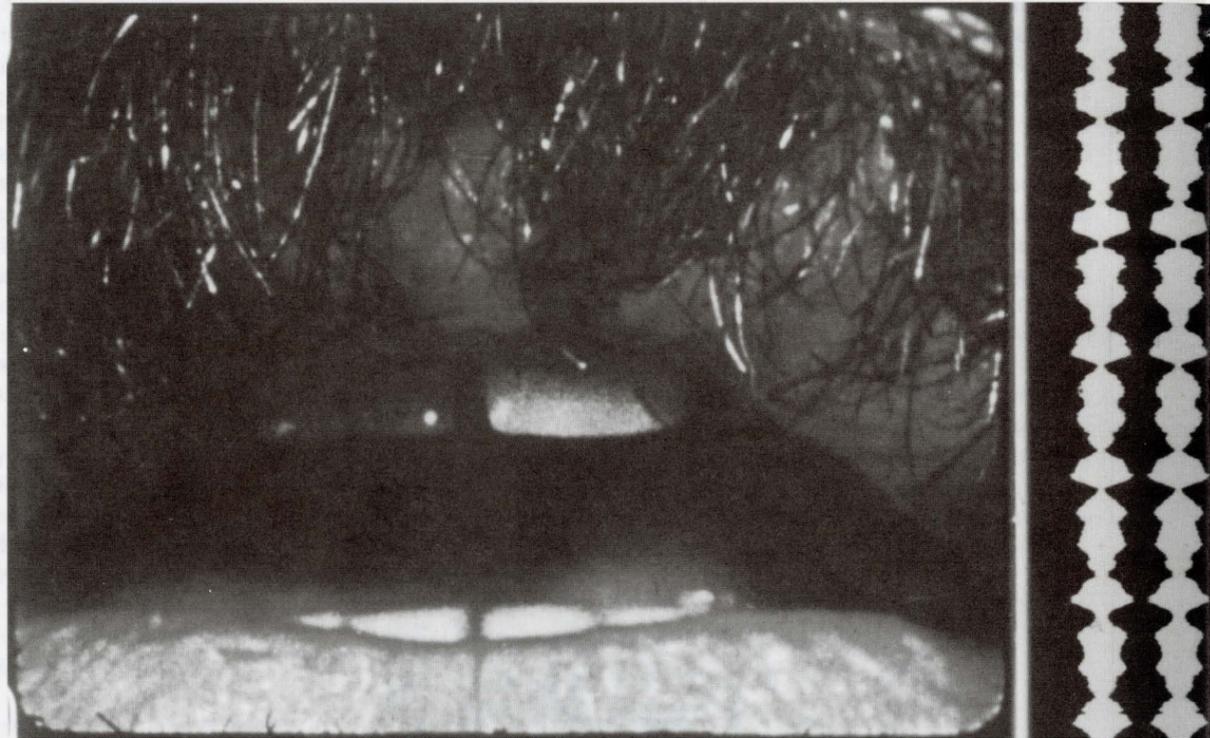
Previous page: Canadian artists roping themselves to the AGO in protest over the hiring of an American director. From *Forum*, courtesy of Clive Robertson.

engaged artists developed a radical critique and organized around it. However, there were other developments playing into the situation. There was the emergence of a class of directors and arts bureaucrats who were willing to support (and capitalize on) Canadian content. At another level of endeavour, cultural industries in the private sector were thriving:

Entrepreneurs like Ted Rogers, Moses Znaimer and Garth Drabinsky began amassing their empires under the protection of the CRTC and Canadian ownership regulations, milking the profits of selling American culture to Canadians. The new home-grown Canadian culture was on its way to producing an official version of itself.

At the same time, the federal government, forever battling Quebec nationalism and on the lookout for antidotes, began appropriating Canadian art where it could, using it to promote national unity. By the '80s official Canadian culture had evolved a made-in-Ottawa version trotted out for state occasions. An artificial even if all-Canadian concoction, and a caricature of the country, it made not only artists but a lot of Canadians wary. This was cultural nationalism at its exploitative and hypocritical worst, what Métis historian, activist, and a leader in the Red Power movement, Howard Adams, calls "soft" nationalism. To be distinguished from "revolutionary" nationalism, "soft" nationalism is described by Adams as when the colonizer uses indigenous cultures to

form an ideology based on folk art—dances and feathers—that inspires pride but not political pride. On the other hand, Adams concedes that nationalism does have its positive sides when it is linked to political struggle. In his classic revisionist history *Prison of Grass*, he recounts how, as a student at Berkeley in the sixties, he had been moved to hear Malcolm X talking about Black nationalism. "Afterwards," he writes, "I wanted time to think of the beautiful things



he had said. The ideas he expressed were so important that I could not put them out of my mind. I kept trying to fit them into the Indian/Métis situation at home. Nationalism seemed to be the spirit that motivated Black people to a new sense of pride and confidence. Like Black people, I began to reject my feeling of inferiority and shame, and to become proud of my Indian heritage and native nation."³

Nationalism, in this understanding, is not obviously or necessarily a negative quantity. It is the emotion, the informing spirit that creates a society and draws people together. As with the leavening that causes bread to rise, too little nationalism and the confection collapses. But the dangers of excess and exploitation are also present, of ethnic nationalism turning into racism or xenophobia into fascism. In Canada's case, a form of cultural nationalism was produced that comprised a distorted view of Canadian society. Public systems were set up to fund the "fine art" of a narrow minority (white, middle class,

straight, male, Protestant, Western European, etc.) while everyone else's art has been treated as anthropologic artifacts or recreation. Or just plain ignored.

By the late 1980s, the Mulroney government was in power, and pushing a Free Trade Agreement with the United States on promises that Canada's cultural sovereignty would be protected. Sure enough, the 1988 deal included a special clause exempting culture that used those very buzz words but also a slew of double negatives and "notwithstanding" qualifiers which when added up seemed to say one thing while achieving its exact opposite. Instead of protecting Canadian industry the Free Trade Agreement actually protects American access to the Canadian market, guaranteeing compensation should any federal government take action in defence of our cultural production displacing U.S. revenues. Not only was this accepting terms of American retaliation in advance, it created a huge disincentive for any government to act, there being the double cost involved as well as the political price of pitting softwood lumber against books, loggers against writers and so on.⁴

We are now in the mid-'90s, closing in on the millennium. Free trade and the corporate ideology triumph along with the concept of the Citizen Consumer. It is no secret that our political culture is eroding, and the credibility of the political process ebbing. The public sphere dwindles in importance as the public service is disparaged, and the public debate is captured by experts. Meanwhile, the media have become saturated with neo-con loathing for government and reformist cant about stripping it bare. Politicians of all descriptions campaign on promises of reducing not just the size but the purview and purpose of government—and with it the influence of the citizenry. Elections have become a game of seeing who can resolve to cut public services and sell public enterprises furthest and fastest. As the elites off-load their public obligations, privatizing transport and communications, transferring responsibility for social programmes back to the private sphere to wallow in charity, they are also bailing out of culture.

"Who's Afraid of Bigger Bookstores?" ran the headline on the page-long editorial in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* last December. Rhapsodizing about the benefits that will accompany the entry of two giant U.S. super-bookstore chains into Canada, the paper pooh-poohed claims that small Canadian bookstores would go out of business and the agency business that supports Canadian publishing might be destroyed. *The Globe and Mail* declared it was going to be paradise for book buyers: more books and lower prices. So what if smaller bookstores disappear as they did in the States under the onslaught of the superstores? The same thing happened to grocers when supermarkets came in. Hardly, the editors intoned, cause for the former Ontario premier and chairman of the Canadian chain Chapters, David Peterson to enact a "fit of cultural nationalism." "If we are going to have book selling superstores," and there is no stopping them, the editorial baldly stated, "surely it is better to have competing stores than an all-Canadian monopoly."⁵

No one, as John Ralston Saul justly laments in his 1995 Massey Lectures, speaks for the disinterested Public Good anymore. "Corporatist society," he writes, "has structured itself so as to eliminate citizen participation in public

affairs, except through the isolated act of voting and though voluntary activities [that] involve sacrificing time which has been put aside, formally, for other activities. Thus sports, meals, holidays [and I would add,



shopping], to say nothing of work are actually structured into our financial and social reward system. Citizen participation is not."⁶

Culture is on everyone's list and on no one's mind. The Conservatives may have put it on the constitutional platter first—offering Distinct Society to Quebec while devolving culture to all the provinces as part of the Charlottetown Accord—but the Chrétien government seems equally anxious to abdicate the federal government's traditional leadership role in the formation of national art institutions and cultural policy. Nothing has been done to counteract the effects of the Free Trade Agreement or countermand the tacit agreement that our national government will not take any action to change the (im)balance in the cultural trade between our two countries. Other, that is, than to close the hole rent by technology that allowed *Sports Illustrated* to evade tax laws intended to prohibit split-run foreign magazines from qualifying as Canadian (the so-called *Time-Readers' Digest* legislation originally passed in 1976). Even that mild-mannered measure teetered on the brink in the Senate for several days last fall before it was passed amid the usual threats of retribution by U.S. officials and outraged accusations of "protectionism" from our own.

The retrenchment and the cuts continue, and there is every reason to assume culture is

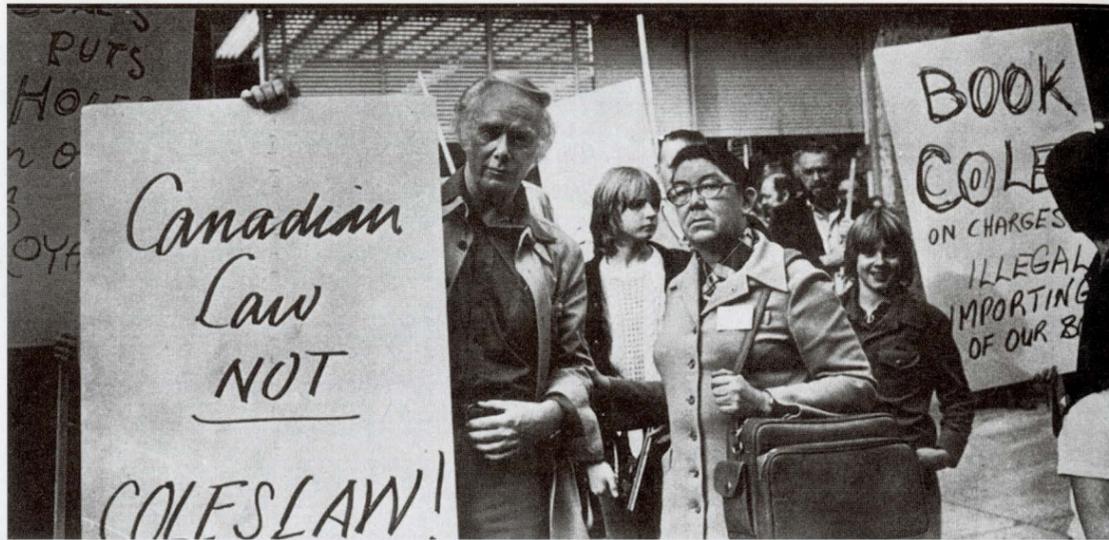
Frame from *Pierre Vallières*, Joyce Wieland, 1972, colour, 30 min. Following page: photo taken during production of *Pierre Vallières*. Photo courtesy of the CFMDC.

still on the platter. The devolution scare of the Charlottetown Accord in 1992 did, however, force many of us in the arts to take stock of the multi-tiered system of public support that had been created over the previous thirty years. I was chair of the Writers' Union that year and part of the Common Agenda

Alliance, which orchestrated opposition from the arts sector. We found ourselves articulating ideas like the value of not fixing things that aren't broken, and the danger of confusing efficiency with effectiveness. We pointed out that the function of (apparent) duplication in services delivered is in fact an investment in individual creativity when decisions are based on subjective judgment. We talked of the value of having checks and balances in that process, especially when the public involved is so pluralistic culturally and so spread out across regional and geographic divides. And we explained how the Canada Council and federal programmes used to bring people together for juries, conferences and the like encouraged an awareness of a larger identity: the sense of ourselves as a community of writers/dancers/artists stretching beyond our regions. All of it was met with indifference. I can still see the disdain in Moe Sihota's face, when, as B.C.'s minister responsible for constitutional affairs, he dismissed the brief as alarmist.

Still you have to ask why, given that not a single province except Quebec has ever made a pitch for culture and that none of the others actually want it, was it up for grabs? Given that the arts community across the country outside of Quebec adamantly opposes any arrangement that would send culture to the provinces or disturb the flexible system which allows any jurisdiction to care about culture to do so without asking, whose interests would be

served by devolution? Or was culture once again being played as everybody's favourite window dressing? Of even greater concern, though, is the absurd conceit that culture belongs to politicians and it is theirs to divvy up according to provincial borders, bureaucratic schedules or whatever suits their fancy, when in fact it belongs to all of us.



One way of reading the history of cultural nationalism is as the story of an idea that was co-opted, emptied of meaning and discarded, of a grass-roots movement ambushed. Over the span of two decades, cultural nationalism has come and gone as a mainstream force for change. It wasn't long before those fly-by-night underground theatres and galleries became institutions themselves, and were being contested for aesthetic exclusivity on other grounds. Movements have a way of seeding themselves, and the political action that first focused on the Canadian content of arts organizations soon was being applied to gender, region and race. The analysis evolved, the critique became more sophisticated and the language changed. Moreover, the necessity of tending to community and fashioning social consensus did not go away, and if you understand nation-building to be the activity of people taking care of their culture, collective memory and imagination, then I would say this country is packed with communities of all kinds doing just exactly that. Nationalism in that positive, cultural sense is still with us. The bureaucratic "soft" version, on the other hand, seems doomed.

None of it, of course, alters the fact that it is still more profitable to import American culture than to produce original Canadian material, and that our systems of mass communication only rarely reflect Canadian ideas and art. By now a very old story, it still explains why regionalism is a far more potent force in Canadian culture than any national (as in nationwide) expression is or can be. Creativity seeks whatever outlets it can find, and finding few at that level, our sense of national identity remains extremely weak and grows

Pierre Berton and Margaret Laurence protesting book-dumping by Coles, 1975.

weaker. This is why I think that Canada's fear of Quebec separation is, at heart, a fear that without Quebec Canada would not make a country, that the remaining provinces and territories might not hold, or be distinct and cohesive enough an entity to survive in the North American context. Canada may not survive. But if it doesn't, it probably will have more to do with ourselves as a national society than Quebec. For it could be said that Quebec is a nation in search of a nation-state while Canada is a nation-state in search of a nation. In that sense, I have come to agree with my *indépendantiste* friends who always maintained the Quebec Question was holding back the Canadian Project. Each time we have come to the constitutional brink (the PQ victory, the referenda on sovereignty) and Canada has been forced to imagine life with a sovereign Quebec, the talk has fallen to a debate about how many parts the rest of us would divide into.

Canada, it would seem, is a society in transition and in the process of a fundamental realignment of power. We see this in Tough Luck economic policies masquerading as Tough Love assaults on the debt, and in high-handed actions like the Harris government's retreat behind the sandstone walls of Queen's Park to rewrite the contract between Ontario citizens and their government in its own image. We fall prey to charlatans, weasels and angry men who cannot, for the (political) life of them, effect constitutional reform. When it comes to the big issues of the day, governments seem incapable of making decisions in the public's interest. And try as they will to manufacture and control it, that national sense of identity, or patriotism as the combination of loyalties binding people together and to a common cause, cannot be imposed. It can only be inspired.

Moreover, if we were to revisit the premise of the cultural nationalists' analysis, we would have to acknowledge that Canada is still an economic colony of the United States, even if today this reality is rarely identified as a problem. We would have to entertain the possibility that the assimilation of mainstream Canada by the United States is well advanced. Official Canadian culture, having moved from the appropriation of genuine Canadian styles and stories to the commercialization of everything à l'américain, may yet self-destruct. There are, of course, cultural programmes and projects we could live without, and dare I say it, a few we might even be well rid of. I suspect everyone has a list. The end of an era always brings with it the end to some institutions, and this can have the effect of clearing the decks for other things to happen, of shaking up suppositions and convictions. In other words, this may be a good time to step back to assess the situation, to press for inventive approaches in the reallocation of resources, and to encourage some graceful exits from the field.

The immediate question is will the attempts by privileged arts organizations and professions to pull up the ladder behind them prevail, or will the pressure from outside official circles to expand the circle carry the day? My own sense is that there is no better time than now to deconstruct the mosaic of Official Culture and to create new patterns and communities of interest by concentrating on building bridges between and among our various unofficial nationalisms. This is a definition of cultural nationalism I'd want to live with. This is an idea worth a movement.

Susan Crean is a writer and cultural activist. She is the author of several books including *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture* and is currently working on a book on Emily Carr. She is the former president of the Writers' Union of Canada and is currently based in Vancouver.

Notes

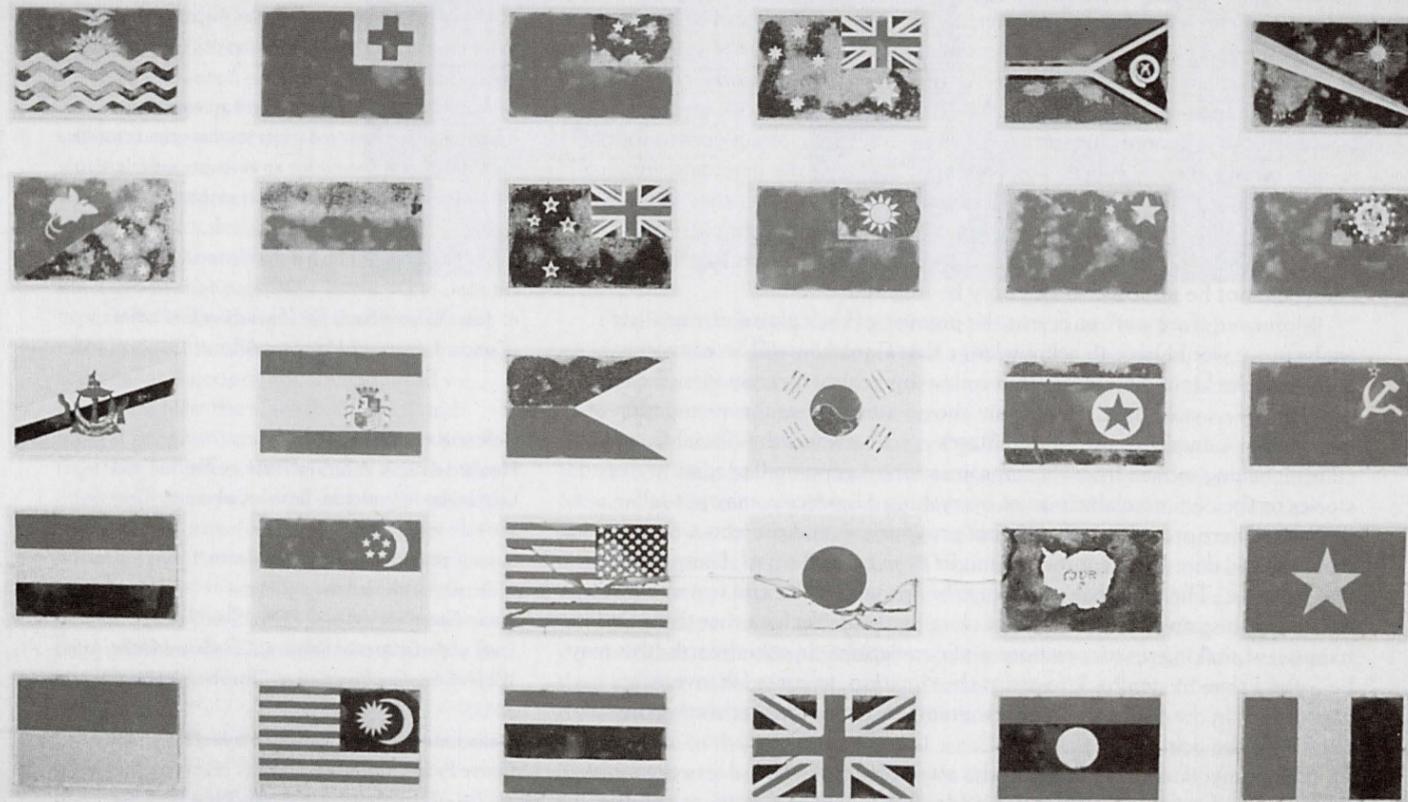
1. Lillian Allen, "Transforming the Cultural Fortress: Imagining Cultural Equity," *Parallélogramme*, vol. 15 no. 3, '93-'94, pp. 48-59.
2. Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee (Applebaum-Hébert Committee), Ottawa, 1982, p. 6.
3. Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from the Native Point of View* (revised edition), (Toronto: New Press, 1989), p. 153.
4. According to the Free Trade Agreement, the Americans are permitted a free shot at any sector of the Canadian economy for an amount equivalent to the losses due to national action in the cultural sector.
5. "Who's Afraid of Bigger Bookstores?" *The Globe and Mail*, 11 December 1996.
6. John Ralston Saul, *The Unconscious Civilization*, (Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi, 1995), p. 168.

References

- Howard Adams. *A Tortured People—The Politics of Colonization*. (Penticton, British Columbia: Theytus Books, 1994).
- Susan Crean. *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?* (Don Mills, Ontario: General, 1976).
- Susan Crean and Marcel Rioux. *Two Nations—An Essay on the Culture and Politics of Canada and Quebec in a World of American Pre-eminence*. (Toronto: Lorimer, 1983).
- Franz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. (New York: Grove Press, 1967).
- . *The Wretched of the Earth*. (New York: Grove Press, 1963).
- Herbert Marcuse. *An Essay on Liberation*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).
- Marcel Rioux and Susan Crean. *Deux pays pour vivre: un plaidoyer*, (Laval, Quebec: Éditions Albert Saint-Martin, 1980).
- Pierre Vallières. *White Niggers of America*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1971).

Flagging Cultures in Motion

by Kyo Maclear



Japanese Contemporary Art in the New World Order

In Terminal Three, Pearson International Airport, a snazzy tourist shop mounted an elaborate poster display for *Today's Japan*. By late summer, the yellow, black and red promo posters had reached the point of streaming visual ad babble. Pedestrians strolling down Toronto's Bloor, Queen and King Streets encountered taut cloth banners flagging the event from street poles. Morning readers opened their newspapers to full-page festival plugs. *Today's Japan*, billed as the largest exposition of contemporary Japanese culture ever assembled in North America, was a three-month-long cultural extravaganza whose dimension has hardly been matched in size, scope and capital since the Art Gallery of Ontario brought the blockbuster Barnes Collection to Toronto in 1994.

What is most striking is how this show was touted as both "cultural" and "contemporary." The conjoining of "today" and "Japan" is a discursive promotion that signifies the ongoing remaking of difference in a context of rapid globalization.

To make an analogy: if Terminal Three's glass atrium has ditched the dusty ethnic wares and curios that still clutter shops in Terminals One and Two in favour of an upholstered view of cultural transit and cosmopolitan commerce, then *Today's Japan* might be similarly taken to measure the distance from colonial cultural fairs and theme parks of yore. This ain't no Caravan. Or is it?

J a p a n T o d a y

The notion of unified national cultures still holds currency in diplomatic cultural trading. Visiting the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, for example, one might gather a sense of Canada as wheat fields, oil, stampedes and sunshine. Attempts to move beyond sweeping panoramas of place and culture are refreshing. In this regard, *Today's Japan* undoubtedly offered a contrast to facile and exportable views of Japanese cultural production as the sum total of ancient and immutable traditions. Most of the contemporary artists on view at the Power Plant and Harbourfront's York Quay Centre from September 22 to November 26, 1995, are working outside the hierarchy of the traditional arts.

Yet while the main touring component of the exhibition focused on contemporary art, it is interesting to note that several local Japanese Canadian artists commented critically on the way they were recruited to play the same old song and dance role. During the two-day Aki Matsuri (fall festival), for example, festival tourists were invited to participate in tactile encounters with pottery, paper, origami and sushi-making. By accident or design, Toronto-based Japanese Canadian artists found themselves facilitating the hands-on, folksy component of the festival, avant-garded in media coverage by the main show.

Bryce Kanbara, writing in the *JC Community News*, was critical of how multiculturalism, bartered as "tonic" on the fringe of the main exposition, reinstated old views of "yesterday's Japan." Festival programs offered visitors palate-watering invitations to "indulge in the taste and fine art of Japanese food presentations," while calling on the more intrepid to "come and fly a kite

Asia-Pacific Art Fair, Yokinori Yanagi, 1995.



under the instructive eye of a master kite-maker." The festival, charged Kanbara, incorporated the typical ethnic fare of "pseudo-traditional crafts and lore," in a predictably "familiar blend of capitalistic enterprise and public relations."

Kanbara's comments, and the uneven positioning of local Japanese Canadian artists within the festival program, should alert us to the durability of certain shop-worn stereotypes even as difference is being re-made. In fact, this doubled discourse might serve to indicate that Japan's presence on the stage of Western culture, its newfound status as a partner in a contemporary exchange of art and ideas, has been spurred as much by exigencies accompanying its rise to global economic power as by changes in Euro-based institutional and curatorial practices.

This is a country imagined as perpetually undergoing an identity crisis.

At an obvious level, shows like *Today's Japan* are enabled by Canadian-Japanese diplomatic and trade aspirations. Running at \$2 million, the exhibition was jointly funded by the Japan Foundation (a government cultural bureau) and several Canadian government agencies. This event was a costly investment in cultural commerce. Two significant moments further evince how the art of diplomacy is involved in touring expositions. The first occurred last summer during the G7 summit in Halifax. Facing pressure from Japanese government officials (and possible diplomatic embarrassment), the federal government renounced its earlier plan to axe operating funds to Harbourfront Centre after this season. The second gesture reciprocating the good neighbour mandate was made by the Japanese government, in sending Prince Takamado to officially open the festival at a gala on September 21, 1995.

In recent years, we have seen Japanese contemporary art avidly promoted in the context of international cultural marketing. While journals such as *Artforum*, *Art in America* and *World Art* have made inroads where Japanese contemporary art criticism is concerned, more attention needs to be paid to the relations that frame this work as it travels across material and interpretive

Channel Exchange 1994, IDEAL COPY, 1995.

boundaries. "The Age of Anxiety" exhibition, the visual arts component of *Today's Japan*, provides a pivot for exploring some of the wider issues and social dynamics encircling contemporary Japanese art production, encouraging us to look at often contradictory corporate, symbolic, and political investments in border-crossing.

signing anxious times

Marking a milestone in Canadian-Japanese cultural commerce, celebrated by organizers as a "vital testament to the friendship between our two nations," "The Age of Anxiety" is the first large-scale exhibition of Japanese contemporary art to be initiated by a Canadian institution. Bringing together nine artists from Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto, the exhibition focused on contemporary art, "addressing vital questions of national, cultural, and personal identity at a watershed moment in Japan's history" (Louise Dompierre, curatorial statement).

Central themes included the country's changing social relations, the impact of technology on contemporary Japanese society and the state of flux in gender roles. Featured artists were Yoshiko Shimada, Yuji Kitagawa, IDEAL COPY, Yukinori Yanagi, Noboru Tsubaki, Taro Chiezo, Shigeaki Iwai, Emiko Kasahara and Teiji Furuhashi.

The first question I had upon receiving promotional materials for the exhibition was: Whose and what anxieties shall we expect to find on view at the Power Plant? Allegories of national identity have effects. Why, and for whom, are certain (identity) crises being heralded as significant? Naive as they may sound, these questions beg prior consideration of the ways "cultures" get encoded in transit. What assumptions are being tagged for North American viewers attending this exhibition?

The extent to which "Japan" serves as a transhistorical barometer or harbinger of global flux and change is worth careful consideration. Functioning within this troubled register, "anxiety" projects and encodes symptoms of panic permeating formerly "stable" and "homogenous" nation-states. What Western travelog hasn't manipulated contrast and juxtaposition to render the immoderate contradictions of post-Meiji Japan? This is a country

Asia-Pacific Ant Farm, Yukinori Yanagi, 1995.

imagined as perpetually undergoing an identity crisis. Here, chrome and glass cast ominous shadows over the Zen gardens of Ryoanji Temple. Nature and artifice meet awkwardly, the exchanging of surfaces (silk for Microsoft, paper for plastic, bamboo for steel) results in an insurmountable clash. This



is the land of kitsch rising; an "anxious" land where one witnesses topographical schizophrenia—or "hybridity," depending on your discursive affiliation. Read as an beleaguered and prophetic sign of post-modern society, "Japan" presents differently invested opportunities to ask: "What is the world coming to?!"

A North American exhibition catalogue could have been written tracking the punctuated outbreaks of "anxiety" pre-dating and accompanying Japan's economic rise to superpower status. It wasn't. An historical perspective might have tracked a genealogy of yellow peril scares that resulted in the establishment of English Only laws, the internment of Japanese Canadians and Americans, and drives for immigration restrictions. A more contemporary purview of anxiety production might have looked at how conservative arguments in favour of



increased trade protectionism and technological regulation have been mobilized by tapping into xenophobic fears, which update a longstanding racist vision of Japan as an encroaching and inhuman menace.

Japanese Canadian poet Roy Kiyooka once wrote: "To go from 'japboy' to 'mistersony' inside the timbrels of a lifetime argues a place for mirth in our benumbed lives." Kiyooka wonderfully encapsulates the flimsy economy of stereotypes characterizing the "Japanese." But with mirth also comes trepidation. As Japan-bashers continue to exhort the essential inhumanity of non-Westerners under the guise of trade protectionism, it behooves us to remember the costs of maintaining this anxiously updated logic. The memory of violence directed at Vincent Chin, a Chinese American allegedly mistaken for Japanese and subsequently slain by laid-off autoworkers in Detroit in 1982, should bolster our efforts to contravene race-baiting, however cloaked and insidious.

That "Japan" is continuously being symbolically remapped by shifts in international trade relations and global communications should keep cultural critics all the more conscious of locating culture within a discussion of changing social formations. Orientalist frames of reception have been set awry. Boundaries delineating difference are increasingly elastic as formerly fixed national identities are unsettled by transnational commerce and technologies. Despite investments in certain foundational forms of colonial knowledge, the "West" has been reluctantly catapulted into a position where ignoring rapidly changing national borders and identities is no longer tenable. The rapid hybridization of culture has lent uncertainty to fixed views of Japan, problematizing racial and cultural ascriptions and meta-narratives of "nationalism." The Orientalist's narcissistic demand for an absolute Other is under siege. This is not to say that old colonial stereotypes have disappeared or been totally replaced, but rather that we are seeing the emergence of fork-tongued representations of difference.

m a d e i n J a p a n

Japan's debut and gradual ascendancy within a global economy of culture is generally narrativized as beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1854, American Admiral Commodore Perry arrives on the shores of Japan with a fleet of warships and enforces an "open door policy." The Meiji period is taken to mark the introduction of Japanese art to Europe. Ukiyo-e woodblock prints, used initially as wrapping paper for imported porcelain and pottery, are collected by French painters such as Monet, Bonsard, Vuillard, Manet and van Gogh. By the late nineteenth century, these prints, with their flattened perspective and asymmetrical compositions, can be seen in salons and tea houses throughout France.

Yet following this fashionable wave of *japoniste* interest and influence, there comes a turning point where Japanese artists are seen primarily as non-innovative formalists, creatively recumbent as Western artists leap ahead. This outmoded colonial perspective divines poles of culture and nature, situating them respectively in the West and East.

From the series *Psychoborg*, Yasumasa Morimura, 1994, Type C print.
Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.

While this logic has been adapted over the years, it is still relatively intact. Today's tendency is to see all art that departs from Orientalist codes of Eastern tradition as derivative. Work produced and circulated in this interpretive milieu is, thus, seen to exist outside the history of Modern Art, caught between a bounded gaze that opposes the work as either "too traditional" or "too Western." Post-Meiji art is appraised as inauthentic, shallow, severed from a classical past—imitatively and inadequately Western.

Assumptions about Japanese imitation have a parallel in trade vernacular. "Made in Japan" meant fake Gucci bags, poor quality machinery, pirated recordings and easily junked electronics. But following the OPEC crisis of 1973 and Japan's inflated status as a global exporter, changes were afoot. By the 1970s, in the heartlands of middle America there was something unsettling about families capturing candid moments in Fujicolor rather than Kodak, there was something vaguely sinister and decidedly unpatriotic about being on the road in a Toyota Tercel in this new-fangled post-Fordist economy. (Anxiety, indeed.)

m i m i c c u l t u r e

While avoiding hasty conclusions and devaluations, further thought needs to be paid to the often paradoxical energies devoted to various forms and modalities of mimicry in Japan. This could be the focus of an extensive essay in itself, looking for starters, perhaps, at the rockabilly teens who congregate for weekend performances in the fashionable district of Harajuku, and continuing with a discussion of the allure of karaoke. One artist who has openly and insightfully dragged imitation into his work is Osaka-based Yasumasa Morimura. Skillfully manipulating computer graphics and photography, Morimura uses mimicry to invite acknowledgment of interdependent cultural influence.

In 1985, Yasumasa Morimura began a series of self-portraits where he inserted himself into a range of famous paintings. Morimura playfully refashions himself

against backdrops of Western culture. These recast images, at one level reminiscent of Cindy Sherman's work, illuminate the glorified and self-edifying European tradition of portraiture. Pictured as van Gogh complete with bandaged ear and fur cap, da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Morimura's ironic presence



re-reflects the ways we see canonical Western masterpieces.

Morimura's reconfigured impressionist works take on added valence when we consider the stir Japanese art acquisition has caused since 1987 when van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (1888) was purchased by an insurance company for nearly \$40 million. Aside from the obvious smatterings of racism tacked to discussions of Japanese "takeover," what was interesting was how Japanese gallery goers were ridiculed for buying into the Impressionist hype of gift shop paraphernalia. The subtext seemed to be that high art was somehow being devalued in this reproductive exchange. The sacrosanct original was valorized, forgetting for a

moment that the commercialization of art knows no boundaries (*someone* was buying those coasters, cloth bags, t-shirts and mugs during the Barnes exhibition run in Toronto).

In the summer of 1994, the Power Plant Gallery exhibited twenty-three life-size Cibachrome portraits by Morimura from a series called *Psychoborg*. This show (also curated by Louise Dompierre as a lead-up to "The Age of Anxiety" show) displayed Morimura performing various impersonations of North American pop icons Madonna and Michael Jackson. Call them karaoke still-portraiture. As an interloper in disguise, Morimura gives new inflection to the notion of parrot-culture. Gender and race-crossed portraits spin new possibilities. The signifiers are still there—one can immediately identify Madonna's Gaultier bustier and fishnet stockings; Michael Jackson's sequined glove and red-leather jacket—but meaning is in flux. Morimura denies the fixity and purity of identity categories, ironically presenting freeze-frame images of subjects in the process of being made.

Morimura's work affords occasion to question boundary-making definitions used to delineate artistic originality and imitation. We are conditioned to expect and value certain forms of mimicry. Acceptable pop-pantomime might include Madonna imitating Marilyn Monroe, but what happens when singer Maki Nomiya of *Pizzicato Five* impersonates Twiggy? When does cultural impersonation and citation get appraised as witty, smart and original? When is it seen as mere copy devoid of substance? How might Yasumasa Morimura's artful image-appropriations be engaged differently than Robert Rauschenberg's, an artist who also took on nineteenth-century master-painting?

t h i s h e r e a g e o f a n x i e t y

How might we critically speculate on the nature of anxieties in Japan today? With Japan's ongoing conscription as "partner" in the New World Order, modernist East/West distinctions begin to collapse. Orientalist strategies of containment, which rely on a perception of a stable "East," are no longer secure. In this renovated context the Power Plant exhibition might be seized as an opportunity to ask: How does capitalized anxiety circulate in an age of transnationalisms? How is anxiety tied to the re-structuring of identities and borders in late capitalist societies? How can historical/cultural specificities be defined within an international context without reifying difference?

One node of anxiety examined in "The Age of Anxiety" relates to an emergent discourse on Japan's wartime atrocities. Fifty years after Japan's defeat in 1945, this is an area of intensifying sensitivity and contention. Unlike Germany, a country for which post-war memory has been an area of ongoing public contestation since the early 1960s, Japan has only recently—in large part due to the pressure from former victims—witnessed the emergence of a public discourse relating to its militarist "past."

In the absence of a critical polyvalent discourse of post-war memory, commemorations of the World War II in Japan have tended to appear non-conflictual. In late capitalist Japan, the path of "peace" is paved with good intentions, and for many remembering the war tidily begins and ends with

From the series *Psychoborg*, Yasumasa Morimura, 1994, Type C print. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.

the A-bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Yet even rituals of "peace," engendered by images of lanterns floating serenely on rivers and school-children folding colourful origami cranes every August, have tended to leaven and incorporate remembrance of its constitutive opposites: violence and injustice.

What, why and how Japan is remembering have been questions of pressing concern in recent years. Already fragile ties between Japan and its neighbours in Asia-Pacific have been steadily eroding since Minister of Justice Nagano Shigeto publicly denied the 1937 Nanjing Massacre. Watered-down apologies for Japanese wartime aggression culminating in Prime Minister Murayama's euphemistic statement of "remorse" to victims of Japanese expansionism (in early 1995) have done little to gain the confidence of redress claimants and human rights activists in Asia.

Discussions of Japanese wartime aggression and post-war memory have been played out differently, with different effects, outside Japan. In the North American mainstream media there is a tendency to see Japan's lack of post-war introspection as a sign of repression, or as evidence of a lack of historical sophistication. North American politicians and journalists, commanding a degree of moral authority that consistently forgets the colonialisms and racisms that have been central to the establishment of their own tenets of liberal democratic humanism, have portrayed "Japan" as somehow uniquely remorseless.

Aside from the danger of homogenization, what is also ultimately lost in these instances of pious (and conservative) editorializing is an historical understanding of the role played by the United States in facilitating post-war amnesia. The marginalization of disruptive memories, the truncated process of collective reflection in Japan, the dispersal of wartime responsibility, were all advanced through the U.S. Occupation and Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal (1946–48). Emperor Hirohito, exonerated by the Americans during the perfunctory war crimes tribunal, was subsequently touted as an icon of "racial unity" in the postwar constitution. The emperor system was expediently used by American officials to stabilize U.S.–Japan relations immediately after the war. The process of establishing the basis for juridico-legal justice was almost wholly mortgaged to U.S. foreign policy interests in the Pacific region during the onset of the Cold War.

Photo of multi-media performance *pH*, Dumb Type, 1995. Seen at the Premiere Dance Théâtre, Harbourfront Centre. Photo by Shiro Takatani.



In Japan, the prevailing liberal sentiment is that the war, while unfortunate, is long over. Efforts to retexture the concept of "peace" and deepen post-war reflection on atrocities committed in the Name of the Emperor continue to be met with responses ranging from ambivalence to outright violence. Anti-imperialist work is still considered transgressive of the status quo. This in itself has quelled broader attempts to question past loyalties and war-time justifications. Fears of reprisal were amplified in 1989 when Nagasaki Mayor Motoshima was shot

by a members of the ultranationalist fascist fringe following comments he made indicting the Emperor for war-time responsibility.

For contemporary cultural producers, censorship in Japan relates to what critic Catherine Osborne has called the "chrysanthemum taboo." Artists and writers who have openly criticized the emperor system



or Japan's imperialist past have been subject to everything from gallery closures to death threats. Artist Nobuyuki Oura raised the ire of the right wing in Toyama Prefecture in 1986 when he manipulated several images of Emperor Hirohito for an installation that sought to investigate broader questions of self and identity. The Toyama Museum of Art, cowering to the possibility of reactionary violence, immediately withdrew the installation and burnt all exhibition catalogues. Japan, not unlike Canada, has seen an upsurge in neo-conservative activity. Right-wing gangsterism, indirectly supported by military and police officials, has contributed to a climate of wariness and self-regulation.

Three of the artists participating in "The Age of Anxiety," Yukinori Yanagi, Yoshiko Shimada and Yuji Kitagawa, have encountered friction in the reception of

their work in Japan. In 1993, for example, Yoji Kitagawa had a run-in with a commercial gallery over an installation he did that included an image of the imperial seal, a chrysanthemum. While complaints had not been launched against the work, the gallery owners, fearing what "might happen," insisted that Kitagawa remove the seal. Kitagawa refused and one day after its opening the show was closed.

While artists such as Yukinori Yanagi and Yasumasa Morimura have taken a more indirect approach to social hierarchy and nationalism, Yoshiko Shimada has tackled these issues head-on. Using volatile imagery, and often violently graphic symbolism, Shimada explores the limits of nationalism. For Shimada, nostalgia, the naturalization of collective memory, loyalties founded on unquestioned allegiances and notions of continuity, together comprise a charged field for considering commemorative activities in late-capitalist nation-states. All nationalist legends and legacies of remembrance are suspect, and necessarily partial, Shimada suggests.

... ants were imported to replace the original ones: some died from exhaustion; others had simply abandoned Yanagi's project by escaping through a crack in the Plexiglas.

Shimada's contribution to "The Age of Anxiety" exhibition inquires into the status of women during Japan's imperialist expansion in Asia. As commemorative pieces, her works aspire to remember the role Japanese women played in supporting racist and gendered violence in the name of patriotism and national unity. Shimada suggests that contrary to popular history, Japanese women, including icons of an early Japanese feminist movement, were actively involved in sustaining the war effort, acting as willing partners in the drive for imperialist expansion. In probing this involvement, Shimada has scavenged among archival records to find documented images of Japanese women dancing under Nazi flags, marching with bayonets, and shooting Korean prisoners of war. Some of these sepia tinted photos are mounted in a collage-canvas series entitled *1,000 Red Knots* (1993). On each canvas, Shimada has embroidered small knots with red thread. There is a simple sense of domesticity encompassed by these

Look at Me, Look at You, Yoshiko Shimada, 1995.

minute gestures. But the knots are also emblematic: configuring, for example, symbols of the rising sun and the chrysanthemum. Here, Shimada alludes to cloth waistbands that were created by Japanese women to act as talismans for Imperial Army soldiers embarking on military conquests. Shimada's visual provocations insistently question these threads of complicity.

The focal point of Shimada's installation *Look at me/Look at you* offers a complex portrait of Japanese maternal nationalists and their racialized other: the so-called Korean "comfort women," some 200,000 of whom were coerced into prostitution for front-line Japanese soldiers. On entering the dimly lit room, the viewer is immediately confronted by a tiered white satin wedding dress, covered with a starched and utilitarian apron coat. Faced by a full length mirror, this ruffled and jaunty cloak is refracted back. On the other side of the mirror is a *chima-gori* (Korean dress) and a *yukata* (kimono). These stained and unbleached cotton garments wrestle in layers to a floor littered with used condoms. Satin red ribbons spill from tears and folds in the fabric. Gazing at the trick mirror from this side, one sees both dresses simultaneously.

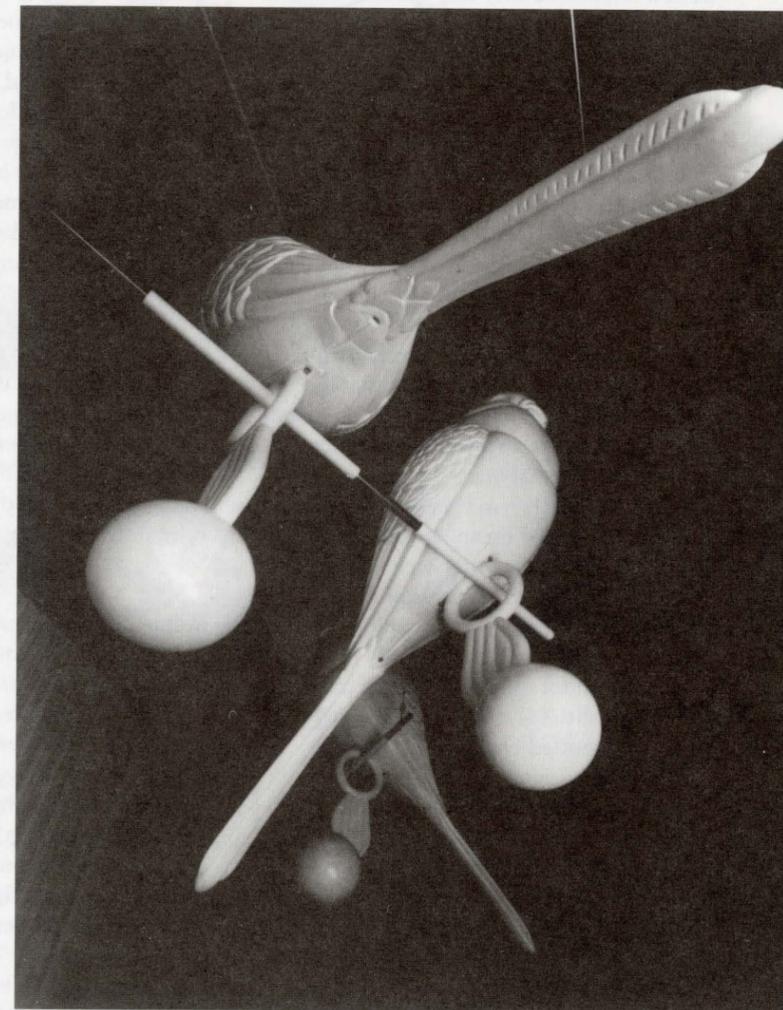
In Shimada's double portrait, the splitting of "good" and "bad" women is achieved by sanctifying Japanese women as symbols of motherly love, chastity and domesticity. It is against this gendered portrait of Japanese moral and national purity that non-Japanese Asian women continue to be discursively outfitted for prostitution. But as Shimada suggests, the ability to see how these two portraits are inter-constituted and relationally bound is precluded for one side. Willful indifference twinned with conformity to the "good mother" role prevents Japanese women from seeing *otherwise*. The seduction of moral authority offers Japanese women a narrative cloak through which to justify the social and psychological relations that enabled the establishment of the comfort women system, and that continue to promote organized sex tours in Asia.

Yukinori Yanagi's work tackles broad conceptual themes relating to the political and economic organization of social identities. In Yanagi's *Asia Pacific Antfarm* (1995) and *Wandering Position* (1995), border-crossing emerges as a key trope. *Asia Pacific Antfarm* presents forty-two national flags (of "Co-prosperity Sphere" nations), each made up of dyed sand particles sandwiched between Plexiglas. These sovereign ant farms are connected by transparent plastic tubes (or ant tunnels). At a metaphoric level, the ants might be seen to move through different historical registers, calling up the myopic obeisance of Japan's imperial soldiers and their contemporary corporate counterparts. But while examining the persistence of imperialism in post-modern capitalist Japan, Yanagi

Polly Zeus, Noburu Tsubaki, 1994. Photo by Narija Hiromu.

also proffers a microcosmic simulation of the process of globalization. As multinational trade and rapid telecommunications re-configure formerly sovereign boundaries, national identity is in flux.

Ants furrow holes through each flag, carrying coloured grains of sand with them as they move. Yanagi incorporates aspects of



chance and vacillation into the work. Boundaries that divide, entrap, and limit us begin to erode. Patterns dissolve, political icons and crests intermix, as the ants go about their restless commerce. Yanagi's vision is that of a unified world. It is sobering, however, to consider how visions of a borderless world are parroted by corporations such as IBM and

Benetton with their fastbuck "solutions for a small planet" and totemic blueprints of friendly cultural variation amidst a "united" and "colourful" world. These corporate attempts to collapse and remodel "difference" in the name of cultural hybridization should compel us to elaborate on our use of these "border-crossing" concepts, inciting us to look at how implicated they may become with the very power relations they seek to oppose.

As old borders get unmade, new ones are erected amidst the "free" flow of deregulated capital and materialist "progress." The proliferation of new technologies and multiple consumer identities gets tied to the farming out of underwaged and unprotected labour in "Third World" free trade export zones. New nativisms and xenophobias, still linked to notions of national "essence" (*kokutai*), flourish in the wake of transnational migration and displacement. It is thus with a sense of poignant irony that I learned that the gallery had just received a new batch of ants from Utah. These ants were imported to replace the original ones: some died from exhaustion; others had simply abandoned Yanagi's project by escaping through a crack in the Plexiglas. In a bittersweet example of art outwitting the constraints of transnational reality, labour momentarily freed itself from the reins of capital.

The wish for other voicings of transnational realities is evoked by Shigeaki Iwai in a work entitled *One Hundred Hummings* (1994). Iwai's sound-based installation consists of "ethnic hummings of Asian migrant workers in Japan when their minds return to their homeland" (artist statement). Rows of small cacti have been affixed to the tops of sound poles. These cacti, considered hardy and modest in needs, have been compared to migrants workers living in Japan. For many of these Asian workers, language becomes a marked signifier of difference in a context of shared appearance.

I experienced Iwai's installation as a compressed sound field in which to rustle with questions about the interconnections between technology, globalization, migration, and social displacement. The "hummings" referenced in the title carried the timbre of lamentation and protest from

an increasingly marginalized and exploited populace. These sounds of belly-ache challenge the beast of tongue-clipping monolingualism — the hubris of nationalist (speech) communities. These sounds reverberate through hollow portraits that cast Japan as a uniform, protest-less society.

In another evocative sound and visual installation, Teiji Furuhashi, a Kyoto artist and member of the interdisciplinary art collective Dumb Type, created a haunting and seductive cyber-experience. In a tragic turn of events, *Lovers* (1994) became a moving epitaph for Furuhashi, who died of an AIDS-related illness during the Toronto exhibition run. *Lovers* revolves in a dark room on the second floor of the gallery. There is a soft ethereal noise that sounds like the hollow tink/tink/tink of a digitalized music box. Enclosed in this space, we are surrounded by a series of projected naked figures that scroll like dreams across the walls. Overlapping at times in an erotic embrace, these figures are for the most part solitary, motioning gently in various states of presence. Words like "fear" and "limit" periodically chase the bodies. Standing amidst these life-size phantoms, there is something transfixing about their soft slow movements, their sad and sudden dashes and falls into nothing-ness.

Paradoxically, these technologically mediated and decontextualized movements also poignantly express reconfigured possibilities for human contact and interaction. The projections are in transit, and if one remains still for an instant a projection might suddenly find where you stand, crossing your body to momentarily cohabit a shared space. There is a charge, a tension, created in Furuhashi's work, which affirms eros only by confronting the limits, leave-takings and vacancies that surge between flickering moments of intimacy and closeness.

* * *

While raising questions of social transformation in disparate ways, the contemporary artists participating in this *Age of Anxiety* resist seeing the process of cross-border imagining as a doomed project. In spite of the corporate agendas invested in these touring expositions, in spite of critically nebulous curatorial statements, the work evades containment. Most of the artists featured in "The Age of Anxiety" resist conflating "Modern" with "Western." They are challenging the assimilationist spirit of globalization (or American cultural domination), while refuting brash patriotic claims by Japanese nativists that postmodern critique and art production are mere symptoms of Western cultural duping and infiltration. Instead these artists invite us to test different borders between the West and the Rest; between the self and its multiple morphing "others." They suggest that as material borders become more porous, with transnational commerce provoking increasingly desperate migration, the "border" as cultural artifact has also become increasingly diffuse. As participants, we are called to witness and react as identity formations begin to tear, shudder, hum and move in our midst.

Kyo Maclear is a Toronto-based writer and visual artist.

All photographs courtesy of Harbourfront Centre and the Power Plant.

Birds of a Feather

Canada, Mexico, NAFTA and Culture



by
José Springer

The specifics of the relations between Canada and Mexico are somehow invisible in everyday life. Nonetheless some images are clear in our minds when we think about each other. These images shape our consciousness at random. They can come and go as quickly as an ad on TV or a photograph in a newspaper. Images of a Rocky Mountain landscape or the towering Vancouver skyline appear occasionally in Mexico associated with the red maple leaf. In Canada, the white sand beaches and blue skies of Cancun and Puerto Vallarta where a vacationing middle age couple enjoy themselves are displayed frequently, along with reports on air pollution in Mexico City. The gaps in our cultural links have been filled up with stereotypes and slanted images. Canadians have images of themselves as frugal and self-effacing while images of Mexico in Canada have an archetypal shallowness to them. The complexities and

subtleties of Mexican's visions of themselves, contradictory as they might be, are seldom reflected fully in Canada. The production and distribution of these images is a complex process. Prior to 1990, Canada was negotiating free trade with the U.S., Mexico became part of GATT, underwent the worst foreign debt crisis in its history, and started a slow move toward electoral democracy after more than sixty years of one party rule. Since 1990, Mexico, Canada and the U.S. have engaged in a negotiation of vested interests, commodities and specific images, under the umbrella of free trade. The Mexican government was a late convert to the religion of free trade. President Salinas de Gortari (1988-94) did not mention the issue during his election campaign. Plans for free trade with the U.S. and Canada only surfaced later as the answer to the country's recurrent economic crisis. The subservient Mexican press praised free trade as the way

for Mexican manufacturers to compete, raise productivity and achieve lower prices. This meant a 180-degree shift from the previous policy of economic self sufficiency, even though Mexico has never been self-sufficient even in corn, the staple of the people's diet.

Controversy over possible American access to publicly owned Mexican oil reserves and the privatization of the oil industry became the focus of Mexican concerns about the agreement. Nationalized in 1938, the oil industry is the symbol of strategic independence from the U.S. While the U.S. Congress demanded the inclusion of oil in the free trade talks, Mexico offered to allow foreign investment in the petrochemical industry but not in the extraction and distribution of gas and oil. The Mexican government also demanded the elimination of U.S. tariffs against steel, cement, agricultural and marine products, while Washington asked for the liberalization of controls on foreign investment. The most banal campaigns in the media invited Mexicans to participate in the agreement by improving their productivity. In most people's minds, NAFTA promised Mexico access to the First World, a dream fueled by media images of products manufactured in Mexico being consumed by North Americans in malls.

Controversies notwithstanding, the three countries signed the agreement in 1993 and started to implement it in 1994. A period of up to fifteen years was set to complete full liberalization of trade among the three countries. Collateral problems such as drug trafficking and labour migration were hardly addressed. Only business people are entitled to travel freely across borders. Ecological legislation was to conform to the minimum common denominator in the three countries, while cultural concerns were reduced to the enforcement of copyright, patent and trademark law, which primarily benefits multinational entertainment and information industries.

For the last five centuries Mexico has been a terrain of cultural hybridization

While the economic and cultural relations between Canada and the U.S. and between Mexico and the U.S. have had a long and controversial history, the Canada-Mexico link lies virtually unexplored. Issues specific to each country and how the other deals with it, such as the last Quebec referendum,

the presence of former president Salinas in Montreal, and the claims of Indian peoples in both countries are seldom addressed. And issues common to each country, like the growing economic recession and migration, are often mediated by economic relations with the U.S.

The role of culture and art seems crucial to understanding the relationship between us, since more often than not our identities are shaped throughout the metaphors, analogies and symbols created by local artists, craftspersons, designers and TV. An exhibition such as the Art Gallery of Ontario's "Art for a Nation" exemplifies the process of rearranging symbolic landscapes for a new context. The boundaries of national identity are increasingly blurred by the globalization of economics and culture promoted by free trade. An analysis of contemporary culture in North America has to take these issues into account. In a world increasingly dominated by images, where messages circulating through mass media or electronic networks have no relation to a geographical or cultural context, power concentrates in international organizations (such as the World Trade Organization, successor to the GATT), resulting in what Ralph Nader has called the homogenization of ways of living and the removal of critical decision-making processes from citizen influence. As Nader puts it, "It's a lot easier to get hold of your city council representative than international trade bureaucrats."¹

Free trade's promise of new jobs, foreign investment, lower prices and greater productivity turned into a recession that has affected Mexico as well as Canada. We have seen the privatization of state-owned enterprises, the decrease in corporate taxes and cuts in government spending under the rhetoric of "common sense revolution" or "social liberalism." Free trade has opened cultural markets to information multinationals and closed the border to agricultural products and manufactured goods. An official working at the Mexican embassy in Ottawa acknowledged that Mexico spends far more money on lobbying and promoting the export of three truckloads of tomatoes than the actual gain from the deregulation of tariffs associated with free trade.

In Mexico, the media and the popular culture portray the post-NAFTA economic collapse as a melodrama. The Salinas family plot is seen as a masterpiece of soap opera: mistresses, killings, drug money, jail. The settings are Montreal, Geneva, Cuba or the high security prison in Almoloya. T-shirts and miniature versions of former president Carlos Salinas dressed in a prison uniform flood the busy streets of Mexico City, providing an opportunity for popular revenge, laughter and some easy money for the unemployed street vendor.

Opposing Visions and Hybridization

Two visions dominated the debate in Mexico over the influence free trade would have on identity and culture. The first view sees the integration of the Mexican economy with that of the U.S. as deepening the dependence on foreign influences and weakening Mexican identity. This conservative vision—held mostly by the political left and a few members of the nationalist right—maintains that an increase of American influence would bring the final disappearance of traditions, the substitution of English for Spanish and the loss of community values to those of individualism and consumerism. The role of the media and fast food franchises in effecting this assimilation has been a key theme in this argument.

The advocates of modernization argued that NAFTA was only a commercial initiative, necessary to improve Mexican standards of production and a way to launch the country into the "new world order." This vision considers culture and identity as separate from and impervious to economic conditions. When asked by a Canadian journalist about the influence of free trade on national identity, former Mexican minister of commerce Jaime Serra Puche, one of the leading advocates of free trade, replied: "This is not relevant to Mexico. If you have time, you should visit the exhibition 'Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries' and you will see there is not much to worry about."²

Every year around the end of March, hundreds of thousands of people gather in the borough of Iztapalapa in Mexico City to witness the parade of the Stations of the Cross. The reenactment of the Passion of Christ was introduced to Mexico by Catholic priests four centuries ago. In the last few years this massive religious ceremony has been broadcast by TV to millions of Mexicans who watch it from home. The ritual has turned into a show. The clergy does not question the virtue of TV in spreading the icons and teachings of the Catholic doctrine.

The influence of mass media in culture acts in two ways: by expanding the exposure to old and new symbols and by fusing them together. As Nestor

García Canclini, the Argentine social scientist, argues: "It is not that national culture is extinguished but, rather, that it is converted into a formula for designating the continuity of an unstable historical memory that is now being reconstituted in interaction with

multinational cultural referents."³ In the case of different cultural backgrounds, the media does not substitute traditions; they designate different terms of engagement between people and their context.

Mexico has already gone through the experience of being colonized by imported images and the technologies to reproduce them. In his investigation of the history of colonization of Latin America by Europe, Serge Gruzinski states that European visual culture



Aztec drawing depicts Spaniards and their allies in battle with the Aztecs.

confronted the indigenous in an image war that grew and adapted itself to the rhythm of politics, reactions and oppositions.⁴ Spanish conquistadors used images of Christ and saints to impose their rule, thus erasing the memories of the indigenous cosmogony and its "profane" and "evil" gods. For the last five centuries Mexico has been a terrain of cultural hybridization. Since the mid-sixteenth century, Mexican has been a mixture of meso-American and medieval ideas. For the Aztecs, human sacrifice was seen as a liberation of energy, while for the Spanish, the Inquisition applied public torture as an exorcism of evil. The Catholic images imposed on the Indian populations were eventually adopted as miraculous and worshipped in the same "pagan ways" as did their pre-Columbian counterparts. Even today, Indian dancers known as "concheros" celebrate ancient rituals as they dance to the beat of drums during Catholic festivities

outside the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In the nineteenth-century, Mexican artists trained in European Classicism favoured historical renditions of the Indian past in a manner that made Moctezuma and council of elders look like Roman senators. Three Mexican muralists, Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros, developed a national-historical version of Cubism, Expressionism and Futurism. In a startling contemporary parallel to this history of hybridization, the Mexican television network Televisa (one of the few Mexican enterprises with access to state of the art technology) produces over 30,000 hours a year of programming, targeting an estimated audience of 300-million Spanish-speaking people in Latin America, Spain, the Caribbean, the U.S. and Canada. Televisa's themes and formats copy those created by American broadcasting corporations. In this process of adaptation, images and styles were appropriated and fused following a simple law of cultural alchemy: nothing is lost, nothing is gained, everything is transformed. The question is: Will we ever be capable of understanding where we came from?

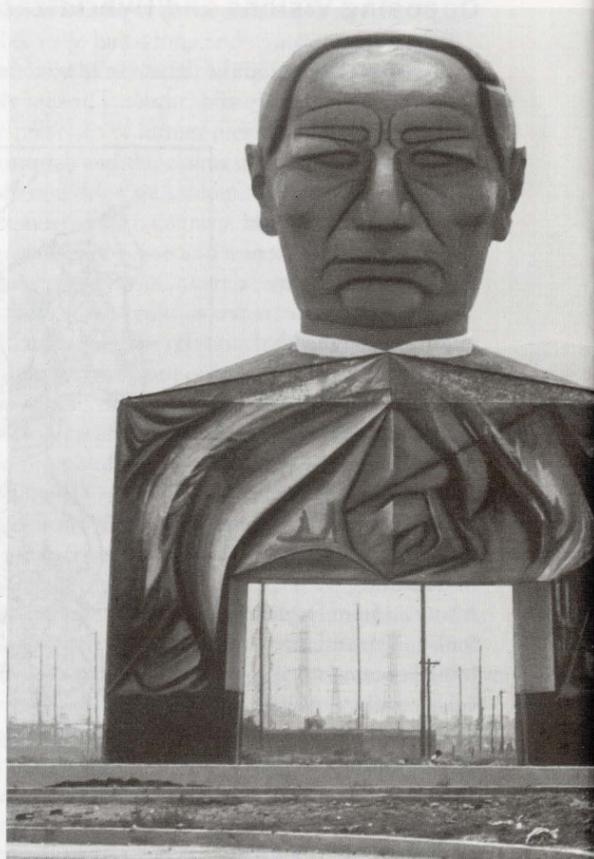


Trading Identities, Exchanging Culture

NAFTA has redefined the notion of "culture" as forms of property that include copyrights, patents, trademarks, industrial designs, integrated circuits, satellite signals and so on. Such redefinition raises problems for the legal protection of community and other collective practices that generate marketable knowledge (i.e., seed varieties) and products (music, crafts) that are not recognized as such by states and multinational corporations, the major brokers in the arena of international law.⁵

Culture is seen in Mexico as a component of identity and the State has been historically responsible for promoting and subsidizing the cultural infrastructure. Artists' unions are now demanding the right to participate in the definition of policies to sustain key aspects of identity in combination with developments in technology. Their demands include: democratic access to the production and distribution of culture; freer and more diversified circulation of messages and cultural products; and elimination of monopolies in mass media and in the art-historical bureaucratic apparatus. This, they say, would end the state monopoly on the definition of culture and its possible uses within society and abroad. However in the official Mexican National Plan for Development 1995–2000, the importance given to culture is exemplified in the space used to describe it, only one out of 173 pages.⁶ There is no mention in this document of cultural exchange or ways to confront the foreign investment in technologies with development of local programs in those fields.

The uses of culture and art by Mexican politicians to promote their agendas and careers are well known and have been amply documented. Narrow or ambiguous definitions of culture and identity are developed by every official—from the president to cabinet ministers, to the directors of the cultural



Left: popular image of Carlos Salinas, former president of Mexico.
Above: statue of former president Benito Juárez near a development site.

apparatus—in order to fit their agendas. With slight variations of discourse, politicians in Mexico regard culture as the sum of historical events and the objects representing them. According to the official vision culture

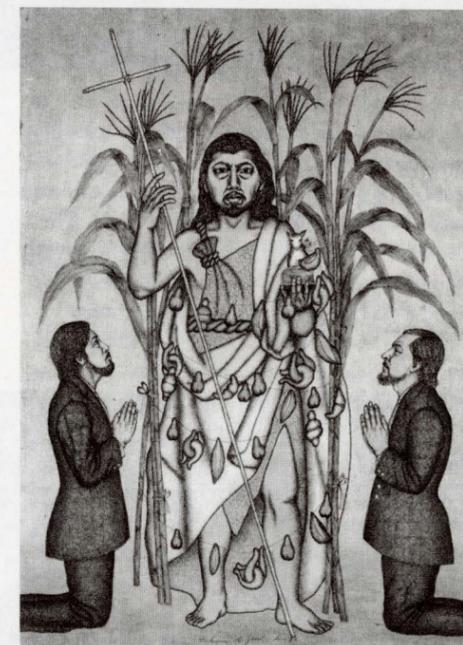
... expresses a vast potential of richness and wisdom rooted in the nation's character.... In Mexico this is particularly true, due to the cultural plurality that defines our people, consolidated in the distant past from the encounter of Europeans and Indians in this American land.⁷

This confined interpretation of culture as a mirror of nationalistic values provides a space in which the perceptions of people can be easily manipulated. "Nationalism reaches its maximum efficiency in securing an identification between politics and culture when the dimensions of the real and the imaginary become blurred or invisible."⁸ It is common practice for the state to use Indian artifacts and artworks to promote the image of Mexico abroad; however criticism of the miserable living conditions of those same Indians, or news reports of their slaying (like the 1995 massacre of seventeen peasants in Agua Blanca, Guerrero) are considered betrayals concocted by the "enemies of Mexico."

The homogeneous rendition of culture portrays Mexico as having a "unique personality," just one. In the arts, literature, cultural studies and public speeches, there is often a call for an endless quest for the "essence of being Mexican." But when the quest is exhausted then it is replaced by the search for "universal" affinities, whether they be formal or spiritual, while ignoring the historical and political formation that determined the relationship with other states. The use of a homogenous definition of culture in the nineteenth century was to ensure that the prevailing systems of value remained intact and retained their purity in order to create the sense of nationhood. Today it provides government institutions with a moral justification for assuming the role of guardians of true Mexican values and identity. According to the president of the Mexican Council for Culture and the Arts, Guillermo Tovar y de Teresa: "... Mexican art has always shown a social concern, because the values it portrays have been present in society in every epoch, have been shared extensively and have shaped the taste and likes of the social complex...."⁹ This version of the role of Mexican art does not include the expression of other histories or of different identities which exist in contemporary Mexico.

An example of the official role assigned to the arts was the major exhibition presented in 1991 in the U.S.: "Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries."¹⁰ The exhibition was assembled by curators of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and funded by Emilio Azcarraga, CEO and largest shareholder of the media monopoly Televisa. Several years later, a similar exhibition presented in Belgium under the auspices of Europalia, the pan-European cultural body, was turned into a major propaganda campaign for the government of Carlos Salinas. He was praised as a shining model of the new Latin American leader, and he was rumored to be the prime candidate for the presidency of the World Trade Organization.

Sound of a Clapping Hand, Enrique Guzmán, 1974, oil on canvas, 149 x 118.5 cm.
Suppliants 3, Naum B. Zenil, 1989, ink on paper.



The Serpent's Children

Mexican society in general, and particularly those who speak for it through the arts and literature, are involved in a continuous process of creating myths. From the artisan that creates the grotesque man-like clay devils in Ocumichu to the expressionist painter of the urban environs, to the chronicler of the fantasies of the middle class, all of them try to define the national character

through myths. Mexican poet and essayist Octavio Paz wrote extensively on this matter in a book called *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. However, his seminal thoughts on the Mexican self have been surpassed by the realities of contemporary culture. Paz has been criticized for his Eurocentric approach to Mexico, which homogenizes history and ignores the cultural resistance of several indigenous peoples after the conquest. New generations of Mexicans no longer believe in the myths that shaped this society. Our current mythology has been exhausted by years of repetition, and the emerging myths are ephemeral and transient.

Serpents shed their skin several times in a lifetime. Quetzalcoátl, the feathered serpent, was the name given to one of the pre-Columbian deities, a white and bearded man that came from the western sky. In the contemporary quest for myth, the notion of Mexicans as the serpent's children describes our hybrid position in the present world. It combines the always-present notion of limits with the possibility of creating myths. The children of the snake are those whose future is uncertain, their past forgotten, their only hope is to change. Novelist and essayist Carlos Fuentes says Mexico should build a future of democracy with memory, progress within culture and a future with a past.

Fuentes' penetrating insight uncovers the myths of Mexico. But it is the anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla who explains the reason for their ailing existence: the denial of deeply ingrained racism in Mexican society. Mestizos and creoles consider Indians slow, untrustworthy and superstitious. Any sign of Indian heritage, such as skin and hair colour or lack of fluency in Spanish, is seen as a handicap that marks the boundary between exclusion and acceptance. Many politicians and intellectuals refuse to admit the diversity of aboriginal cultures living in Mexico's territory into their imaginary Mexico. Marxist intellectuals in the early 1950s failed to see segregation based on racial features and instead explained it by using the classical categories of participation in production: peasants, proletarians, petit bourgeois and bourgeois. This denial of the country's real racial composition has led to



ESTA OBRA ES ARTE NEO MEXICANO
¿POR QUE? VEALA EN EL

CENTRO
CULTURAL
ARTE
CONTEMPORANEO, A. C.

continued failure of economic plans and land reforms. Centuries of segregation and abuse sustain a social pyramid of privilege, which to the outside world looks like nothing more than corruption. Bonfil Batalla calls this "the Deep Mexico."

The myth of racial unity is often overlooked or underestimated by foreigners who travel to Mexico. On the other hand, middle class, white, educated Mexicans often try to look and act North American to avoid being confused with ordinary folks—*los nacos*. Discrimination seldom appears in high art as a theme, rather it takes the form of submerged ironic comment.

Ad for Televisa's Centre for Contemporary Culture and Art. The Centre promoted the term "Neo-Mexican art" as a tag for this 1990 exhibition. Shown is *La Virgen*, Rocio Maldonado, acrylic and collage on canvas, 216.5 x 176 cm.

This particular form of discrimination surfaced with extraordinary detail in film and radio melodramas from the '50s, '60s and early '70s, in popular songs (boleros), in adult comic books and in pornographic literature. Anthropology has resorted to myths to understand this complex problem of identity. Ethnologist and essayist Roger Bartra has written that:

Between the hunched Indian and the urban, underclass mestizo there extends a line that passes through the principal points of articulation of the Mexican soul: melancholy—negligence—fatalism—inferiority—violence—sentimentalism—resentment—escapism. This line marks the voyage that each Mexican must make to find himself, from the original natural Eden to the industrial apocalypse.¹¹

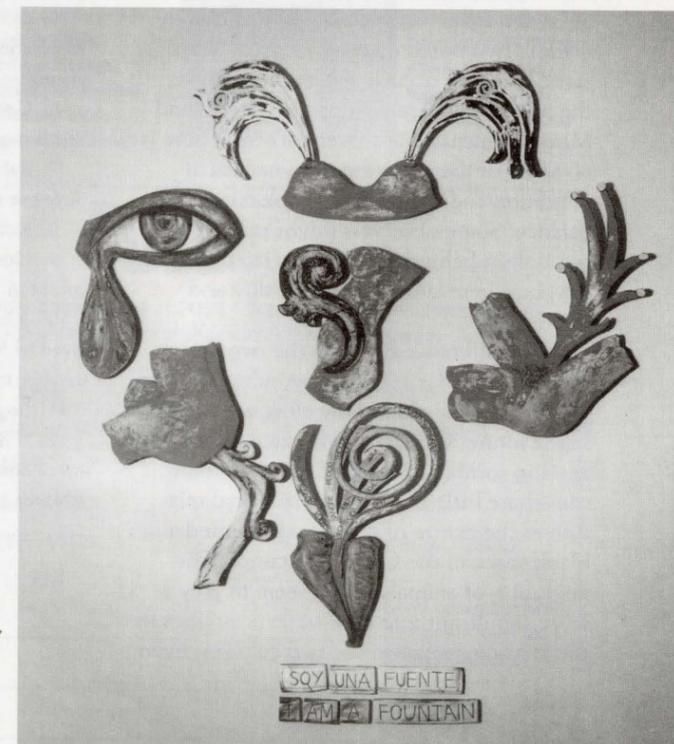
The work of visual artists in the first half of this century demonstrates a clear tendency to look to the past for a sense of belonging in modern times. Painters like Frida Kahlo, María Izquierdo, El Corsito and Miguel Covarrubias depicted the essence of race identity and the source of racial conflict with extraordinary detail. The generations that followed rejected the sense of melancholy and the social implications of being Mexican. The visual art of the postwar period became mimetically cosmopolitan in the '50s and '60s and then turned ironically postmodern in the late '70s and early '80s. During the second half of the '80s and the beginning of the '90s, art market demand contributed to shape a mainstream tendency in painting, now almost defunct, called Neo-Mexicanism. This style was exported in exhibitions like "The Bleeding Heart,"¹² which traveled through the U.S. and Canada in 1992 and 1993. Chicano art of the last thirty years, which deals with issues of representation and personal identity, leads to a re-examination of the rich melodramatic heritage of popular culture that defines how all Mexican flesh and blood looks.

The coming of age of contemporary hybrid art to express a fragmented reality caught between contempt for the old values of society and fascination with the self became the serpent's egg of our culture. The visual arts have been central to understanding the process of catharsis, proposing and defending multiple readings of our heritage and the self. Contemporary art confronted the established definition of national identity and contested the values of a "one-race, one-history" society. This journey has broken away from the narcissism implied in *The Labyrinth of Solitude* and from the permanence of archetypes, replacing them with layered interpretations of identity based on sexuality, transcendental experiences and the harsh realities of marginal and ethnic groups. This is the beginning of a new cycle.

Cavallo Ballo, Julio Galán, 1987, oil on canvas, 130 x 180 cm.

I am a Fountain, María Magdalena Campos, oil on board, clay tablets, 275 x 325 cm.

These works, along with Enrique Guzmán's painting, were included in "The Bleeding Heart" exhibition.



Meanwhile in the north...

In 1995 Canada Post issued four stamps depicting four animal species that travel between Mexico and Canada. These include: the prototypical winter tourist, the monarch butterfly; the fishing aristocrat, the belted kingfisher; a goose called the northern pintail; and a scary-looking mammal that goes by the name of the hoary bat. All of them are border-crossers caught in the act of flying. In the background, a map of North America signals the regions of Mexico and Canada that share the seasonal presence of these creatures. Arrows point out the flying routes and faded contours of the animals give the whole design a strong sense of motion. These stamps are masterpieces of Canadian design, implying a cultural and political agenda. In a matter-of-fact way, they show the path of migration in two directions. The economy of means and symbols is evidence of the Protestant ethics that run deep in Canadian society. Canadians spend more time and money than any other country reaching consensus, even if they don't want to cope with it.

The same cannot be said of Mexico, where an edition of four stamps on the same theme was also issued last year. The Mexican design is flatly narrative and even quaint. Two bored ducks, being just that, static and dull, occupy most of the stamp; the official emblematic flags of Canada and Mexico adorn the left-over corners. There is no sense of the direction or dynamics of migration and the elements look out of balance. Some observers might praise the symbolism behind wildlife as related to ecology, but these lame ducks look silly and uneventful.

The difference between the two designs indicates how far apart we are culturally, and raises questions about how close we will get in the future. Canada and Mexico remain far apart in spite of free trade. The two countries share little more than a marginal relation to the centre of power, represented as a blank space in the Canadian stamps. The migration of animals would seem to play a more significant role than trade or politics in the relations between the two cultures. Even

the controversial swan song of former president Salinas, who resurfaces sporadically in Montreal, raises questions about the true purpose of NAFTA.

We are still far from grasping the reality of the other, but it is by looking at the myths, realities and contradictions embodied in our respective imageries that we might begin to get closer. The recent array of cultural exchanges between the two countries may aid in resolving the competing visions of Mexico and Canada into a dynamic and multi-layered context for convergence. Mexicans and Canadians share one overriding objective in common: trying to survive the difficulties of NAFTA. It is almost certain that neither country will remain the same in the long run. Reading between the lines of official discourses, understanding the misuses of representation, avoiding the slanted agenda imposed by multinationals, we can begin to grasp the future of the Americas.

José Springer is a visual artist and writer from Mexico City living in Toronto. He was awarded the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Art Residency Program grant for 1996 to write on the Canada-Mexico relationship during the 1991-96 period, of which this feature is a part.

Notes

1. Ralph Nader, et al., *The Case Against Free Trade, GATT, NAFTA and the Globalization of Corporate Power*, (San Francisco: Earth Island Press, 1993), p. 1.
2. Quoted in Néstor García Canclini, "Tradición y Modernidad Cultural, Ante el Tratado de Libre Comercio," *El Gallo Ilustrado, Novedades*, 19 April 1992, p. 7.
3. See Néstor García Canclini, *op. cit.*
4. Serge Gruzinski, *La Guerra de las imágenes. De Cristóbal Colón a "Blade Runner"* (1492-2019), (Mexico: Ed. Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), pp. 12-13.
5. Quoted from George Yudice, "Cultural Anxiety and Cultural Brokering in the Transnational Era," paper presented at the symposium Identidad, Políticas Culturales e Integración Regional, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico, September 1994.
6. Gerardo Ochoa Sandy, "Cultura y TLC: Poca Negociación, Muchas Ambigüedades," *Proceso*, no. 890, 22 November 1993.
7. Rafael Tovar y de Teresa, president of the National Council for Culture and the Arts, "Arte que se Enriquece," *Edición especial del V Centenario, Novedades*, 13 December 1992, p. 8.
8. Rafael Tovar y de Teresa, *op. cit.*
9. Quoted from Roger Bartra, "Mexican Oficio," *Third Text* (London), spring 1991, vol. 14, p. 10.
10. A complete account on the origins and consequences of this "mammoth" show is given by Shifra M. Goldman in "3,000 Years of Mexican Art," *Art Journal* (New York), summer 1992, vol. 51 no. 2.
11. Roger Bartra, *La Jaula de la Melancolía*, Ed. Grijalbo, (Mexico, 1987), p. 240.
12. "The Bleeding Heart" exhibition was put together by the Institute of Contemporary Art of Boston and was shown in at the Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, 10 September-1 November 1992.

DID YOU MISS US ON THE NEWSSTAND?



19:1 FALL 1995
Kill, Kill, La, La, La: Pop, Punk and the Culture Industry; The Obscenity Chill Continues: Elaine Carol on the Eli Langer Trial; plus reviews of Body-centred Video Art in Halifax, Out on Screen, *AlterNative* and General Idea.



18:1 FALL 1994
Featuring Hair of the Dog? Perspectives on Artists of South Asian Descent in Britain by Sonali Fernando. Atif Ghani interviews curator and Writer Ian Iqbal Rashid. Packed with great reviews!



17:2 WINTER 1994
Sinking: \$6-million & Still Counting, M. Nourbese Philip on *Show Boat* and the Media; plus Call Out the Tropes: *Miss Saigon* Undergoes Analysis; Richard Fung interviews David Henry Hwang, author of *M. Butterfly*.



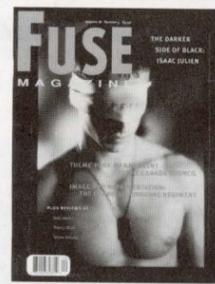
18:5 SPECIAL 1995
A Newer Laocoön: Toward a Defence of Artists' Self-determination Through Public Arts Funding; Michael Balsler's Video Art and Activism; Positive (Inter)Action: Responding to AIDS in Montreal; and much more!



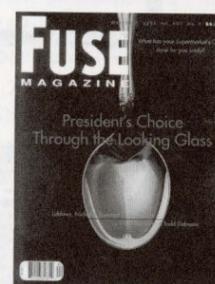
17:5&6 SPECIAL 1994
This is our very special music issue. It features articles on The Changing Space of the Record Shop & an interview with Durable Planets. Columns include Music in the New South Africa and Hole's Courtney Love.



17:1 FALL 1993
Canadian Film and Video in a U.S. Context; plus Cruising Media: Serial Killers & Other "Undesirables"; and DQTV: Public Access Queers. Also a profile of performance duo, Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan.



18:4 SUMMER 1995
The Darker Side of Black, an interview with Isaac Julien; Theme Park Management at the Canada Council; What the Canadian Airborne Regiment Means to Artists; with reviews of bell hooks, Nancy Nicol and Steve Reinke.



17:4 SUMMER 1994
President's Choice Through the Looking Glass: Loblaw's, Nichol & Specular Consumption; Talking Cock: Lesbians and Aural Sex — Cynthia Wright interviews Shonagh Adelman; plus Multiculturalism and AIDS: Doing the Right Thing!



16:5&6 SPECIAL 1993
This double issue is burstin' at the seams. Re-appropriating Cultural Appropriation; Working Through Cultural Appropriation; Dis-Orient-ation; wordS and sWord: An anagram of Appropriation. Also Voices and Stories, and Dance Me Inside.



18:3 SPRING 1995
The Haunt of Race: Multiculturalism, Incorporation and Writing Thru Race; Chomsky Speaks; AIDS Testimonials by José Francisco Ibañez-Carrasco; plus reviews of *Guy to Goddess: An Intimate Look at Drag Queens & Ladies Please!*



18:2 WINTER 1995
"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold": Prospects for the Racist Right in Canada; plus Agitative Propaganda; Embodying Shame and Fear: The Effects of Misogyny and Homophobia on Gay Men's Bodies.

FUSE

Yes, I would like to order back issues of FUSE Magazine. I have enclosed cheque or money order of \$5.00 plus \$1.00 postage/handling for each issue.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19:1 FALL 1995 | <input type="checkbox"/> 17:5 & 6 SPECIAL 1994 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18:5 SPECIAL ISSUE | <input type="checkbox"/> 17:4 SUMMER 1994 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18:4 SUMMER 1995 | <input type="checkbox"/> 17:2 WINTER 1994 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18:3 SPRING 1995 | <input type="checkbox"/> 17:1 FALL 1993 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18:2 WINTER 1995 | <input type="checkbox"/> 16:5 & 6 SPECIAL 1993 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18:1 FALL 1994 | |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____

Prov/Terr: _____ Postal Code: _____

Send your payment and order form to:
FUSE Magazine
Back Issues
401 Richmond St. W.
Suite 454
Toronto, Canada
M5V 3A8

Art, Appropriation, & the Commodification of Difference

Cannibal Culture



by Deborah Root

Available at bookstores or from Harper Collins Canada 1-800-387-0117

READING AND RE-READING

Selections from the Permanent Collection.
 April 20 - June 9, Centennial Gallery
 Opening Sunday, April 28, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
 Public Talk by Guest Curator Karen White, April 30, 7:30 p.m.

JOHN SCOTT - STEALTH

April 27 - June 9, Gairloch Gallery
 Opening Sunday, April 28, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

IN THE GARDEN

Saturday, April 20, 7:30 p.m., Gairloch Gallery
 Fundraising Soirée and Live Auction
 of garden-inspired objects by Canadian
 artists, architects and designers.

CENTENNIAL GALLERY
 120 Navy Street
 GAIRLOCH GALLERY
 1306 Lakeshore Road East

oakville galleries

OFFICES
 1306 Lakeshore Road East
 Oakville, Ontario
 Canada. L6J 1L6
 Tel (905) 844-4402
 Fax (905) 844-7968

FOUCAULT'S POTATOES

Ron Benner: All That Has Value

EDMONTON ART GALLERY, JANUARY 13 - FEBRUARY 25, 1996
 CURRENTLY: PRESENTATION HOUSE GALLERY, VANCOUVER, APRIL 6 - MAY 12, 1996
 CURATED BY PETER WHITE

REVIEW BY JOAN RICHARDSON

"Ron Benner: All That Has Value" questions the values we assign to foods imported from Central and South America. Peter White curated this survey of Ron Benner's multi-media installations from 1979 to 1995 for London's McIntosh Gallery. It opened recently at its first tour venue, the Edmonton Art Gallery.

Benner's premise is that the vegetable foods on which we depend in North America originated among indigenous people and form the material basis of cultures that are being subsumed by profit-driven technology and business. He confronts us with a series of ironic and ambivalent situations, in which we must select our own position, decide what we value and what we count as nothing.

For two decades Benner has traveled annually from his birthplace of London, Ontario, between old country and new world ports, across boundaries of the Americas, North and South. Sometimes Benner sees himself as Crow, a mythical creature from First Nations lore. Crow flies high, sees much and bears messages. Like Crow, Benner lives from a vantage point that few of us could manage. Benner gets his crow's view from his journeys. He sees first hand the real impact on human lives and food sources of the history of European colonization.

Benner chose the title "All That Has Value" to honor indigenous culture that existed before 500 years ago. It comes from the words of a native Mexican speaker after the Spanish conquest: "Gold,

jade and bird feathers — all that has value was then counted as nothing." Were the Aztec ignorant of the European market value of gold and jade, and were Spaniards ignorant of the cultural value of sacred objects? We resolve the ambiguity by selecting a position on what is of value and to whom. For Benner the meaning is unequivocal: "The importance of that cultural production was totally, violently canceled and counted as nothing by the people who invaded."

The cultivation and consumption of plants are a kind of art whose traditional values are lost when they enter our market system. The title piece *All That Has Value* (1994) presents English and Spanish translations of the Nahuatl quotation stained on paper with cochineal red and indigo blue, dyes derived from two Mexican plants. Traded for centuries by Oaxacan people, their sacred meanings were "canceled" by price in the European market. Benner's use of these dyes in his own cultural production recalls, if it does not restore, the original meanings of these products.

With startling wit, *Cuitlacoche*—in memory of Michel Foucault (1985) underlines the contingency of cultural meanings. A large photo-portrait of Foucault grinning brings the philosopher's teeth into incongruous association with regular rows of kernels in hybrid corn stacked on a table, as well as with a deformed corn cob in a nearby photograph. Reproduced from a product label, it shows cuitlacoche, a corn fungus sold as a delicacy in Mexico and

branded "smut" in North America. This opposition of cultural values between two market systems is especially unsettling as it concerns literal consumption — would I want to put this in my mouth? We resolve the oscillation between abhorrence and desire by sharing Foucault's wonder at the multiplicity of meanings that can be conferred on a single object.

And the trees grew inwards—for Manuel Scorza (1979/80) recognizes indigenous production and marketing of traditional vegetables in Peru. It commemorates the campaign of Manuel Scorza, socialist and novelist, to include pre-conquest cultures in Peruvian society. A cornucopia of fresh vegetables supplied to the North from the South spills rotting from photo-images of upraised hands. Over a second pair of hands, Benner replicates a Peruvian farmers' market, with dried foods and artifacts arranged on socialist newspapers and market women's shawls. This is the actual cornucopia, the rich diversity of traditional foods in South America that sustain consumption in Canada.

Benner's replication of a potato breeding experiment in *Trans/mission: Drought Simulation* (1988-90) poses agricultural engineering with pointed irony against cooperative potato cultivation in the Andes. The region is the original gene pool for the world's potato crops, possessing thousands of varieties. Andean farmers, photographed for a farming institute calendar, seem to laugh at the experiment. Beneath them, a richly coloured assortment of potatoes (found in an Edmonton farmers'

February 22 to March 30, 1996

INTOLERANCE

Maris Bustamante
 Edgar Clement
 Juan Davila
 Bruce LaBruce
 Matt Nolen
 Jane Ash Poitras
 John Scott

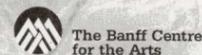
May 23 to June 23, 1996

THE SPACE OF INFORMATION

Guest curated by Laura Trippi

ELECTRIC THEATRE Video

Guest curated by Christopher Eamon



WALTER PHILLIPS GALLERY

Box 1020-14 Banff Alberta Canada T0L 0C0 (403) 762-6281
 Web Site - <http://www-nmr.banffcentre.ab.ca/WPG/>
 Financial support provided by the Canada Council and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, a beneficiary of Alberta Lotteries

Queer City Cinema

Lesbian and gay film and video
 coming (out) to a theatre near you...

APRIL 15, 16 **Gender/Race**

APRIL 22, 23 **Home/Family**

APRIL 29, 30 **Desire/Sexuality**

MAY 6, 7 **Memory/History**

Guest curator Gary Varro examines the frequently overlooked diversity within queer culture and invites a re-think of 'cohesive' identities and identifications.

All screenings begin at 7:30 pm, Regina Public Library Film Theatre. Admission is free.

Presented with the financial assistance of The Canada Council and the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

DUNLOP Art Gallery

Regina Public Library, P.O. Box 2311, 2311 12th Avenue
 Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3Z5 (306) 777-6040 Fax 352-5550



Cuitlacoche—in memory of Michel Foucault, 1985, installation detail. Photo courtesy the Edmonton Art Gallery.

market) contrasts with hybrid baking potatoes, gold-wrapped and uniform.

Engineered hybrids satisfy “YUP” criteria — high yield, uniformity, and ease of processing. Hybrids promise to solve famine with larger crops. They can also be patented and controlled for profit. Experience, however, shows that extensive uniform crops increase the risk of failure and genetic erosion. Subsistent farmers nurture the diversity of nature. They raise many varieties in a single field to achieve hardiness and resistance as well as high nutrition.

Benner’s curiosity about food plants led him to the writing of Pat Roy Mooney, an agricultural researcher and political activist. Mooney exposed First World multi-national corporate control of global food resources in a 1979 book.¹ His meeting with Benner last year inspired “Shell Trails.” Mooney states:

Indigenous knowledge—as manifested through the cooperative community

innovation systems—has provided us with every food we eat today.... In the present century, much of the diversity and value of this human genius has been destroyed by ruthless colonialism.²

Mooney recounts the history of the potato blight that caused the 1840s Irish famine and that currently threatens the genetic sources of potatoes in the Andes. Ancient cultivation practices of the Huastec people of central Mexico contained the blight at its point of origin before colonial and trade contacts. Mooney laments that in its 1995 food security declaration, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization still seeks solutions in private investment and the free market, ignoring the potential of indigenous knowledge.

Conceived during the period of NAFTA and the Chiapas revolt in Mexico, *In Digestion* (1993–95) documents the impact of free market enterprise on our food sources. Benner retraces the paths of two boxes of bell peppers from a market in London,

Ontario, back to their origins in Mexico and Florida by recreating a trailer-truck in the Edmonton Art Gallery.

Sequences of photos on the sheet metal interior of the “truck” lead in reverse from the Ontario market through highway transport to the packing and loading of the peppers in Culiacán and Immokalee. Tire trail gives way to shell trail, strewn with corn kernels and aboriginal shell-corn necklaces. We arrive at a 50,000-year-old track through the Sonora desert, the aboriginal trade route north from Mexico to the United States and Canada.

Images distant in time and space co-exist. Elliptical arrangements of photos fill in the “ellipsis” — the gap in our understanding. Like Crow, Benner sees native farming, exchange and trade routes in a single glance beside modern technology, business and transportation. Without that awareness, the closed ellipse of our market system is self-perpetuating.

We forget the ecological and cultural origins of our basic foods. We forget the indigenous farmers, their communal tenure of the land, the native plant species they tend with an age-old wisdom that allows symbiosis between people and their cultivated foods. Ron Benner sees that symbiosis being killed and the survival of us all threatened in the process.

Notes

1. Pat Roy Mooney, *Seeds of the Earth: A Private or Public Resource?*, Canadian Council for International Co-operation and International Coalition for Development Action, Ottawa, 1979.

2. Pat Roy Mooney, *Shell Trails*, in *Ron Benner: All That Has Value*, exhibition catalogue with texts by Peter White and Patrick Roy Mooney (London: McIntosh Gallery, 1996 [forthcoming]).

Joan Richardson, Ph.D., is an art historian and critic living in Edmonton.

ART OF RECALL

From Memory to Transformation: Jewish Women’s Voices

CURATED BY MIMI GELLMAN

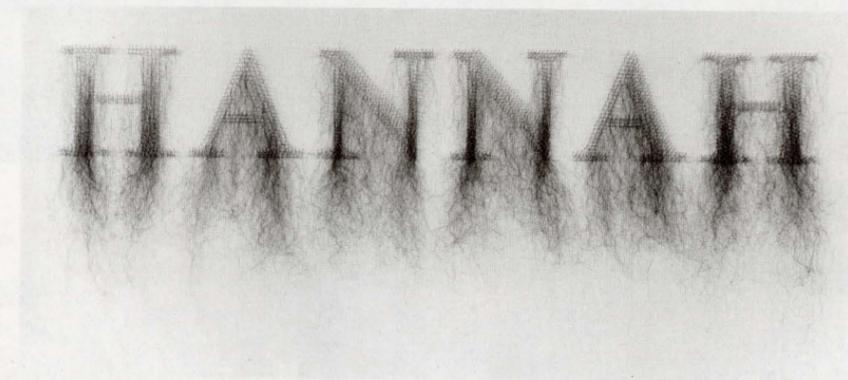
JANUARY 19–FEBRUARY 3, 1996

179 JOHN STREET, 3RD FLOOR, TORONTO

REVIEW BY CATHERINE OSBORNE

The exhibition “From Memory to Transformation” was organized to coincide with a Toronto conference on Jewish women in today’s society. Some participating artists were initially reluctant to show their work under the exhibition’s theme — Jewish women’s voices. The aversion was understandable, as several of the eight artists do not use their particular religious and cultural ethnicity as primary signifiers in their work. So, when scouted out to fit an emphatically targeted theme, there was the very real possibility of labels being attached and content shrinking to one-liners. But curator Mimi Gellman succeeded in creating a sensitive and provocative exhibition.

In this particular case, theme has not limited content. While there is, very definitely, the female impetus and Jewish heritage present, the sentiment is decidedly humanist. The means and themes are expressed in deliberately broad, even subversive, terms that give voice to prevailing questions of identity and disenfranchisement. Mindy Yan Miller, for instance, who has used hundreds of straight pins pierced into the gallery’s dry-wall to write out the name Hannah, does let her own sense of alienation growing up in a non-Jewish neighbourhood in Sault Ste. Marie find its way into her work — Hannah, we are told, is the name of a relative. But personal history is the undercurrent, not the focus. On each pinhead she has precariously balanced a long strand of black hair which produces a thin mane running down the wall. The work’s seduction is in its frailty and the implica-



Every Word, their Name, Mindy Yan Miller, 1993, hair and pins. Photo: Peter MacCallum.

tion of human frailty. Eerie and gorgeous at the same time, Hannah is clearly vulnerable to being destroyed by even the slightest breeze through the gallery, and knowing that the work will disappear once the show is over reads like a scripted death.

Human vulnerability is also evident in the work of Ruth Liberman, who exposes personal stories in public spaces. A Jew who grew up in Germany, Liberman has recorded across a giant sheet of white paper excerpts from her own memories and stories told to her by relatives. By randomly laying down strips of typewriter ribbon across the page, Liberman writes across the ribbon leaving an inked impression of a phrase or sentence. Text moves across the paper like a blizzard of words, thoughts and ideas that are bunched together or meander off on their own, allowing only glimpses into the content. What content is visible reads as

fleeting moments of intimate conversations or dreams. But privacy prevails — given Liberman’s poetic license in rearranging the text — and even though personal recollections are openly displayed, the identity of the author remains concealed.

In comparison, one might read Nadine Norman’s installation like an open book on Judaism and its irreconcilable connection to Nazism. Norman has stenciled across two walls a repeated pattern of swastikas and sauvastikas (the Buddhist temple emblem that is the mirror image of the Nazi icon) made of pressed ash. Cleverly and campishly toying with a symbolic discourse between ash and the Nazi emblem, as well as the diametrically opposing meanings of swastikas and sauvastikas, Norman sets up other variable contradictions. The feminine hominess of her “wallpapered” room, for instance, contrasts the masculine Nazi

ANALYZING THE GROOVE

Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America

(HANOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE: WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1994)

BY TRICIA ROSE

REVIEW BY CHRIS WODSKOU

The more the Cultural Studies industry churns out books on music, it becomes clear that, at least where analyses of popular music are concerned, the field is dominated by three types: young academics trying to make their *c. v.*'s sexier; pop journalists like Greil Marcus, Simon Frith and Simon Reynolds bent on legitimizing their much-maligned discursive terrain with language and frameworks appropriated from the Frankfurt School and post-structuralism; and an older generation of tenured academics desperate to prove their relevance to post-'60s youth culture. The recently published *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music & Youth Culture* (1994), edited by Tricia Rose and the ubiquitous Andrew Ross, is symptomatic of what happens when these three groups converge in one volume. While a handful of the articles offer insightful analyses, you'd swear that the majority of the contributors were moonlighting for the Berlitz people — the older, more academically entrenched contributors come off as little more than elevated travel writers, pointing out enthusiastically and superficially the local flora, fauna and chief exports of various movements in youth culture. Of course, they attempt to situate musical trends within the projects of modernity or late capitalism or some such meta-narrative, but their effect is of a rarefied primer of contemporary music for the highly educated who get their music updates from *Time* and CNN. People knowledgeable about hip hop, for example, don't need to have it explained to them that Ice Cube's not down with cops.

To anyone in the know about hip hop, raves or riot grrrls, far too many of the treatments in *Microphone Fiends* are factually facile and theoretically patronizing — at their worst, their genesis as academic exercises is transparent, as was the case with leading African American literary critic Houston A. Baker, Jr.'s theoretically ambitious yet seriously underinformed *Black Studies: Rap and the Academy* (1993). Baker's intention — to place popular music on the agenda of cultural and textual analysis — is laudable, but more than being passingly familiar with the music under study should be a prerequisite to tacitly ordaining oneself an authority by writing critically about it. There are volumes to be written about the myriad trends, alternative and mainstream, in pop music today, but the last thing we need to read is Baudrillard writing about the libidized angst and simulacra of desire in grunge.

That partly explains why I like Tricia Rose's *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* so much. Her pedigree as something of an insider is evident from the number of rap artists she interviews, from anecdotal material concerning rap concerts she's attended and even more fundamentally from the fact that she does not limit her focus to the most spectacular elements in the cultural

fabric of hip hop. She goes deeper than the most lurid controversies (2 Live Crew, Snoop Dogg), the most overt confrontational politics (Public Enemy) and those who have most gripped American consciousness by dint of playing to white America's worst racial paranoia (gangsta rap). Underlying her enthusiasm is a sense of urgency and compulsion to critique; an engagement with hip hop that seems born out of love, respect and concern.

Black Noise opens with a brief summary of the media coverage hip hop almost exclusively receives: a crudely applied tar brush of violence, sexism, anti-Semitism and anti-white racism to all rappers and, just as significant, their fans, monolithically

constructed as Black and criminal. Rose spends much of the rest of the book delving beneath this image of hip hop, the dissemination of which is so rarely under the control of the artists themselves, to recuperate the sites of production of hip hop and humanize the producers of hip hop culture, then flesh them out into more than media-encoded ciphers.

With this approach, Rose transcends the bulk of cultural criticism of hip hop, which becomes fixated on the visual, on the spectacle (ever found it strange that so much academic work on popular music deals with video and those stars like Madonna and Michael Jackson who are as well known for their appearance as for their music?) and of the tendency to read Black cultural products as pure textuality. For Rose, hip hop and Black life exceed facile sociological approaches that read unproblematic truths off the surfaces in rap, songs as videos as texts. In the process, she demystifies the hold of the visual on Western imagination. She insists on reading the sound of the music itself, finding in it resonances and intersections with Black urban life. Getting inside the beat, samples and rhythm of hip hop she uncovers, and describes, the technological and political modes of production of hip hop music and reilluminates "the social contexts where everyday struggles over resources, pleasures, and meanings takes place." Here, and throughout *Black Noise*, Rose echoes Stuart Hall's Gramscian theory of popular culture, arguing that hip hop is a sustained, if unstable and sometimes contradictory, tradition of cultural resistance. Hip hop is a counterhegemonic struggle by urban African Americans against the material conditions of existence: cultural denigration, economic exploitation and political

marginalization, the manifestations and effects of which she documents and deplores with equal vigor.

Rose locates hip hop, which in her model consists not just of music but also graffiti and breakdancing, along a continuum of Black cultural tradition. Sections like "The Urban Context" read like companion pieces to Mike Davis's *City of Quartz* (1990): painfully clear and detailed accounts of the ways in which Blacks and Hispanics have borne the brunt of deindustrialization, shrinking inner city economies and regressive government policies that redistribute wealth upward and severely restrict housing options. When she also factors in police harassment of hip hop and racist inequalities practised by insurers who demand much higher premiums when insuring a venue for a rap concert, the successes of hip hoppers becomes the stuff of urban legend, bricolage of heroic proportions.

She identifies rap's primary thematic concerns as identity and location, both responses to racism and restrictions to Black urban spatial mobility, but the crux of *Black Noise* and hip hop lies in the disruptive aesthetic politics found in breakdancing, graffiti style, rapping and the musical textures of hip hop enabled by creative appropriations of technology. The fundamentals of flow, layering and

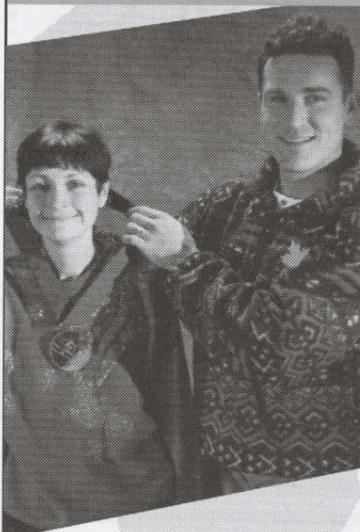
"ruptures in line" animate the sound and visuals of hip hop and articulate its cultural politics:

These effects at the level of style and aesthetics suggest affirmative ways in which profound social dislocation and rupture can be managed and perhaps contested in the cultural arena. Let us imagine these hip hop principles as a blueprint for social resistance and affirmation: create sustaining narratives, accumulate them, layer, embellish, and transform them. However, be also prepared for rupture, find pleasure in it, in fact, *plan* on social rupture. When these ruptures occur, use them in creative ways that will prepare you for a future in which survival will demand a sudden shift in ground tactics.

Such heady rhetoric does not seem out of place in a book that is also on a solid analytical footing, as Rose envisions present and future contests over race, gender (the final chapter is devoted to women rappers) and the uses of urban space. In so doing, she pulls off quite a feat with *Black Noise*: a book that is both an approachable introduction to hip hop history and culture, a challenging analysis for the already initiated.

Chris Wodskou is a Ph.D. Student at York University and a writer/editor for !*#@# (Exclaim) magazine.

What is a
CHAMPION?



As an Olympic skier, I'm courageous for two minutes at a time. My friend Linda is courageous every day of her life. She is a true champion.

Linda has Huntington's. It is a cruel, hereditary brain disease that causes physical and mental deterioration, and eventual death.

Although there is no cure, there is hope. Research has never been more promising. We've found the gene that causes Huntington's. Now, we're working on a treatment and hopefully, a cure.

Please support these champions and help us fight Huntington's disease.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.


Edi Podivinsky
Olympic Bronze Medalist


HUNTINGTON
SOCIETY OF CANADA
13 Water Street North, Box 1269
Cambridge, Ontario N1R 7G6
(519) 622-1002

Charitable Registration #0464040-11-15
Income tax receipts will be issued.

MAY 25 - AUGUST 16

Artsperience '96

Wood Firing
Jane Agnew

Salt Glaze Firing
Sam Moligian

Glazing for Oxidation
(Understanding Cone 6 Glazes)
Ron Roy

Raku I
Judy Lowry

Studio Pottery
Jim Louie

Oversized Throwing
Jane Agnew

Glass Blowing I
Clark Guettel

Hand Building Clay Sculpture
Dzintars Mezulis

Portrait Sculpture in Terra Cotta
Christopher Rees

Figure Sculpture - Clay
Christopher Rees

Mould Making
Peter Sloan

Over 140 courses! Large, well-equipped studios. Residence accommodation available. Registration starts April 1.

For a brochure or more information, contact:

Artsperience '96
Canadore College
100 College Drive
North Bay, ON P1B 8K9
(705) 474-7601, ext 5385
Fax: 494-7462
E-mail: campbelk@cdrive.canadorec.on.ca



Visit the Reading Room and browse through hundreds of Canadian Magazines.

Subscribe to the magazines of your choice

Explore many associated links

Access publishing and environmental information

Send e-mail to your favourite publisher

The Reading Room is sponsored by the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association with assistance from Canada Post.

Now on the INTERNET!

Welcome to the

CMPA

Reading Room

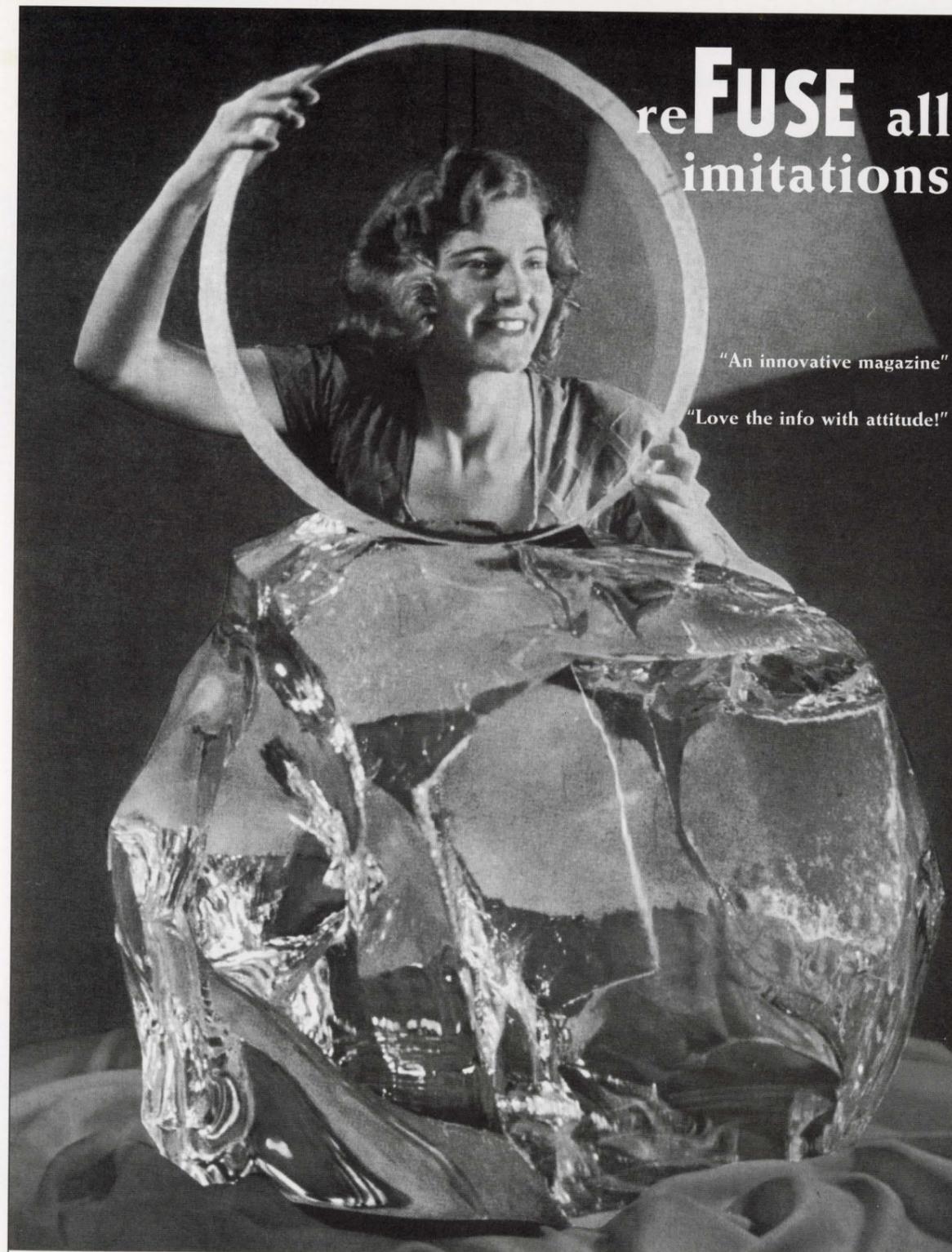
Canadian Magazine Publishers Association
130 Spadina Avenue, Suite 202
Toronto, Ontario
Voice: (416) 504-0274 Fax: (416) 504-0437
E-mail: cindyg@cmpa.ca

<http://www.cmpa.ca/>

re**FUSE** all
imitations

"An innovative magazine"

"Love the info with attitude!"



Name: _____ 2 years = \$32 1 year = \$20
Address: _____ method of payment:
City/Province: _____ bill me cheque/Money Order enclosed
Postal Code: _____ Mastercard number _____
exp. date _____
signature _____

Clip and mail to: **FUSE Magazine**, 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 454, Toronto, Ontario M5V 3A8