art media politics

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GENERAL RADICAL

Featuring: Emory Douglas, Valerie Palmer, RL Cutler, Kendra Ballingal, Sally McKay and Brenda Goldstein

$7 Volume 31, Number 4

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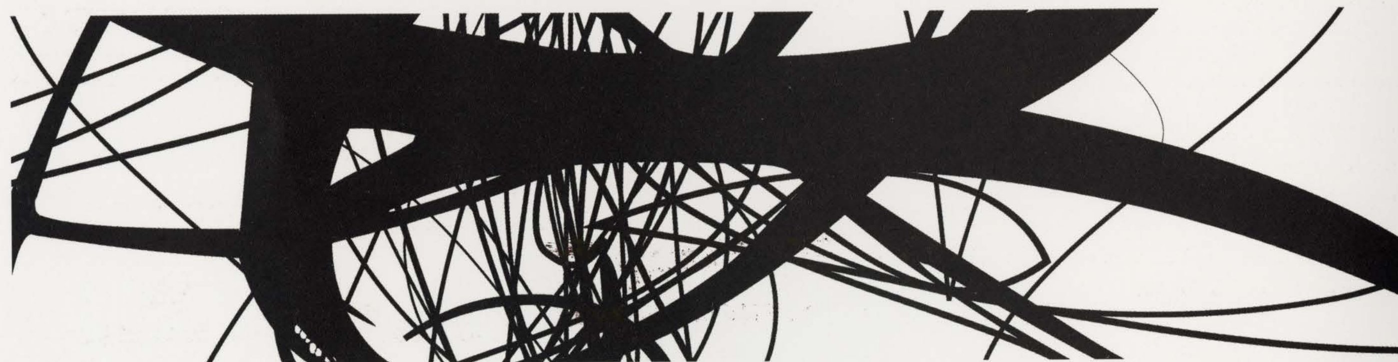

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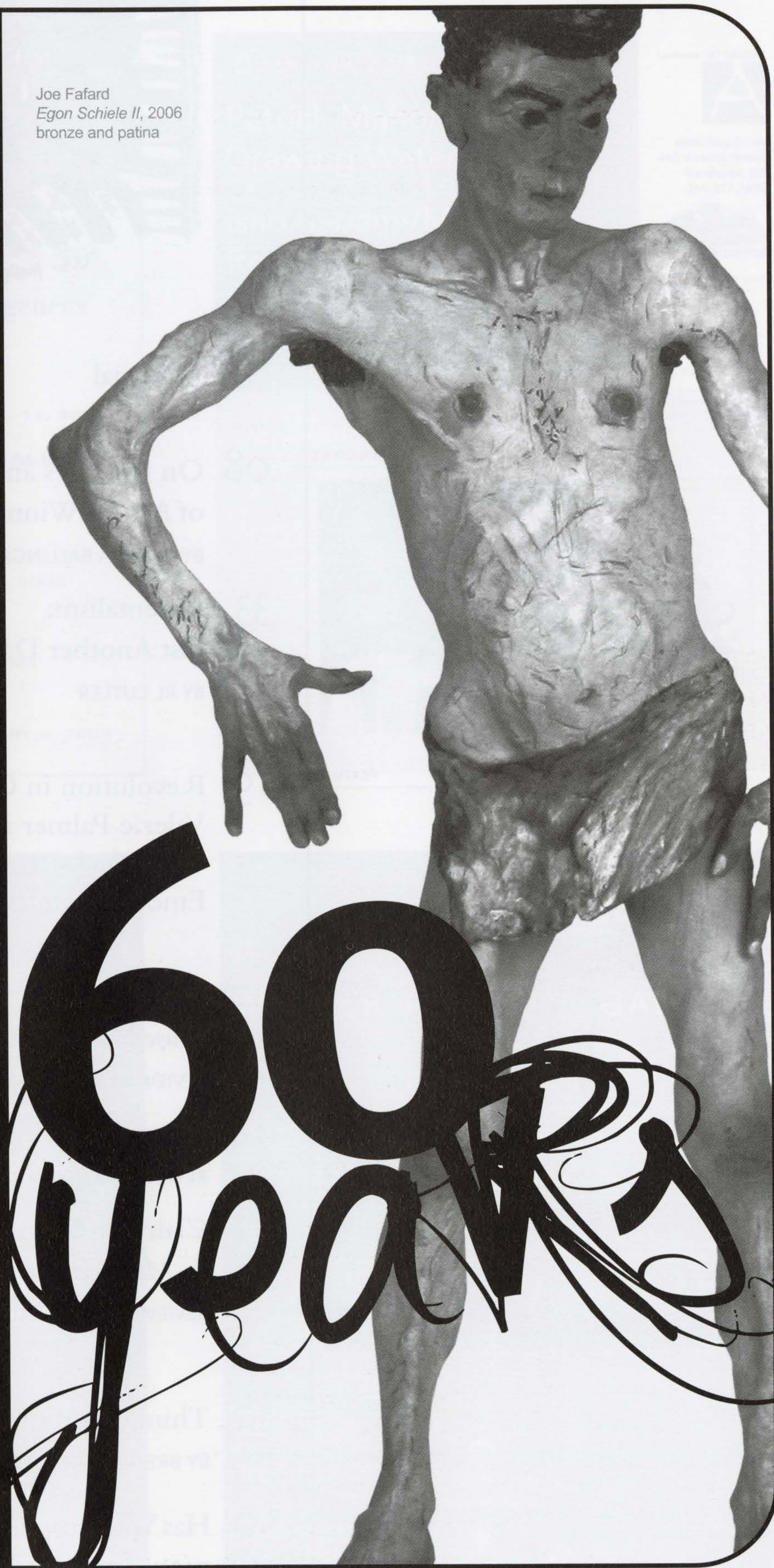

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THE GENERAL RADICAL

In the 1960s and 70s, at the height of the Black Panther movement, people from communities across the US were organizing to fight endemic racism, police brutality, militarization of public space and cultural hegemony. Demanding that basic social safety nets such as daycare be put in place and naming the individuals responsible for brutality against the black and other communities, the Panthers catalyzed a moment of transition, creating powerful alternatives to the order of the day. All these years later, noting that many of the changes that the Panthers fought for remain urgent matters today, Valerie Palmer in this issue's interview *Revolution in Our Lifetime*, asks Black Panther's graphic artist and Minister of Culture Emory Douglas what the role of art and artists could be. "The artist has to respect the common concern of the community," Douglas replies, "If you've got art that's helping people escape their problems, then you're dealing with art that serves the interests of those who want to continue to oppress you… Art can be educational, it can show solidarity with others who are struggling. It can have a spirit of resistance or expose oppression and deal with institutions that don't serve the community's best interests."

Photo: Lisa Kannakko

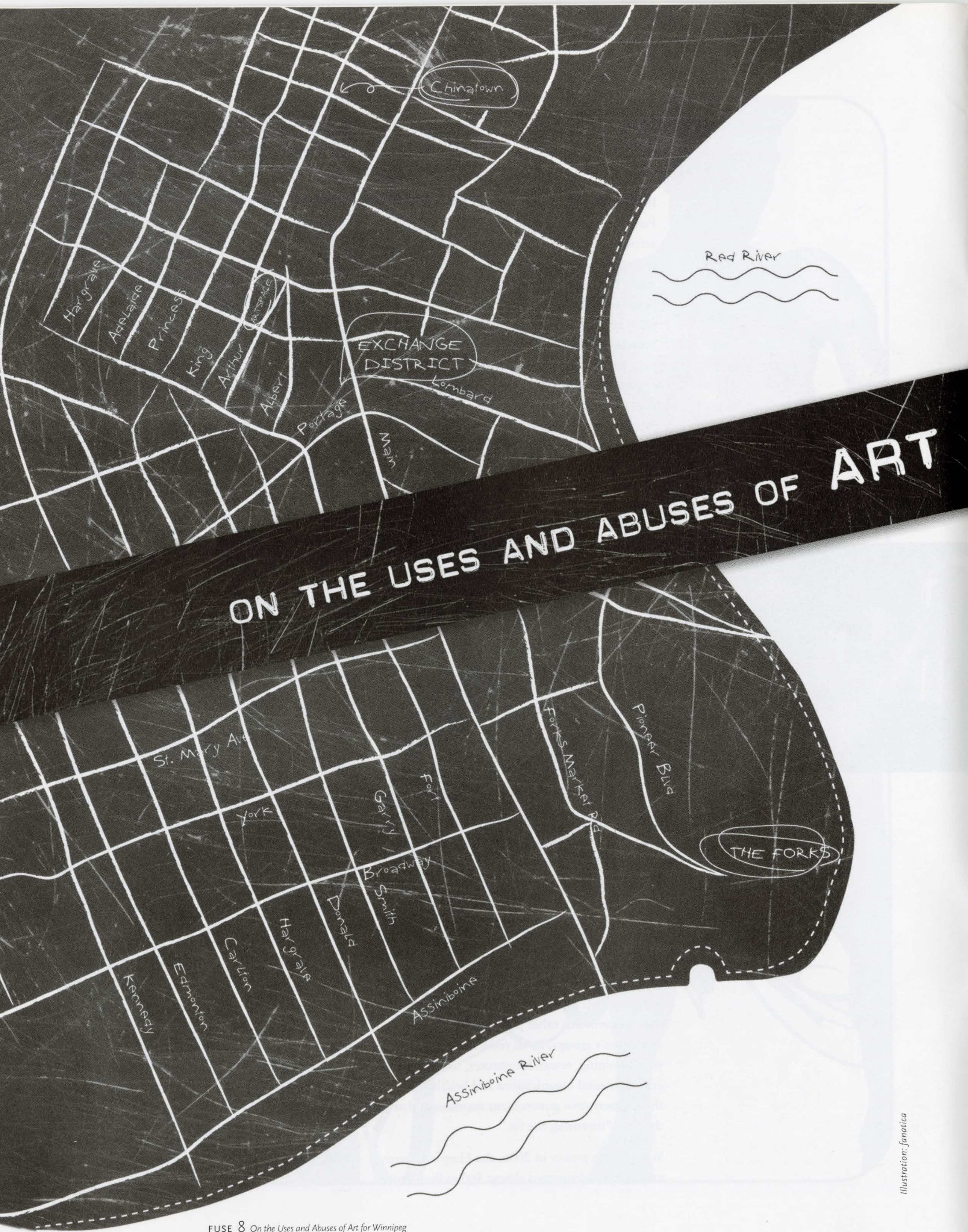
This conversation between Palmer and Douglas was at the top of my mind when the federal government implemented a series of funding cuts to the arts late this August. The cuts were unveiled surreptitiously, quietly, while Parliament was on its summer break and no debate could be held in the House of Commons. With the announcements, a series of justifications were leaked that revealed the underlying reason for the cuts to be the left-wing leanings (one described as a "general radical") of some of the recipients; the official reason given by the Prime Minister was a commitment to more "disciplined spending." Masking their retreat from funding not only arts organizations but other progressive initiatives such as women's groups, harm reduction programs, youth training, research institutes, food inspection, environmental organizations and health policy, the Conservative government maintained that they are "trimming the fat."

Since taking power in 2006, the Harper Conservatives have eliminated almost $60 million dollars from Cultural and Heritage Granting Programs. The programs affected by the recent wave of cuts — Promart, Trade Routes, the Canadian Arts and Heritage Sustainability Program, Canadian Independent Film and Video, National Training Program in Film and Video, the Audio Video Preservation Trust and the Canadian New Media Fund — were designed to assist artists, arts institutions and not-for-profit charitable organizations to create, develop, promote and disseminate Canadian art both nationally and internationally. As opposition MP Peggy Nash noted about the recent justifications for the cuts, "There is real concern the government is picking and choosing which artists it is supporting and which artists it is not supporting. I suggest, in a democracy, that is a dangerous thing."

The attempt by this government to sneak through a series of drastic and draconian funding cuts while the house is off for its summer recess has been met with outrage from already cash-strapped organizations; these are groups that were already reeling from attacks on culture and the broader social safety nets that Canadians have been building since the 1950s. Within the arts and not-for-profit sectors, in opposition to instrumentalist arguments that prioritize the amount of money each sector generates for Canada's GNP, we must start talking about what a healthy society looks like when it doesn't bow to a liberalized marketplace. The years since NAFTA have clearly shown that we cannot put any faith in the market to serve the common good, nor allow its ideological agenda to dominate social planning. We must remember that a decent society to live in, one that not only considers but prioritizes the welfare of its citizenry, is a reasonable expectation from government. And to heed Douglas' words, it is time to put our energies toward unseating those institutions that do not serve the community's interests.

Across the country, people are responding to the cuts by organizing the defeat of a Conservative government that has consistently shown callous disregard for our well-being. With an election looming, we must mobilize our resources and take our rightful seats at the negotiating table.

– Izida Zorde



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ON THE USES AND ABUSES OF ART FOR WINNIPEG

BY KENDRA BALLINGAL

When does the city erase your desires, and when do your desires erase the city?

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

A glamorous new urban residential community has recently developed along the Red River in the core of Winnipeg. On the East side of Main Street and bordering Winnipeg's historic Exchange District, The Excelsior, Ship Street Village and Sky Waterfront are luxury condos lining the riverbank — which is still the stomping ground of a very different demographic from the new condo dwellers. On one of the buildings flanking the new development, the words "Bay Area" are spraypainted bluntly in plain, black text.

The manic influx of telecommunications, bioscience, environmental technology and multimedia industries that employ the new high-tech, freelancing dot-commers populating San Francisco's Bay Area are far from Winnipeg's own "creative class." This self-mythologizing motley assortment of DIY, low- or counter-technicians is known mostly to outsiders through Guy Maddin's scratched and Vaseline-smeared filmic counter-narratives, the root-beer-stained paintings of Marcel Dzama and collaborations of the Royal Art Lodge, the interactive retro projections of Daniel Barrow, Ken Gregory's re-rigged machines, or the messes that are Paul Butler's travelling collage parties. Winnipeg has been called many things including the Dublin of North America and the opposite of bourgeois Paris, but it is still a frozen shithole[1] and has no substantial relation to San Francisco.

THERE MAY BE A DISTURBING NOD TO SAN FRANCISCO IN THE PASTEL WATERFRONT CONDO ARCHITECTURE, THE REPETITIVE ARCHES SIGNIFYING SAILBOATS, BUT IN WINNIPEG, THE LOCAL IS SUCCUMBING TO A SLOW DEATH, AN INTERNAL HEMORRHAGING LARGELY UNNOTICED AND SEEMINGLY WELCOME.

Winnipeg, Capital of Never

Winnipeg is decades behind the urban renaissance/revanchism of other cities. The affordable cost of living once ensured by a deteriorating infrastructure, an aging housing stock, racist investors, the extreme climate and associated physical and cultural insularity (balaclavas, garbage mitts, prolific car culture and underground strip malls), is only recently shifting toward private investment from developers interested in expanding their enterprises or avoiding inflated land values elsewhere.

The slick "new economy" that killed the beatnik, bohemian San Francisco of Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Frida Kahlo has yet to obliterate Winnipeg's surrealist, expressionist, unassuming tendencies. Nevertheless, this holdout is loosening, the graffiti not a complete misnomer. There may be a disturbing nod to San Francisco in the pastel waterfront condo architecture, the repetitive arches signifying sailboats, but in Winnipeg, the local is succumbing to a slow death, an internal hemorrhaging largely unnoticed and seemingly welcome.

There is a creative and violent tension between the death and life of cities, between the decline and revitalization of neighbourhoods. In Winnipeg, official discourse — upheld by city hall, property and community developers and the media — swings between the two poles at its own convenience with an ambivalence that denies and disguises this tension. Whether euphemistically cleaning up the streets, reporting a crime (usually car theft), funding building renovations through rent control exemption, claiming empowered neighbourhood involvement through token community consultations or channeling cosmetic renovation funds to neighbourhoods considered to be in decline, these agents of official discourse simplify the complexities of contested urban spaces, and silence the critical discourse that otherwise names certain urban processes as gentrification.

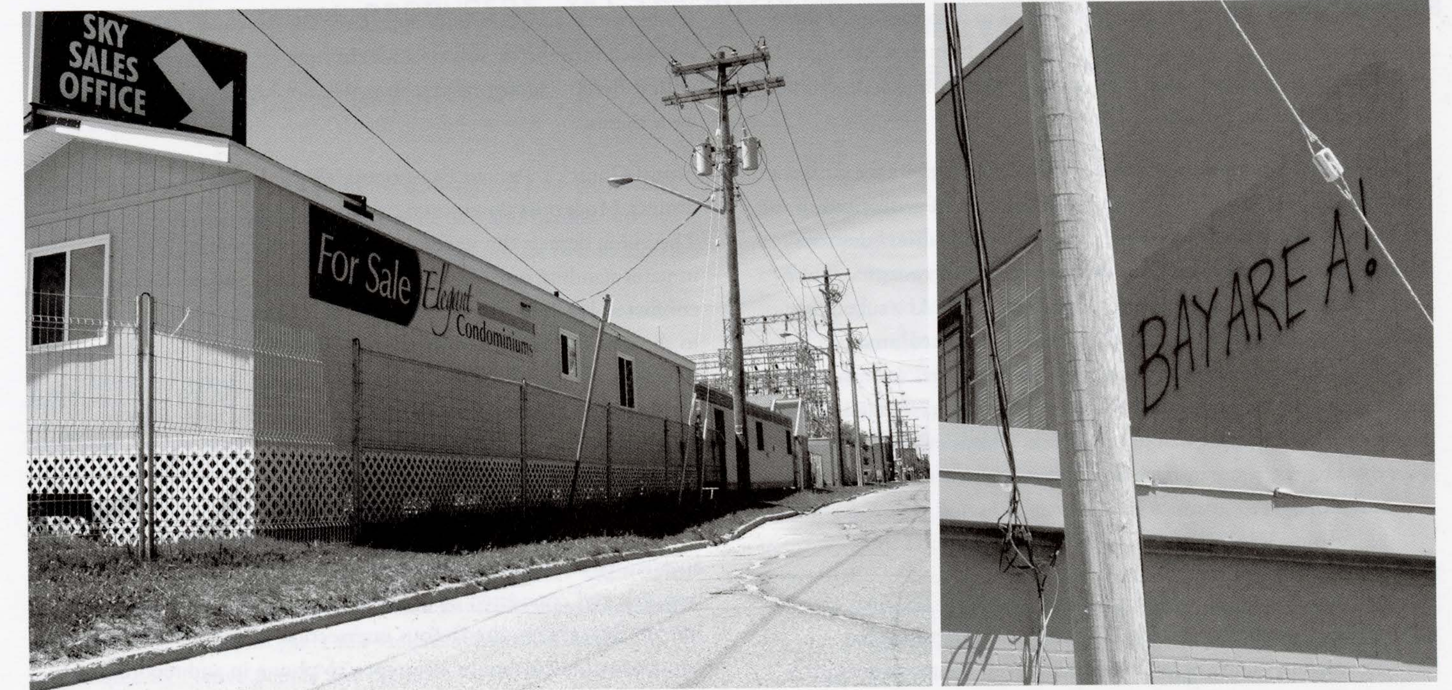
Part of this process is a gentrification of language that "allows people to frame development as disinterested revitalization."[2] This framing is also a form of symbolic violence,[3] imposing classifications and systems of meaning that legitimize relations of social domination. At the level of the symbolic (where "revitalization" replaces "gentrification") artists are well positioned to intervene inasmuch as they redistribute and disrupt categories of legitimate taste, exposing the official discourse as arbitrary rather than natural.

The developer of Sky Waterfront Condos along the Red River is a leader in Winnipeg's latest wave of investment. An agent with Winnix Properties (with offices in Winnipeg and Phoenix), and an inductee in the RE/MAX Hall of Fame, Phil Sheegl is also Winnipeg's new Director of the Department of Planning, Property and Development. He claims to "understand that the proper role of government is to act as a catalyst of quality development for downtown, and the City as a whole."[4] The City is "open for business" and development permits are readily accessible.[5] Meanwhile, affordable housing is becoming increasingly less so. With the vacancy rate barely over 1%, the housing situation is now reaching crisis levels — a fact repeatedly neglected in media and political discussions of the plan to replace the inner-city, residential neighbourhood of Point Douglas with a new football stadium and associated parking lots. The City's commitment to the private sector at the expense of sound city planning or even basic housing needs attests to its near-complete transformation into a consumable form.

Everybody Wants Somewhere

Winnipeggers know that their city is not San Francisco, but some would like it to be. Then again, it seems they would also take Toronto, Vancouver or New York, as made evident in the support of recent spectacles in the Exchange District that are oriented toward those who tend to otherwise avoid the downtown, such as "Sex and the District" and "Rocking the District." These events have a dramatically different flavour than longer-standing Exchange-based events such as the Fringe Festival, but all have the effect of increasing the police and security presence. The events engage art spaces and youth culture, but seem desperate, projecting an unabashed envy, a desire to be somewhere else that both belies and confirms Winnipeg's typical self-deprecation. With no basis in local artistic practices or distinct traditions, the events liquidate urban meaning into surfaces and images for consumption.

Characterized by Chicago-style warehouses and neo-Classical banks of limestone or terracotta, the Exchange District was the epicentre of Winnipeg's turn-of-the 19th-century boom in the grain trade as well as Canada's Westward colonial expansion. The subsequent bust (from which Winnipeg's ego has yet to recover), and the formulaic post-war exodus of capital and the middle class, created a refuge of sorts in the Exchange in the second half of the century, a space for homeless people and sex trade workers, transient people, single room occupants, theatre, dance and art centres, worker co-ops, artist studios, activist collectives, second-hand shops, small businesses, family-run restaurants and punk rock venues. Anchoring the District, Old Market Square, a gathering space for workers during



<left> Sky Waterfront Condo Developments off of Waterfront Drive in Winnipeg.
<right> A side street near Waterfront Drive, where many new condo developments are being built. Photos: Talia Potash

the 1919 General Strike, effortlessly fulfills the criteria prescribed by Jane Jacobs as essential to a "good neighbourhood:" collecting pedestrian paths toward a green space marked by benches, trees and a stage, it has changed cumulatively according to the patterns of diverse users without needing to be over-programmed.

Loft conversions for single, self-employed, often high-income people, as well as high-end boutiques, jewellers, cosmetics shops and cupcakes, have become increasingly widespread in the Exchange in the last few years. Recently purchased with profits from on-line pharmaceutical sales, the Royal Albert Arms Hotel will soon be a day spa. The fabled punk rock venue on the lower level now serves organic, vegan food. With more staying power, the punks remain, but most of the hotel inhabitants are gone.

When a poll conducted by the Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone (the BIZ) shows that "arts and culture" are among the most appealing aspects of inner-city Winnipeg and the Exchange, it is referring to relatively conservative institutions such as the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Manitoba Opera, as well as pop and rock concerts at the downtown MTS Centre, a conspicuous orange and blue entertainment centre that replaced the demolished historic Eaton's Building and the old hockey arena, much to the trauma of thousands of Winnipeggers. They are not referring to the artist-run culture and community arts spaces that have been sustained by and for artists and inner-city residents for decades, including Martha Street Studio, Crossing Communities Art Project (previously a Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) prison solidarity project), Art from the Heart, Art City, Urban Shaman Gallery and Video Pool Media Arts Centre.[6]

While Plug In Institute for Contemporary Art has opted to leave the area to accommodate its expansion, aceartinc., not to mention Urban Shaman Gallery, Outworks Gallery or independent artists with studios in the same building have speculated on their precarious position vis-a-vis potential rent increases or pressure to move from the building's new owner, an international property developer. Cinematheque, the Winnipeg Film Group's independent theatre, is struggling to survive, and MAWA has already relocated to "The Edge," a Main Street "artist village" bordering the Exchange District that was conceived by the site's developer. Claiming to offer affordable rental housing to artists, "The Edge" has catalyzed recent investment, notably by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, in an area long inhabited by working-class, immigrant and Indigenous communities, dwellers and audiences of the now-demolished Starland Hotel and Theatre, transient or homeless people using shelters, people with addictions detained in the drunk tank or recovering at the Main Street Project, and residents of Chinatown.

The Exchange District has been the heart of Winnipeg's art community. Narratives of gentrification often begin with art: the presence of galleries, studios, artists and the work that they produce. Reduced to a formula, gentrification does show artists, punks and activists paving the way for the next wave, usually less tolerant than the first. (The presence of MAWA on Main Street is an example; as it expands the Exchange District, it has remained alienating to local residents in its new location.) Putting aside for a moment the parallactic search

for elusive origins, this description is limited in its omission of those who came before. Immigrants without means, homeless Aboriginal people and the working poor are displaced even from the description of the gentrification process.

It is limited in another sense: artists and cultural workers are far from being a coherent group. While class is at the core of gentrification, a reification of the class-defined process of gentrification "destroys the potential for local communities made up of both artists and non-artists to produce diverse and meaningful culture."[7] As a subculture, artists are indeed united most by their shared role as cultural producers, yet the artists themselves are not explicitly aligned with shared interests, in spite of the legacy of Walter Benjamin's relentless inquiry into the role of the artist in a time of crisis. This is evident in the ways that artists represent, negotiate and consume the changing city.

Art and the City

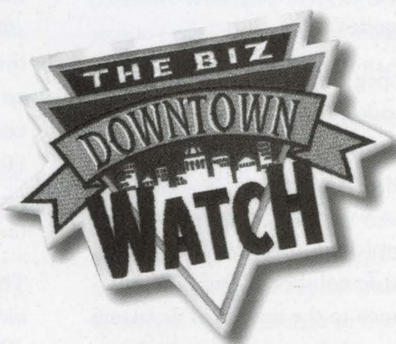
Artists have a complicated love affair with the city. This may or may not be particularly true for Winnipeg, but the urban has been a recurring theme of late, surpassing even contemporary art's ongoing obsession with the late 20th-century spatial turn and the cross-disciplinary relevance of architecture, the urban and geography. Organized by Video Pool Media Arts Centre, Garth Hardy's (2007) sound art project *and I thought Guy Debord was dead: an in situ cartography of Winnipeg* installed in the Exchange District's Artspace Building, resurrects the Situationist legacy locally while insisting on the unavoidability of mediation. Lynda Gammon's *Salvaged* series, photo-sculpture garbage maquettes hinged and hanging from the walls of Platform Gallery in her exhibition *Residual* (2008), are described by local poet Colin Smith as mocked–out rational architectures, screwed–around models, unlocked, swiveled, smashed–through squats, canny, "after all, a home'd person's discarded refrigerator packing box becomes a homeless person's condominium:" a kind of Situationist joke.[8] In *Informal Architectures*, curated by Anthony Kiendl at Plug In ICA, the spatial interrogations of William Pope.L, Rita McKeough and Jimmie Durham, among others, engage institutional critique and counter-monumental deconstructions of Modernism with a rigour and relevance that demands a larger local audience. These exhibitions foreground the city and its architecture as sites of contestation that necessarily implicate aesthetics.

Subconscious City, a 2008 exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, collects the work of 29 local artists under the curatorial trope that the city is structured like a mind. Unlike the conscious functions of administrators, manufacturers and bureaucrats, artists are here presumed to be in a privileged position to access the latent or repressed memories (labour activism), places (vacant lots, riverbanks, Portage and Main), and demographics (Indigenous peoples, the incarcerated) of Winnipeg. While many of the works struggle with this topographical metaphor, which can simply repeat the art–historical convention of appropriating the exotic, dangerous, repressed other in an urban context, some pieces contend well with it because antagonistic urban relationships are central to their own theses.

Noam Gonick's *Precious Blood* remodels the façade of Winnipeg's distinct Modernist downtown prison as a video projection screen. The video depicts the wives, partners and girlfriends of prison inmates standing outside the prison, watching and explaining their conflicted loyalties to the incarcerated. Their projected images cut to shots of the inmates visible behind the glass wall, each straining to see his unattainable visitor outside. This oscillation between seeing and being seen complicates simplistic and objectifying viewership, creating for the audience an effectively disoriented architecture of surveillance.

In *portage*, Jake Moore's relational aesthetics find form in four apothecary jars repurposed as speakers. The jars are placed on pedestals and connected by wires, forming an intersection that mirrors her subject: the famous intersection at Portage and Main. Moore invited citizens of Winnipeg to phone in and record their memories of Portage and Main, which has long been controversially barricaded to pedestrian traffic, forcing awkward detours. While the sound work becomes a diverse cacophony of reminiscences and opinions amplified in the jars, one voice stands out: "The problem with this city is prostitutes, panhandlers, and parking lots [not enough of them, that is]" — the three P's.

While local artists engage with the subtleties of the city, exposing the competitive conflict and rights abuses within, investors and developers clearly establish their objectified Other as deprived but indecent and undeserving people in problem neighbourhoods. "The implementation of a neoliberal revanchist urban utopia — the city of business and of commerce, of city marketing and landmark architecture, of social cut-downs and market-led housing — cannot exist without the demonization of dysfunctional neighbourhoods."[9]



<left> The logo/patch of the Downtown Watch program. <right> Lise and Mubarak of the Downtown Watch Safety Ambassador Program walk downtown Winnipeg's streets. Courtesy: Downtown Winnipeg BIZ.

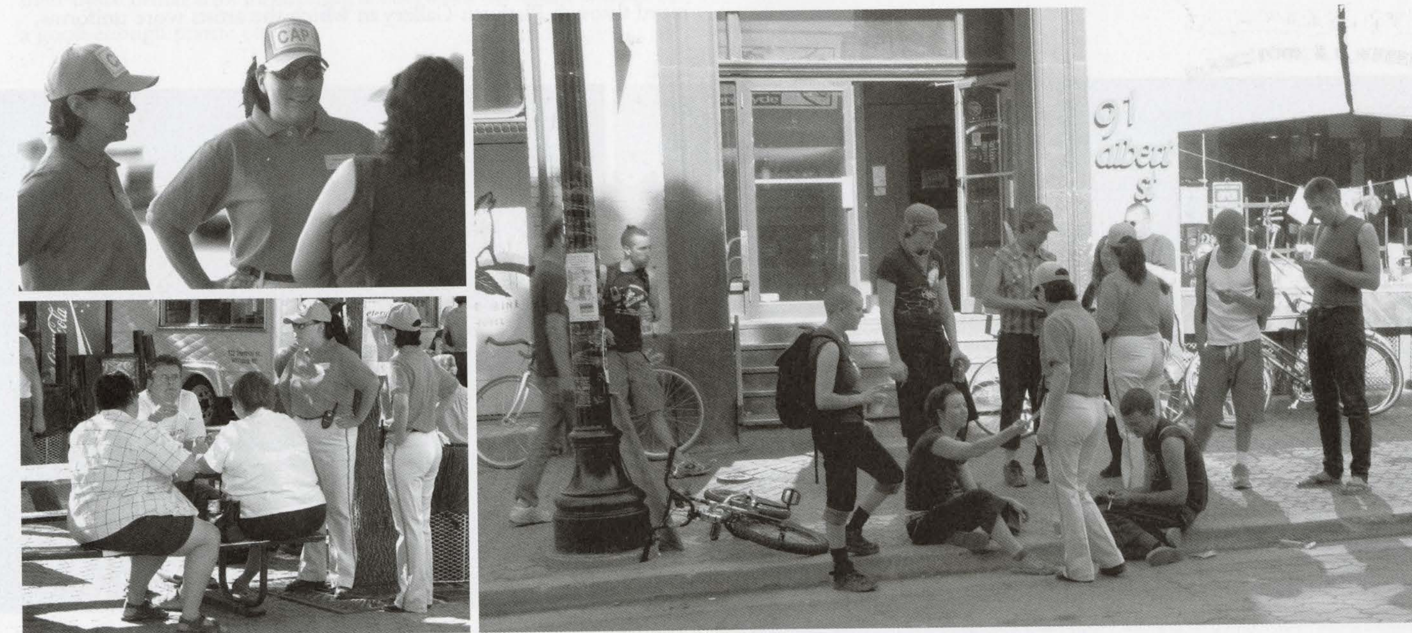
AS A SUBCULTURE, ARTISTS ARE INDEED UNITED MOST BY THEIR SHARED ROLE AS CULTURAL PRODUCERS, YET THE ARTISTS THEMSELVES ARE NOT EXPLICITLY ALIGNED WITH SHARED INTERESTS, IN SPITE OF THE LEGACY OF WALTER BENJAMIN'S RELENTLESS INQUIRY INTO THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST IN A TIME OF CRISIS.

Art Between the Death and Life of Good Enough Prairie Cities

Unlike those of many cities, where gentrification has been more intensive and higher-paced, Winnipeg's suburbs are only gradually becoming a refuge of the displaced. Public transport still fails to keep up with the suburbanization of poverty, and inner-city neighbourhoods are still stereotyped and feared as unsafe sites of aggressive panhandlers, sex trade workers and violent crime most often perpetuated by Native people and the poor. A recent MacLean's Magazine article[10] describes Winnipeg as one of the most dangerous cities in Canada (with frequent drug busts and police flying squads descending on "problem neighbourhoods"), justifying the recent dramatic spike in the city's police budget.[11] It is the type of media coverage that provides a simple excuse to celebrate so-called revitalization campaigns while legitimizing the militarization of the streets, to be made safer only for the newest arrivals.

While agents of the mixed-use or residential community development processes embrace the potential of these inner-city areas, they are still susceptible to the "suburban gaze" in a less overt form. It is not sufficient to reject suburbs and centralized high-rise Modernist housing projects in favour of New Urbanist "good neighbourhoods" in which empowered and democratic community representation is still lacking, and longer-standing residents are alienated by the replacement of laundromats, cornerstores and vegetable gardens with cafés, organic food stores and dog parks. Without deconstructing uncritical campaigns that depend on official and legitimized definitions of both revitalization and decline, well-intentioned people will fail to address criminalization and displacement rooted in systemic poverty, homelessness, racism, classism, colonialism and gentrification. Local organizing by groups such as Winnipeg Copwatch (citizens against police brutality), the Right to Housing Coalition, Winnipeg Is Not For Sale, the Winnipeg Citizens' Coalition, and Crossing Communities Art Project, which works with self-identified women and youth trying to exit the sex trade, contend with the complexity of these urban processes that binaries between renewal and decline fail to acknowledge.

Likewise, video, installation, and performance artist Rebecca Belmore has been confronting themes of displacement, violence and loss throughout her career. Installed at Urban Shaman Gallery as part of the exhibition *The Named and Unnamed* (2006), *Vigil* is an accessible performance and video installation that situates these themes in the criminalized space of Vancouver's Downtown East Side.



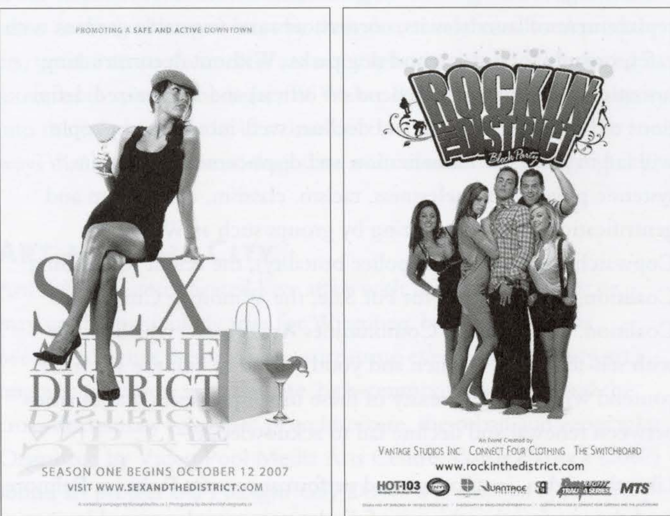
KC Adams and Valery Camarta. *Community Art Patrol*, from ON/sight: performing the camera, curated by J.J. Kegan McFadden, 2005. Courtesy: PLATFORM centre for photographic + digital arts. Photos: Scott Stephens.

Bellmore's ritualized cycles of naming and cleansing insert her body and gestures into a critique of the symbolic violence that makes ignoring the brutal and fatal disappearance of certain women from certain areas, specifically sex trade workers from the DTES acceptable, even favourable. Charlotte Townsend-Gault, the exhibition curator, writes that, for Belmore, "there is no sharp divide between aesthetics and ethics."[12] The exhibition is no less site-specific when presented in Winnipeg. The work articulates the urban sexualized violence disguised by revitalization campaigns like "Sex and the District," which glamourizes the commodification of sex in an urban context.

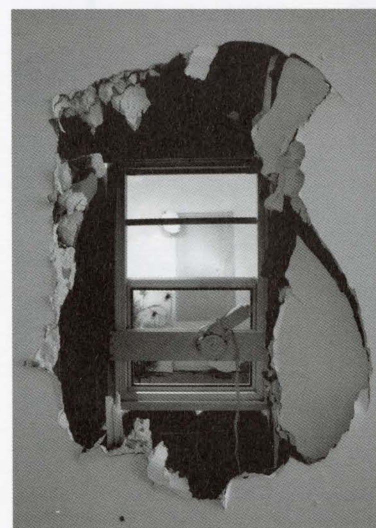
A report published by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission in 2007 drew unprecedented public attention to the sexual assault of Aboriginal women, the targeting of racialized communities by police, and the systemic racism within the police force, while implicitly foregrounding the lack of an independent police review agency.[13] This lack of accountability is only exacerbated by the increasingly prevalent turn toward private or public-private policing in cities. While the mandate of the BIZ, the main sponsor of "Sex and the District," is to advocate for downtown revitalization and promote a safe and active downtown, the BIZ "community patrol" consists of unidentified and unaccountable private police-in-training who are nonetheless uniformed and granted Special Constable Status to enforce the Intoxicated Persons Detention Act. The "community patrol" has the power to detain and move people from public places, and they frequently do, transporting them to the drunk tank of the Main Street Project, a cell in the Public Safety Building or elsewhere out of sight.

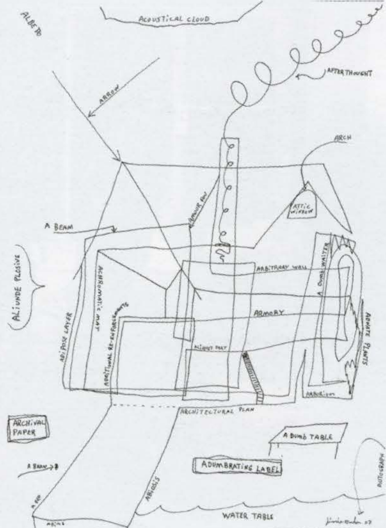
KC Adams and Valery Camarta intervened in these rights abuses as early as 2005. *Community Art Patrol* was a performance work organized through Platform Gallery in which the artists wore uniforms, hats and collared shirts signifying their authority as the C.A.P. They wandered through the Exchange during the Fringe Festival in June, engaging people in stern conversation. In their statement, they explain that they became "the protective service and the voice to the people of the neighbourhood … made up of panhandlers, homeless people and the artist community who occupy this area 12 months out of the year. During the summer months homeless people and panhandlers are pushed out of the area by the Exchange Biz Patrol… Their treatment by the Patrols and the police is usually physical and hostile. The artists are pushed out of the area because it becomes loud and full of suburban dwellers who take over the streets and bars. Our intent was to walk around and let the visitors know that they need to respect the area, the people who live in it, and say no to social cleansing."[14]

When the downtown Portage Place Mall installs a device called "The Mosquito" designed to deter loitering by emitting an irritating sound that only young people with undamaged hearing will notice, or when new management replaces an inner-city hotel and vendor with a youth hostel and college pub and feels compelled to put a "No Vendors, No VLTs" sign on the entrance doors, necessarily political aesthetic choices are being made that distinguish between the fine and the vulgar, the acceptable and the rejected. It is not bohemia that is at stake, but the choice between a city committed to eliminating its geography of racism, displacement and homelessness, or a city in the service of developers and a condo-dwelling class that continues to exploit its colonial and economic Other. Artists are invested in gentrification not only because they are the "first wave" or because they too will be displaced, but because they can influence the way aesthetic experiences are consumed and understood, including whether they legitimate or contest official distinctions and their more brutal arm, positioning art between the death and life of a good enough prairie city. □

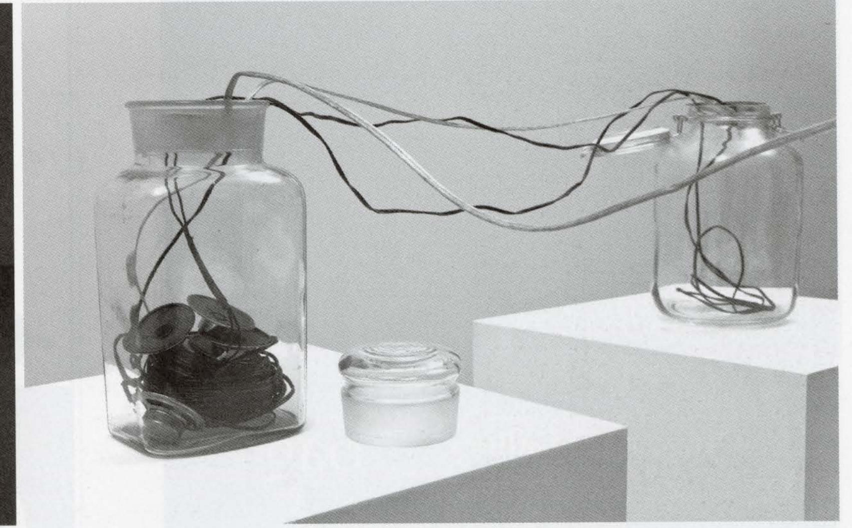


<left> Poster for Sex and the District event in Winnipeg's Exchange District.
<right> Promotional poster for Rockin' the District Block Party. Both courtesy: Vantage Studios Inc.





<left> **Rita McKeough** (with technical assistance from Robyn Moody). *Long Haul*, 2005-2008. Courtesy: Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art. Photo: William Eakin.
<centre> **Jimmie Durham.** *Adventures in Architectural Planning*, 2007. Courtesy: Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art.
<right> **William Pope L.** *Historic Building*, 2007. Courtesy: the artist, The Project, and Kenny Schachter ROVE. Photo: Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art and William Eakin.

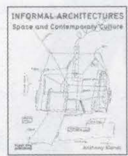


<left> **Noam Gonick.** *Precious Blood*, 2007. Courtesy: The Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo: Marina Dempster.
<right> **Jake Moore.** *Portage*, 2008. Courtesy: The Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo: Guy l'Heureux.

Kendra Ballingall is an art writer and Co-Editor of the emerging Wednesday Press. She lives in Winnipeg.

Notes:

1. As described by Aaron Funk of Winnipeg-based Venetian Snares with the album "Winnipeg is a Frozen Shithole."
2. Adrian Blackwell, "The Gentrification of Gentrification," Fuse, Volume 29, Number 1, January 2006, p. 30.
3. See Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (London: Routledge:1984).
4. www.winnipeg.ca/cao/media/news/nr_2008/nr_20080422.stm Last update: 22.04.2008.
5. "The Permits X-Press project … is all about putting the customer first, exactly the kind of attitude you need to have in a city that is open for business." Mayor Sam Katz, quoted in a City of Winnipeg press release. www.winnipeg.ca/PPD/whatsnew_permitimprovements.stm Last update: 04/24/2008.
6. *Downtown Trends*, Downtown Winnipeg Market Research bookle. Published by the Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone (BIZ), 2007, p. 19.
7. Blackwell, p. 29.
8. Colin Smith, text for Lynda Gammon's *Residual* (Winnipeg: Platform: March 2008).
9. Guy Baeten, "The Uses of Deprivation in the Neo-Liberal City," *Urban Politics Now*, BAVO (ed.) (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers: 2007), p. 46.
10. Ken MacQueen, "Taking back the neighbourhood: From the front lines of Winnipeg's all-out assault on crime," *MacLean's Magazine*, March 12, 2008.
11. Passed in March, the most recent City budget reported drastic cuts to the city's wading pools, community centres, recreation services, Aboriginal youth programs, library reserves and already meager housing programs. The Public Art Program was completely eliminated, while the business tax remains frozen and is promised to disappear.
12. www.urbanshaman.org/gallery/archive/Rebecca_Belmore/index.htm.
13. www.gov.mb.ca/hrc/english/news_releases/12-06-2007.html.
14. www.kcadams.net/art/performance/CAP/CAP.htm.



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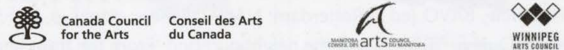

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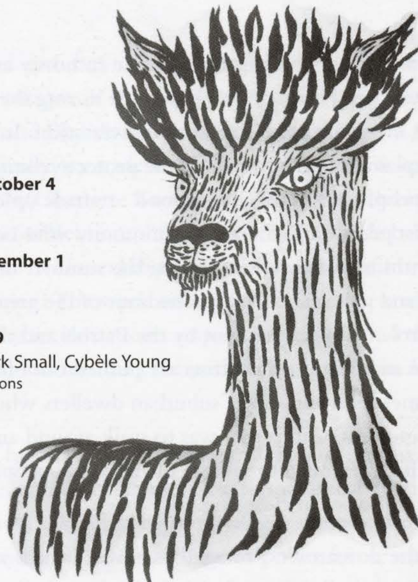

Image: Celeste Toogood, *Alpaca*, screenprint and watercolour, 14" x 19", 2005. Courtesy the artist.

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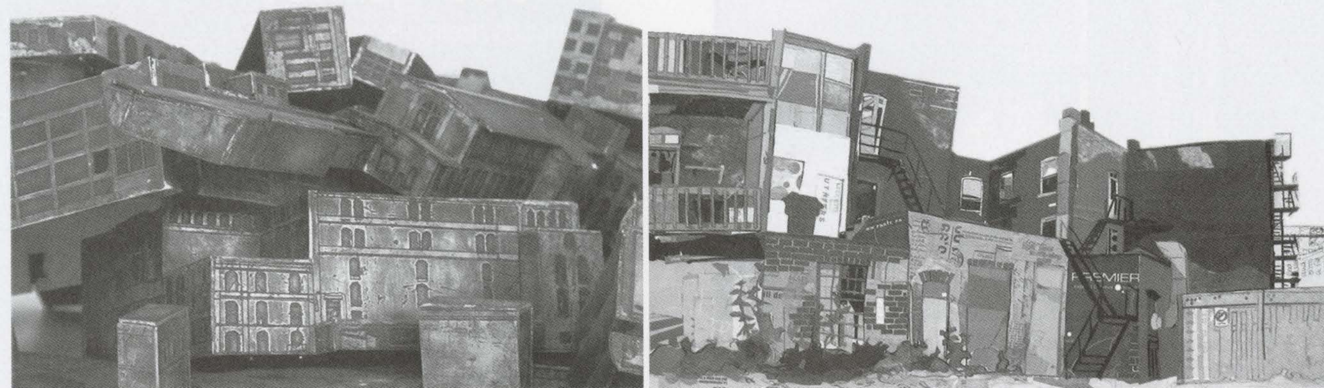

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Editor: Peggy Gale

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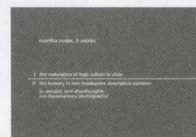

Martha Rosler: 3 works

In this book, photographer and critic Martha Rosler traces the ways in which art draws its meaning from within its social and political frameworks. The book's two artworks and a related essay exemplify and investigate the social embeddedness of art. In "afterword: a history" Rosler revisits issues raised by 3 works, explores debates within photographic practice from the time of the book's original publication in 1981, and further refines her views on the history of documentary practices and the enduring significance of these forms of expression.

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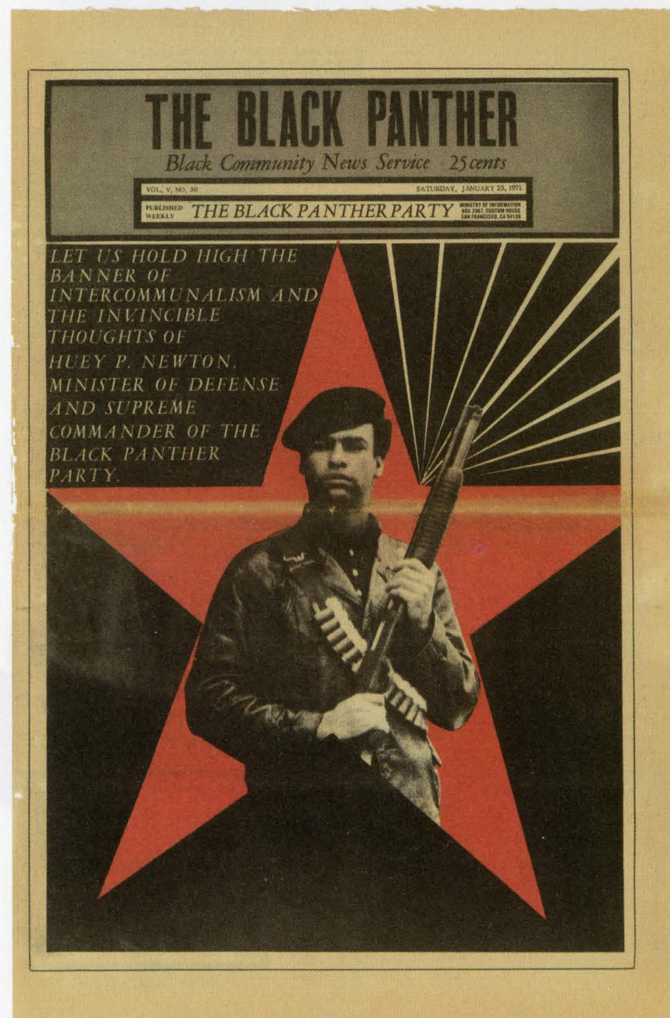
REVOLUTION IN OUR LIFETIME:

VALERIE PALMER IN CONVERSATION WITH BLACK PANTHER'S GRAPHIC ARTIST EMORY DOUGLAS

After studying commercial art at the City College of San Francisco for two years, Emory Douglas joined the Black Panther Party in 1967 at the age of 22. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed Minister of Culture, a position he held until the Party disbanded in 1980. During those years, his art defined the Black Panthers visually and was featured in their newspaper, on posters and in pamphlets. Earlier this year, Douglas' work was exhibited at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art in a show called *Black Panther: The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas*. I met with Douglas at his home in San Francisco on a very wet, stormy day in late January.

continued...



THE BLACK PANTHER
Black Community News Service 25 cents
VOL. V, NO. 30 SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1971
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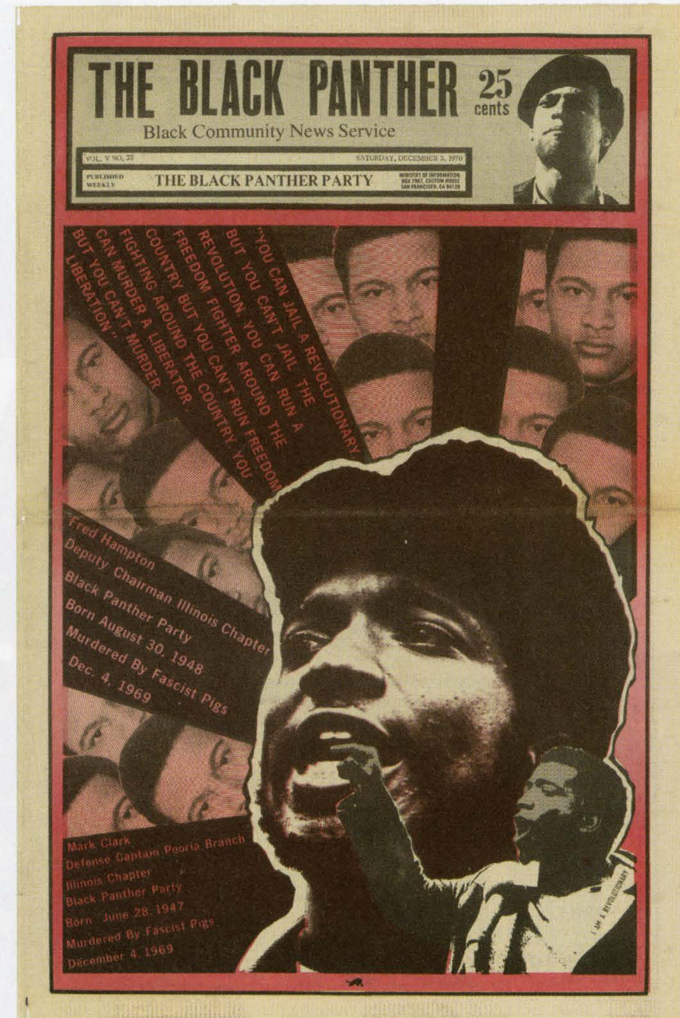
LET US HOLD HIGH THE BANNER OF INTERCOMMUNALISM AND THE INVINCIBLE THOUGHTS OF HUEY P. NEWTON, MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY.



THE BLACK PANTHER 25 cents
Black Community News Service
VOL. V NO. 23 SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1970
PUBLISHED WEEKLY THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY MINISTRY OF INFORMATION BOX 2967, CUSTOM HOUSE SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94126

"YOU CAN JAIL A REVOLUTIONARY BUT YOU CAN'T JAIL THE REVOLUTION. YOU CAN RUN A FREEDOM FIGHTER AROUND THE COUNTRY BUT YOU CAN'T RUN FREEDOM FIGHTING AROUND THE COUNTRY. YOU CAN MURDER A LIBERATOR, BUT YOU CAN'T MURDER LIBERATION."

Fred Hampton
Deputy Chairman Illinois Chapter
Black Panther Party
Born August 30, 1948
Murdered By Fascist Pigs
Dec. 4, 1969

Mark Clark
Defense Captain Peoria Branch
Illinois Chapter
Black Panther Party
Born June 28, 1947
Murdered By Fascist Pigs
December 4, 1969

<left> **Emory Douglas.** *Let Us Hold High the Banner*, from The Black Panther Newspaper, January 23, 1971.
<right> **Emory Douglas.** *You Can Jail a Revolutionary*, from The Black Panther Newspaper, December 5, 1970.
All images courtesy: Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

Valerie Palmer: In your presentation at LA MoCA, you mentioned the power of language and said, "Words are not the only way to communicate; artists speak through images." Could you explain what you mean by this?

Emory Douglas: You can articulate a philosophical perspective through images. The politics of the Black Panther Party and its position on issues and programs, all that was reflected in the art. People could see that and it communicated with them. During that period there was a large segment of the community, particularly the African American community, that was not a reading community. They liked to observe the pictures and the photographs and the captions below, but they wouldn't necessarily read whole long articles. People used to buy the paper to see which way the Party's politics were going by looking at the art.

VP: The Black Panther newspaper would have been very different without your images. You defined the Party visually. Why do you think such strong imagery spoke to people in a way that just words could not?

ED: I guess the people might have seen something in the art that they themselves were struggling or dealing with, so it took on a life of its own. Also, it was an art form that hadn't been used by a black organization, a militant organization, the way the Black Panther Party used it in this country. All this occurred at the height of the resistance movement and involved solidarity with other people around the world and working with these other coalitions. Other movements were inspired by what we were doing and beginning to implement the same type of programs to deal with some of the same issues. All this had an impact as it related to how people dealt emotionally with, and became attached to, the art.

VP: So do you think that's what it is? It's an emotional thing…visuals hit people in their heart?

ED: Yeah, because they speak to them on a grassroots level, a very basic level. I've always tried to create artwork that even a child can understand, work that could communicate with anybody. People saw themselves in those images, so it put them on the page, and they became the heroes. They saw images that they identified as their uncle or somebody that looked like their brother or a family member or somebody they knew. So it became an attachment in that way also. In fact, there were important messages about self-defense and overcoming obstacles of police brutality and human rights violations, and all those things played into it.

VP: I think it's interesting that you studied commercial art at the City College of San Francisco. Is there a connection between advertisements and political posters? Do the two share common traits?

ED: Oh yeah. They're both trying to appeal to an audience. They're both trying to inform and inspire people. I used to critique my work in various ways. Not only that, but I would listen to what people were saying about the work to get a sense of how they related and responded to it. That's how I knew I was doing something that was connected to the community. I knew that this had become something bigger than just the art itself.

VP: Your images not only appeared in the Black Panther newspaper, but were also wheat-pasted on telephone poles and abandoned buildings, creating a community art gallery on the streets of Oakland.

ED: It started in San Francisco because that's where we first used to do the distribution of the newspaper, and then it spread out all over. See, this was prior to when we had our first national headquarters in Oakland. We used to workon the newspaper in San Francisco, but we still hadn't moved our distribution operation to Oakland, so mornings they would come over and pick up newspapers for sale. They would also take wheat-paste and extra newspapers and posters and plaster them all over the community.

VP: So, in a way, you created an art gallery on the streets.

ED: Yeah, that's how we defined it: the community as an art gallery.

VP: How do you think that affected people? Did it help bring people together? Did it allow people to commiserate? Did it alleviate any of the suffering of the black community during that era?

ED: I don't know if it helped to alleviate any of the suffering, but it helped bring attention to it and to the fighting spirit of wanting to overcome and deal with the issues and obstacles that we had. I think it gave people the opportunity to see themselves and to find out what the symbols of oppression looked like and what they were about. That also played a role. Because these were probably issues that existed in the backs of their minds — these were common folk going to work or trying to survive on a daily basis and we grasped that. Politically, we reflected that in the art, so they could see it and visualize it.

People saw themselves in those images, so it put them on the page, and they became the heroes. They saw images that they identified as their uncle or somebody that looked like their brother or a family member or somebody they knew. So it became an attachment in that way also.

VP: Is it true that you were the one who made the term "pig" as a reference to police popular?

ED: From the standpoint of the artwork, yes. But Huey [Newton] and Bobby [Seale] had already defined what a pig was, and they had been calling the cops pigs. One day early on when the paper initially started, Huey asked me to draw a pig character that we could put in the paper every week, and I did that. Then I think it was in the next issue they wanted to use a pig with a badge number, the badge number of a policeman who was intimidating and harassing people and being abusive to the community. And it just so happens that the badge number we were going to use belonged to a pig named John Frey. That was the one who got killed when Huey got shot. He was notorious in the community as a bad policeman. That's how I began to evolve the pig drawing.

VP: It seems like you had fun with it. The flies buzzing around it…

ED: Oh, yeah. It was fun. Once I got on a roll.

VP: Do you think that pig made people chuckle, considering some of the horrible things the police were doing? Did the image of the pig lighten things up a little?

ED: Oh, yeah. But to the police it was psychological warfare.

VP: What do you mean?

ED: The term "pig" was used not only by the Black Panther Party but also the anti-war movement and people of color… all these folks called them pigs. Not only that, but you had people in the middle class who were being abused by them who were also beginning to call them pigs. So the pig became a

symbol of oppression because of the abusive behavior of the police, and they had to try to clean up their image. I mean, it was not too long ago, four or five years ago, that a guy was arrested in one of the Midwestern states, and he was charged with a misdemeanor for calling a policeman a pig.

VP: Do you feel like a lot of the issues that the Black Panther Party addressed in its day are still issues for blacks in America today?

ED: Oh, yeah. You're talking about education, unemployment, decent housing, dealing with the prison industrial complex, and the disproportionate number of people of color dying in the military. All those things still exist today.

VP: So as much as things change, they stay the same in America?

ED: In many places [laughs], but particularly in America.

VP: Considering the times that you lived through — it seems like there was this great momentum for change in the 1960s and 1970s — is it disheartening or frustrating to have lived through that and to see so many of the same problems now?

ED: No, in some ways you see there's progress being made. But then you have people who rise up and movements take hold, and there's a thrust, but then there's a lull. And you get a sense that the people are highly frustrated, and the question is whether you have an organization that people can rally around and be inspired by to move forward. In the 1960s you had the civil rights movement, and then you had the militant aspect of the human rights movement, which was the Black Panther Party, which became involved in solidarity with people struggling around the world with the same issues. Now, I don't know if you would have another organization like the Black Panther Party, per se, or the Brown Berets. To say you would have that again...you may have some formation, but it will take on a different form.

Emory Douglas. *What is a Pig?*, from The Black Panther Newspaper, December 20, 1967.

The term "pig" was used not only by the Black Panther Party but also the anti-war movement and people of color... all these folks called them pigs. Not only that, but you had people in the middle class who were being abused by them who were also beginning to call them pigs.

VP: Do you think there has to be a long period of oppression or stagnation in order for people to get to the point where they push forward?

ED: There doesn't have to be, but sometimes it seems to work like that. When people see the reality… and a lot of folks are scared to speak out against the war this time around because of the way they phrase it: if you're against the war you're against the troops. They really box people in, so they don't want to be critical of the reality of the situation, but as things evolve and more stuff comes out about the lies and misinformation, people begin to feel more assertive as far as speaking out about those things. Then they see how much money they spend — millions of dollars per week over there and they can't even deal with basic fundamental issues of survival for human beings right here in this country. People see that, so you have another kind of mass consciousness developing.

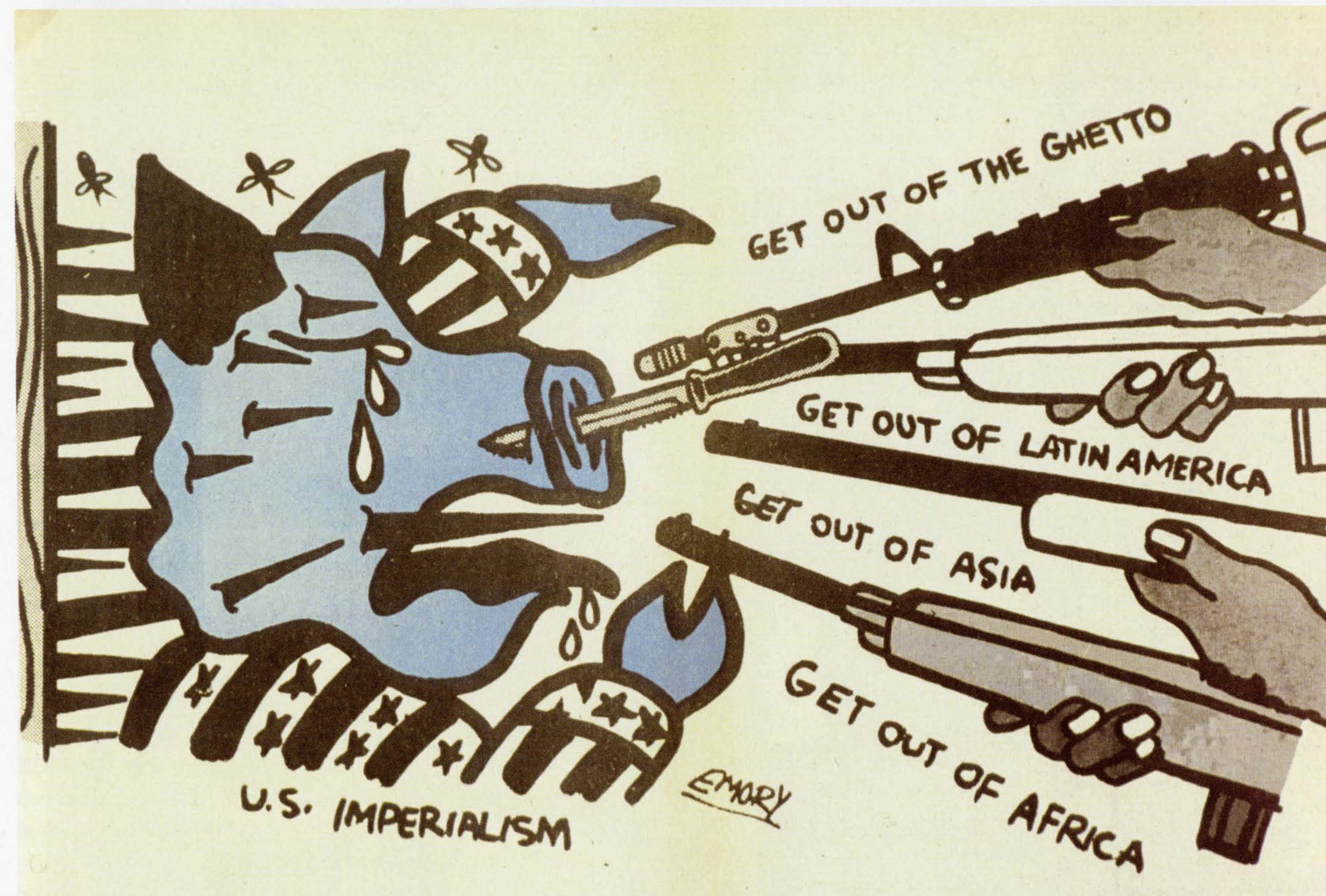
But you do have people out there who are organized. Sometimes they're very rigid and not flexible in their thinking and what they're doing; sometimes I see that. And there are others who are very flexible. But all of those things existed back then, too.

VP: So were the Black Panthers flexible in their thinking? Was that one of the strong points?

ED: Oh, yeah. We were always evolving and developing as we went along.

VP: Is that important?

ED: Yes, it's very important. Because you've got to hear what the people's interests are and see that. That was how



Emory Douglas. *U.S. Imperialism*, from The Black Panther Newspaper, January 3, 1970.

some of the Black Panthers' survival programs were implemented — being out there in the community and talking to folks. I think Bobby was out there one time and saw a sister who had a childcare program and he said, "Hey, we can do this all over the country." He saw that hers was very significant, but it wasn't something that she could use to educate people about the need for this because she was just one individual. But as an organization, we could do that, so we began to develop our childcare program.

VP: Just from talking to one person?

ED: Yeah, just from happening to see and talk to her.

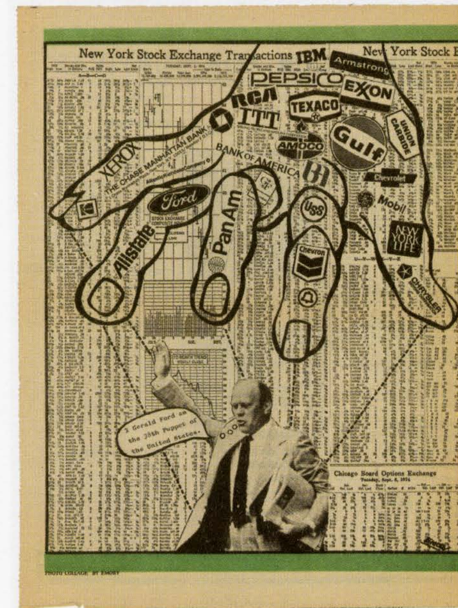
VP: I read a quote recently by Al Sharpton that says: "In some ways, it was easier when you had the barking dogs and the fire hoses. Now it's not getting the promotion or not being elected. So it's more difficult to dramatize — and easier for people to ignore." Would you agree?

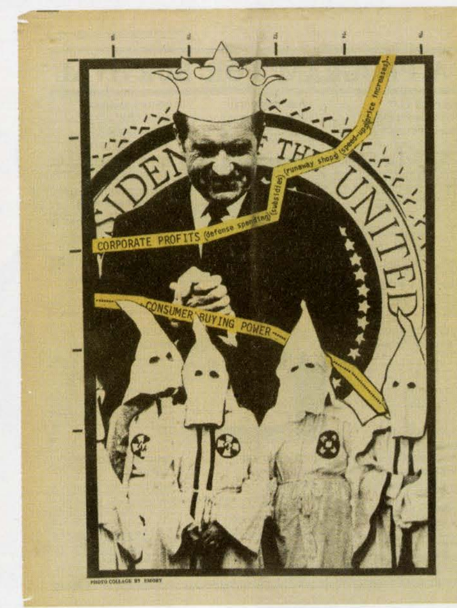
ED: Yeah. For example, what he's talking — I can see they have allowed or opened up the door for a greater middle class of black folks. The establishment now allows them greater access to the marketplace. You have them in the marketplace, which was part of what the civil rights struggle was about, so they're in there, but they've still got the same folks who are running the system with the same attitude, like the CEOs that you have to deal with. So they may say, "We've got blacks in our operation," but they're marginalized. There's a glass ceiling. I'm assuming that's what he's referring to. You've got a lot of qualified blacks, and that's why you have a lot of people of color starting their own businesses, to get around it, because they know that it exists.

VP: Do you think the fact that blacks have moved into the middle class in America allows people to ignore some of the problems that still exist?

ED: It does because now they have an interest in maintaining their position in the marketplace and they have an interest in maintaining the instinct that exploits folks. [laughs]

VP: Exploits folks?





<opposite page> **Emory Douglas.** *Don't Support the Greedy,* from The Black Panther Newspaper, August 9, 1971.
<left> **Emory Douglas.** *I Gerald Ford,* from The Black Panther Newspaper, September 21, 1974. <centre> **Emory Douglas.** *Corporate Profits,* from The Black Panther Newspaper, March 16, 1974.
<right> **Emory Douglas.** *Vote for Survival,* from The Black Panther Newspaper, May 27, 1972.

ED: Yeah, that's just like the rappers. When they give them a multi-million dollar contract, they can't speak in the same way. Just like a baseball player or a football player. If they say too much of anything outside of the box, then that interferes with their marketability and their ability to continue to bring in money. This applies to most but not all of them. Mos Def is one of those who speaks out, and you've got others that articulate themselves too.

VP: One of your posters from 1970 says, "In one sense, only by the power of the gun can the whole world be transformed into the earthly paradise dreamed of by the people from time immemorial." How do you feel now about such images that advocated a "shoot to kill" policy for blacks defending themselves against police brutality? Do you still maintain this point of view?

ED: When you put it in context, it means one thing, and when you take it out of context, it means another. So back then, you're talking about it in the context of the ideological and psychological warfare that was going on as it related to the power structure, to police brutality and the conflicts that went on between the community and the police and the Black Panther Party. So that's what you were talking about then. That's the context. If you take it out of context, it could mean anything. It could just be chaos. But looking at it today, I still believe people have a right to defend themselves. Of course they do. If they choose to have weapons in their house to defend themselves, I think they should have that.

VP: But for people who are trying to see change, as in social justice, in the world, does the phrase "By any means necessary" still mean an armed fight in 2008?

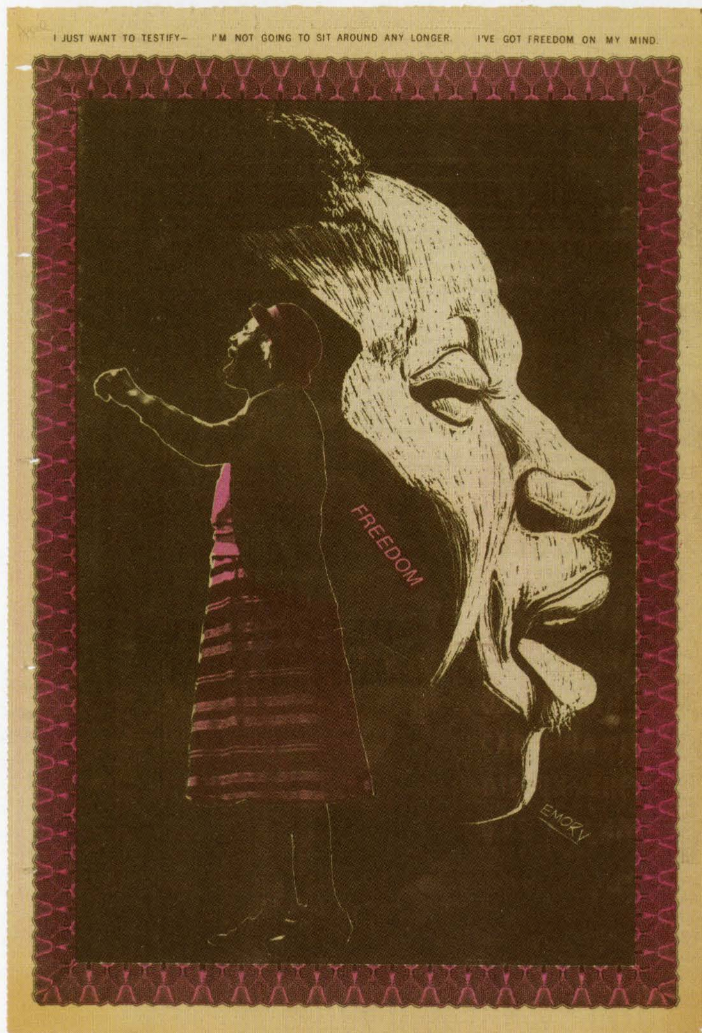
ED: "By any means necessary" refers to politics, physical self-defense as well as the non-violent. All of those things are part of it. At some point everyone's going to do something anyway. When you say, "By any means necessary," you've got those who will use direct action, those who will be more passive in their approach, and you've got those who believe in self-defense. So you've got different perspectives on how to go about overcoming the obstacles and dealing with the challenges that we face. But I wouldn't say it's an absolute because it's never going to be an absolute. As it relates to people now, you have situations where young men shoot at the police, and it comes to the point where there are shootouts. Because even in their apolitical way, they're still confronted with those same things on a daily basis: the abusive behavior, the negative attitudes, and the police coming into the communities in formation to deal with the criminal element. They don't come in with respect; they come in to create fear and chaos.

VP: So people are still fighting back, but they're just not organized and they don't have a name for it? It's happening on a more informal basis?

ED: Yeah, absolutely.

VP: But it's not necessarily labeled as a political statement.

ED: No, but it is. That's the whole thing; it is in most cases.



<left> **Emory Douglas.** *I Just Want to Testify*, from The Black Panther Newspaper, July 14, 1971.
<right> **Emory Douglas.** *Hallelujah! The Might and Power of the People is Beginning to Show*, from The Black Panther Newspaper, May 29, 1971.

Well, if you've got art that's helping people escape from their problems, then you're dealing with art that serves the interest of those who want to continue to oppress you. That's basically what they want you to do; they want you to just be passive.

VP: But that's not how most people would see it, I don't think. They see it as a random tragedy when a policeman is killed and wonder how someone could commit such a horrible crime.

ED: Well, that's because of the image. How many times can you count on your five fingers that a policeman has ever been convicted or done serious time for killing a black person? It never happens in this country. Never. How many times has it ever been for a brown person? Never. How many times has it been for a yellow or a white person? Never. That tells you what you're dealing with — a police state. You're dealing with a paramilitary operation, the same thing you're dealing with when you're dealing with the military. You have military justice, but they keep the citizens away from being involved with that and make their own decisions on how they deal with it. They keep it secretive because of image. If they could have completely gotten away with Abu Ghraib, then you never would have heard of it. But when you did hear about it, what did they do? They made those with lower rank the sacrificial lambs.

VP: I guess they try to keep it secret, but little things pop up and the public reads about it or hears about it in the news…

ED: Look what they did when they shot Sean Bell 50 times in New York when he was coming out of the club. He was just about to get married… And they'll tell you, "Well, you really don't know the circumstances. You've got to wait until we review the case." But that gives them time to come up with whatever story they want to tell the public. How they're going to use words to trick you. That's what it's about more than anything: how are we going to sell to the people the idea that what really happened didn't happen? That's how they deal with stuff.

VP: Some of the work you're creating now deals with the war in Iraq. The posters depict children carrying signs that say "Peace Heals" and "War Kills." This seems like a big leap from the work you were creating in the 1960s and 1970s.

ED: We dealt with the war in the 1960s and we dealt with health because we talked about sickle cell anemia and some work dealt with the health clinics and the senior citizen's programs and the whole bit. But the artwork itself reflects the mood of what's going on today and how people will accept it today more so than back then. Perhaps some of the art from back then would today appear just sensational as opposed to providing an informative and educational perspective.

VP: Do you feel like the same people who demonized the Black Panthers back in the 1960s and 1970s are praising you now?

ED: No! [laughs] There have been people who've come around. There are always those detractors and those who are on the borderline.

VP: In 1969, J. Edgar Hoover said the Black Panthers were the greatest threat to American society and now…

ED: Things haven't changed — they don't like us. For example, the San Francisco Eight, they were tortured. As a matter of fact, one of them just got released.

VP: Now your art is in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, which is a fairly respected institution, and I don't think that would have happened in 1969.

ED: What you have to understand is that there are more progressive-minded and open-minded people who work in museums nowadays. So you have to look at it from that perspective. The whole fabric of how people think about museums has changed. You've got young people working there who may be supportive of grassroots organizations in the community, who want to see how the museum can be more community-oriented and reach out to people. So the people working in this kind of outreach may be activists themselves outside of the museum.

VP: Do you think radicals during the 1960s and 1970s got slowly absorbed into mainstream American culture? Do people catch up with the ideas?

ED: Yeah, because vanguards always lead by example, and the people catch on later on. That's what the hip-hop movement is about — art. It's not an absolute good or an absolute bad; those things always exist at the same time within anything. So it's a matter of what it is, what it inspires and what it informs that determines how people can move forward or even think of doing something that's constructive.

VP: As far as social change and political movements, you can have activists working on a grassroots level, politicians working within the system to try to change things, and lawyers trying to push for legal change. But the artists — what role do they play in all this?

ED: The artist has to respect whatever the common concern is. Every artist is going to have to pick and choose what subjects they want to deal with because you've still got a lot. But the artist has to be in tune with the desires of the community, what they want and what their demands are, and be able to interpret that. Or give some insight through art in a way that people will get something out of.

Art can be educational on an issue, or it can show solidarity with organizations and others who are struggling. It can have a spirit of resistance or expose oppression and it can also deal with institutions that don't serve the community's best interests. For instance, you can use satire. Art can show what things could be — a vision of the possibility.

VP: To me that just sounds like the human spirit, which ultimately, I think, wants good.

ED: Yeah, it is. There was a quote by Huey that said, "The spirit of the people is greater than the man's technology." That was one of the quotes Huey coined that we used all the time.

VP: I think that's even truer now.

ED: Yes.

VP: Some would argue that social and political problems should be dealt with by lawyers and politicians, and artists should create work that helps us momentarily escape from our problems. What would you say to that?

ED: Well, if you've got art that's helping people escape from their problems, then you're dealing with art that serves the interest of those who want to continue to oppress you. That's basically what they want you to do; they want you to just be passive. So that kind of art would be in their best interest. All art reflects an outlook, no matter what you do. So if you say, "I don't want to make art that has anything to do with politics," all art is a reflection of a political outlook whether you call it abstract art or whatever. It may have great feeling and emotion to it, but what does it serve, what does it bring out in you, what does it do for you? Does it make you say, "Oh, it's great that

I can do this art," but not understand the connection between this art as an individual achievement and the greater interests served by creating this art?

Art can be a release on a personal level. All art can be relevant and can have some kind of educational aspect to it, but you need to consider to what degree it pacifies people and keeps them pacified, as opposed to being enlightened, informed and educated.

VP: Is there anything we can do about this art that pacifies?

ED: [laughs] No, you just have to do more of the art that enlightens. Because the art that pacifies is going to be around as long as the art that enlightens. Now, which one is going to have the most impact and which one is going to have the most influence, and that kind of thing…

VP: Which one? Pacifying art seems to be winning…

ED: Of course, because it has more money behind it and there are more venues in which it can be presented on a mainstream level. See, that's where you look at it from the standpoint of it being a form of pacification. Those mainstream galleries and people who spend the money buy into it from the standpoint of aesthetics: shape, form, mood and that kind of thing. But if it has a statement, then they might say, "No, no, no. We can't deal with that. We need something that doesn't have any type of politics in it." [laughs] But they're talking about politics in saying that they don't want to deal with any kind of statement. So it becomes political in that sense.

VP: I guess you can't really force enlightenment on someone. Like you said earlier, art has transformational powers, but I guess if someone doesn't want to be transformed, then it doesn't work. Many people avoid the political work and opt for the soothing pastels.

ED: There was an actor that came through the Museum of Contemporary Art show in Los Angeles. I forget the guy's name. Somebody pointed him out to me when he came through the exhibit, and he didn't look too pleased with it all. [Laughs] So it depends on what your thinking is, what your outlook on the world is. This is art that came out of oppression, out of suffering, out of a whole different world. A lot of people are not ready to deal with that.

VP: You're still creating work with many of the same messages, so how do you stay hopeful and inspired after all these years?

ED: Well, one reason is that I enjoy doing what I do, so that's the main thing.

I read the newspapers; I read through all the justifications that they give for all these wars and everything they're doing. And I try to work this into the artwork. But I try to keep a balance because you can get too emotionally charged up and then you can lose focus on how you want to do things.

Anger can destroy you. It makes you have high blood pressure. [laughs] It's like that saying, "You won't be punished for your anger, but you'll be punished by your anger." You can get angry all you want, but you're not going to hurt anybody but yourself, so I guard against it like a soldier guarding Fort Knox. [laughs] I realized what it is, and I've got to work at it; it's like a job.

VP: What does the phrase "Revolution in our lifetime" mean to you? Is it the little, everyday things? Or is this about the bigger issues?

ED: It's a combination, because if you look at that picture, "Revolution in our Lifetime," you'll see the image on his button of a little black baby with the white doll. Back then, you didn't have black dolls. That was a basic thing that a lot of people missed. That was a major obstacle to overcome, so there could be dolls that represent and reflect the culture of ethnicities other than that of the dominant group, which was the Europeans.

I always used to tell my daughter — now you've got the ethnic diversity with the dolls, so I don't have to say this to my granddaughter — but when my daughter was a girl, you didn't have that in the dolls that were marketed in the stores. I used to always say, "If you don't see anything there that looks like you, then you can't buy it until they get a doll that looks like you." If they don't have enough respect to market dolls that look like you, then why should you buy them? Folks will say it's just a doll, but it's deeper than that because the folks that were making the dolls just didn't see it. But now they do, they see it's a great market. They can make money.

VP: So money's the driving force?

ED: Yeah. Man made money; money drove man mad. Those are the three M's. I mean, money's a tool, but it can also be an obsession.

VP: So if revolution in our lifetime comes down to that very basic level, in what other ways would it manifest itself?

ED: It's about overcoming obstacles. That's what I mean by change and the process of change, going from A to B. There might be an abrupt change at any given time, but it's a process. That's what it's about; it's about overcoming obstacles. □

In September, All Power to the People! Graphics of the Black Panther Party 1966 – 1974 *makes its Canadian debut at the Toronto Free Gallery. In October,* The Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglas *makes its UK debut at Manchester's Urbis and appears in the Arts & Culture Conference of the Black Panther Party in Atlanta, Georgia.*

VALERIE PALMER lives and writes in Los Angeles. She is a contributing editor at *Planet Magazine* and her work has also appeared in *Anthem*, *VenusZine* and *Mean*.

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In the ProjEx Room: Travis McEwen

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SNAP

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Slawomir Grabowy
the nauvoo suite
David Poolman
SNAP'S STUDIO GALLERY:
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Artist Talk Saturday, September 13, 1pm
The Swimmers
Christophe Jivraj
(caw)l
Shantael Sleight

October 16 – November 15
Opening: Friday, October 16, 7-10 pm
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2007/2008 Artist in Residence Exhibition
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It's true retirement planning is an ongoing process.
This year, I decided I should start to think about my future.
So I went to see Mrs. Rizzo at my local bank...

If I start saving now, I assume that I have missed the boat on Freedom 55, but maybe I can catch freedom 65.

I don't need a million dollars... I just want to live comfortably. 30K seems like a reasonable amount.

Since 1992, the rate of inflation in Canada has fluctuated around 2 per cent, which is what this calculation is based on. Mrs. Rizzo seemed unconcerned about the oil bubble bursting.

Introduction

Retirement planning is an on-going process. Whether or not this is the first review of your current financial situation, you have taken an important step toward achieving your retirement goals by having this analysis prepared. The purpose of this analysis is to help you assess the attainability of your desired retirement income, expressed in terms of what today's dollars will buy, after allowing for taxes and adjusting for inflation, from today forward and throughout the retirement period. This analysis has been prepared especially for you and is based on the assumptions and information that you have supplied.

Planning Information and Assumptions *(Today's $)*

	Brenda Goldstein
Current Age	35
Retirement Age	65
Analysis Period	Age 35 To Age 99
Retirement Period	Age 65 To Age 99

The overall inflation rate used is **2.50%**

Expenses	**Age Start**	**Age End**	**Amount**	**Index Before**	**Index After**
Net Income Required	65	99	30,000	2.50%	2.50%

Income	**Age Start**	**Age End**	**Amount**	**Index Before**	**Index After**
Brenda					
Salary	35	64	20,000	0.00%	2.50%
CPP/QPP	65	99	10,615	2.50%	2.50%
Old Age Security (Clawback On)	65	99	6,028	2.50%	2.50%

RRSP/RRIF Account Contributions	**Age Start**	**Age End**	**Amount**	**Index Before**	**Index After**
Brenda					
Registered Contribution Contribute - end of the year.	35	64	2,000	0.00%	0.00%

Investment Account Rates of Return	**Age Start**	**Age End**	**Rate**
Brenda			
Rate of Return	35	99	8.00%

RRSP/RRIF Account Rates of Return	**Age Start**	**Age End**	**Rate**
Brenda			
Rate of Return	35	99	8.00%

Locked-In Account Rates of Return	**Age Start**	**Age End**	**Rate**
Brenda			
Rate of Return	35	99	8.00%

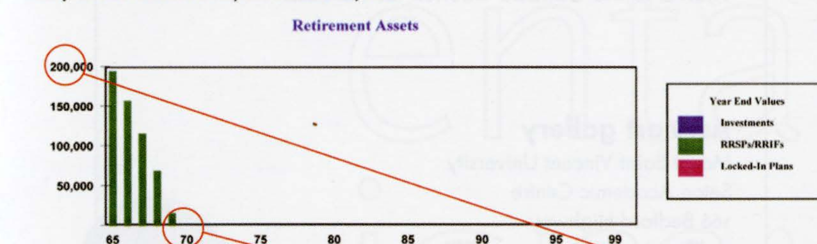
Tax Rates

The red here is the shortfall between what I want to live on ($30,000.00 a year) and what I am left with after my savings run dry. Mrs. Rizzo tells me that in order to live at that level, I am going to have to accumulate $1,173,085.00 by my 65th birthday.

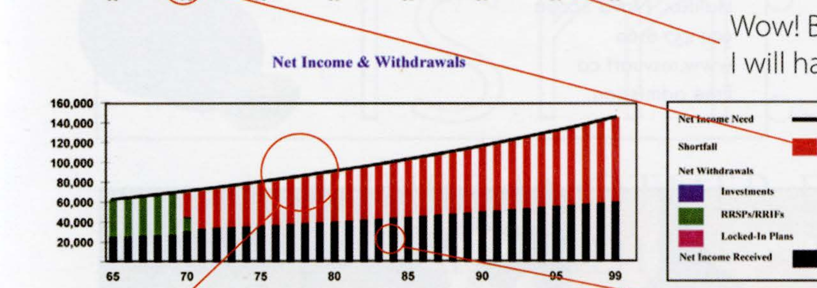
This has been a pretty good year for me. I have cleared over 25K. In an average year, I'm lucky to make 20K. According to a study by Hill Strategies, I'm doing great: the average visual artist makes 18.6K. After rent and paying down my debts, etc., I think I can manage to save about $160 a month.

2,000 yr. Retirement sav.

The retirement analysis illustrates whether your retirement incomes and retirement assets will be sufficient to meet your retirement goal. The first graph illustrates the year-end value of the various retirement assets during the analysis period. The second graph illustrates how net income received (government benefits, defined benefit pensions and other incomes) and net withdrawals from your retirement assets (Investments, RRSPs/RRIFs and Locked-In plans) are used to fund your retirement income goal (net income need). When your retirement assets are depleted a shortfall may occur.



Wow! By the time I have retired I will have accumulated $200,000!



...but by the time I am 70 I will have used up my savings.

Luckily I have been paying into CPP (Canada Pension Plan) so I will receive $10,615 a year. I will also be entitled to a yearly $6,028 from Old Age Security.

For a numerical summary of these graphs, please refer to the **Net Income & Withdrawals** table.

Year-End Values: The value of retirement assets after investment income is added and payments or withdrawals are subtracted at the end of the year. Contributions may be made either at the beginning or end of the year.
Net Income Need: The amount of net or after-tax income needed during retirement, adjusted for inflation.
Shortfall: Investment, RRSP/RRIF, and locked-in assets are used to fund the net income required. When these assets are depleted and the LIF maximum has been reached, a shortfall may occur.
Net Withdrawals:
Investments: Net withdrawals made from investment assets to provide additional income to fund your net retirement income goal.
RRSP/RRIF: Net withdrawals made from RRSPs and RRIFs to provide additional income to fund your net retirement income goal. Minimum RRIF payments are included starting in the year following the specified conversion age.
Locked-In Plans: Net withdrawals made from locked-in assets to provide additional income to fund your net retirement income goal. Minimum or maximum LIF/LRIF/Prescribed RRIF payments are included starting in the year of the specified conversion age. Also includes estimated annuity income after age 79 resulting from the required wind-up of a LIF (if applicable).
Net Income Received: Total net or after-tax income received from CPP/QPP, OAS, defined benefit pension plans, salaries and other income.

3

Mrs. Rizzo has some advice...."In order to meet your goals you are going to have to start saving now. Is there any way you can stop paying rent?" she asks. She tells me I should get a part-time job, especially if I want to consider buying a home in downtown Toronto. She suggests waitressing or bar work, something where I can make a lot of money, in cash. "Maybe art should be the part-time job," she suggests.

Thinking About My Future, *performance documentation by* **Brenda Goldstein**

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RECLAIMING THE POWER OF ART TO
EDUCATE AND INSPIRE PEOPLE TO ACTION

Ori-ental-ism:

JUST ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE

RL Cutler

Like many urban centres, Vancouver is a microcosm of global trends and events. With the latest outpouring of cultural activity in 2008 — an efflorescence of exhibitions, the sprouting of new retail outlets and the endless array of coffee franchises — an exotic display of consumer options and aesthetic sensibilities pervade the landscape. More than a site for laidback hipsters and idyllic realm of contentment, the paradisiacal context of Lotusland takes on new meaning in the context of a resurgence of Orientalism. The original term has travelled into the 21st century, as Edward Said had anticipated, and become an equivocal spectre of contemporary art and its methodologies.

Said's groundbreaking book *Orientalism* (1978), foundational knowledge for postcolonial studies, articulates a constellation of false assumptions underlying Western attitudes toward the East. Since the publication of the book, the concept of Orientalism has circulated as a critique of an entire system of thought and scholarship as well as a loose appropriation of its strategies. As Said argued four years later in his essay "Travelling Theory" (1982) "…the movement of ideas and theories from one place to another is both a fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of intellectual activity."[1] I have come to marvel at the mutability of Orientalism, not only in representations of the Orient constructed by and in relation to the West, but more recently as a visual strategy and methodology for cultural critique in Canada's Pacific Northwest.

In his essay "Travelling Theory," Said argues that the movement of ideas necessarily involves processes of representation that complicate their circulation:

> First, there is a point of origin, or what seems like one, a set of initial circumstances in which the idea came to birth or entered discourse. Second, there is a distance transversed, a passage through the pressure of various contexts as the idea moves from an earlier point to another time and place where it will come into new prominence. Third, there is a set of conditions — call them conditions of acceptance… Fourth, the now full (or partly) accommodated (or incorporated) idea is to some extent transformed by its new uses…[2]

Global Fusion campaign items from HomeSense. Courtesy: HomeSense.

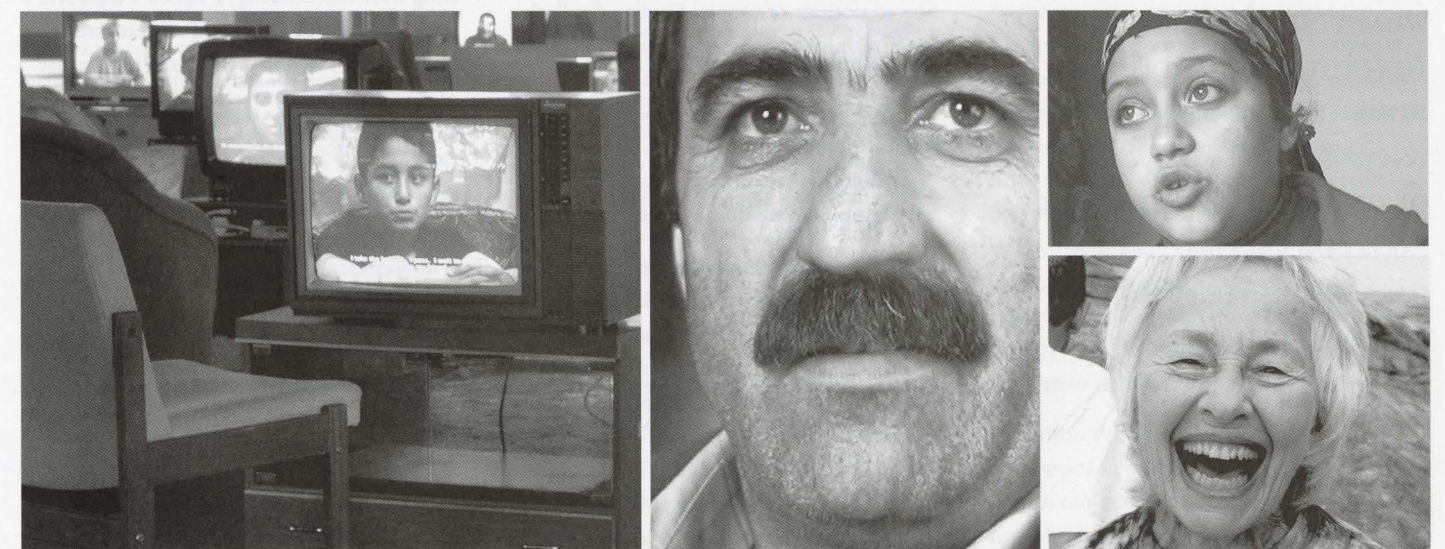
While Said never refers to Orientalism directly in this passage, its reference is instructive. Orientalism has so penetrated critical discourse and popular culture that it now functions as a shorthand for a way of collecting, displaying and representing people and their cultural productions. Taken to its interpretative limits, Orientalism itself appears to have travelled from the critical to the capacious in the form of an often indiscriminate and unruly visual methodology. That it is a veritable Babel of visual culture and cultural objects peddling fictionalized cultures irrespective of race or geographic location speaks to Said's observation that travelling theory is often reified in the transplantation process.

Matthew Stadler's public lecture at the Vancouver Art Gallery in March titled "Going Nowhere: Where Was Paradise?" explored concepts of utopia in relation to the West Coast and the exhibition *Kutlug Ataman: Paradise and Küba*. Stadler introduced Orientalism in his discussion of how Biblical and subsequent Christian scholarship located Paradise in a remote part of the earth. He pointed out that 16th and 17th century European explorers often made the search for Paradise part of their journeys to other continents. In this way, the search for Paradise became entangled with relationships and discourses that would later be characterized as imperialist and Orientalist.[3] Stadler argued that Orientalism characteristically involved the creation of narratives that removed people and their cultures from their history, placing them into a different history. Near the end of his talk, he spoke to Ataman's video installation *Paradise*.

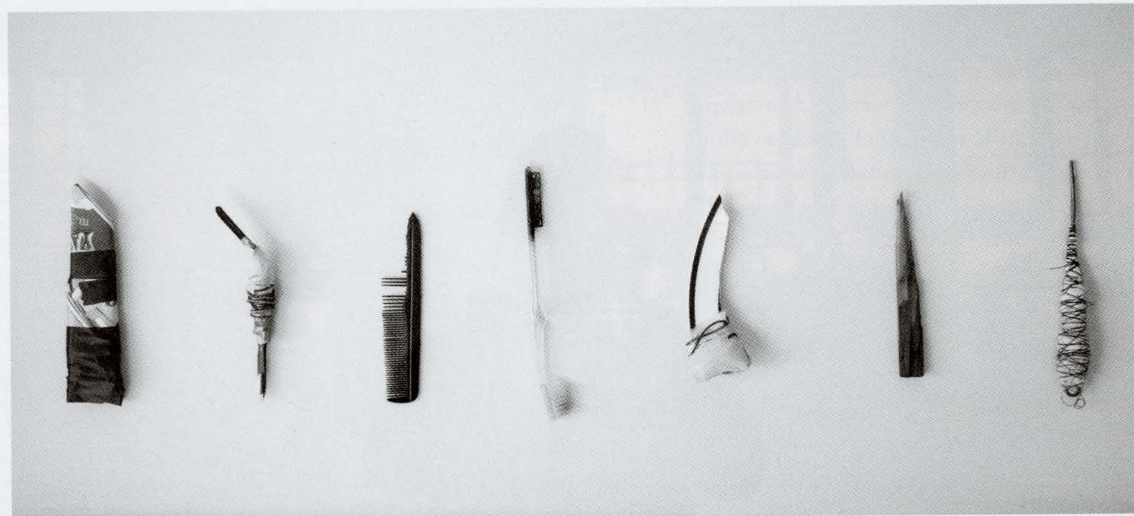
<top> **Sean George.** *Venus Rising,* 2008. <bottom> **Sean George.** *Ben gone,* 2008. Both courtesy: the artist.

<top> **Kutlug Ataman.** *Küba*, installation at the Sorting Office, London, 2004. Courtesy: the artist and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York. Photo: Christopher Bliss Photography.

Completed in 2007, Ataman's piece portrays 24 southern Californians describing their encounter with that place they call "paradise." The Turkish artist provided an interpretation of identity and desire as embodied by people living in the earthly and often fictionalized paradise of Orange County. In order to experience the work, the viewer dons headphones for each of the 24 screens and enacts their own constructed narrative. One can then travel through Ataman's *Paradise* both encountering and reconstructing the fictional portraits. Stadler describes the work as "Orientalist" in that it dehistoricizes its subjects in order to create the artist's (and viewer's) preferred narrative. While I am not entirely convinced of this interpretation,



<left> **Kutlug Ataman.** *Küba*, installation at the Sorting Office, London, 2004. <centre and top right> **Kutlug Ataman.** *Küba*, 2004, video still. <bottom lower right> **Kutlug Ataman.** *Paradise*, 2007, video still. All courtesy: artist and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York.



Abbas Akhavan. *Makeshift objects*, 2008. Courtesy of the artist and Centre A. Photo: William Ting.

WHAT I DID DISCOVER WAS THAT THE MERCHANDISING OF HOMESENSE REPRESENTED AN UNCONSCIOUS SIMULACRUM OF THE "ORIENT," WHEREBY THE PARTLY INCORPORATED IDEA HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED BY ITS NEW USES.

the installation does reflect upon how a community of people living in a certain part of the world imagines personal and geographic mythologies, especially in relation to notions of utopia. Finding Stadler's application of the term "Orientalism" oddly productive and in light of Said's "travelling theory," I began to map out possible routes and journeys to Paradise:

A) Ataman was a purveyor of false assumptions (and mythical constructions);

B) Ataman had reconfigured Orientalism from its point of origin to another time and place;

C) Ataman had created a new set of conditions — call them conditions of acceptance;

D) The partly incorporated idea of Orientalism has been transformed by its new uses;

E) All of the above (Orientalism is open and mutable).

On a warm summer afternoon, while puzzling over this elasticity, I visited Vancouver's new HomeSense store on Robson Street. The world closed in around me in a bazaar of merchandise conspiratorially designed to entice a feminine lust for ornament.[4] Seemingly passive objects excited and distracted my senses. As I gazed upon hand-carved wood bowls made in China, hanging lamps with Coptic motifs, distressed metal work and Venetian glass, a voice from above beseeched shoppers to visit a new shipment of decorative Moroccan objects. Strolling past the scented candles, tropical bathroom pottery and earth-tone bedding, I never did find the elusive cache of North African objects. What I did discover was that the merchandising of HomeSense represented an unconscious simulacrum of the "Orient," whereby the partly incorporated idea has been transformed by its new uses. I wondered whether Stadler's adaptive Orientalism was doing its work; my consumer choice and aesthetic judgements were a miasma of unconscious desire and projection. Seduced, abandoned and unsure where the faux-bamboo towel racks ended and the damask floor screens began, I left this décor oasis and stopped by a local café ordering a dark coffee made from the Arabica bean. Discovered in the highlands of Ethiopia in the ninth century, coffee's pleasures spread to Egypt, Yemen, Armenia, Persia, Turkey and northern Africa by the 15th century. From the Muslim world, it spread to Italy, then to the rest of Europe and the Americas. Surveying the interior décor, the spectre of a travelling Orientalism appeared yet again. Coffee blends were represented by images of a Javanese woman in a headscarf leaning on burlap coffee sacks, a Juan Valdez doppelganger posing with his donkey, and elderly Ethiopians drinking coffee from clay urns. I ordered a baklava and found a table.

Orientalism & Ephemera (installation view). Courtesy: Centre A. Photo: William Ting.

Sipping on the hypnotic brew, I considered Centre A's spring exhibition *Orientalism and Ephemera*, Jamelie Hassan's curatorial reflection on the cultural space of the Middle East and the legacy of Said's 1978 book. In her curatorial statement, Hassan asserts that, "In *Orientalism and Ephemera*, I draw on my archives and collection, as well as a selection of works by other artists and collectors, to create an exhibition that brings multiple aspects of my own practice and interests together: creative, curatorial, research and collecting." While the concept is intriguing, the exhibition was a confusing maze of pop cultural ephemera (souvenirs, pamphlets, postcards, catalogues, travel and commercial items, documents and photographs) alongside work by local artists Diyan Achjadi, Abbas Akhavan, Babak Golkar, Fabiola Nabil Naguib and Jayce Salloum among other national and international examples. At the opening, someone described the curatorial approach as generous; I saw it as lacking focus and framing. Hassan suggests that the exhibition "reflects a certain closeness and offers an alternative space from which to consider the innumerable manifestations of Orientalism within our everyday culture." I wondered about the absence of work by certain artists of Chinese, Japanese and Korean descent and the inclusion of work by Indonesian, Aboriginal and Caucasian artists.

In addition to the curator's observation of "the attraction and presence of the "East" within our everyday experience," I questioned whether *Orientalism and Ephemera* in fact manifested an Orientalist methodology.

Installation view of Christel Herzog photos within *Learning to Walk........a mediated journey to Africa*. Courtesy: Sean George. Photo: Sita Kumar.

The rather loose selection of visual display was less a critique of Orientalism than an haphazard representation of an idea. Perhaps the travelling exhibition was less a demonstration of false assumptions underlying Western attitudes toward the East than a space for considering the complex ways in which post-colonialism and globalization are implicated in visual culture. A symposium organized around the exhibition in collaboration with the Simon Fraser University Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures at the University Harbour Centre similarly echoed an Orientalist methodology. Keynote speaker Steven Caton, Professor of Contemporary Arab Studies at Harvard University, presented an exposé on the figure of the White Sheik in western culture. He observed how the Caucasian adoption of Arab attire both feminized the wearer and allowed him to conquer and subdue the Oriental Other. During the ensuing discussion, someone observed that the hyperbolic news stories of Senator Barack Obama in African garb (he was dressed as a Somali Elder during his visit to Wajir, a rural area in north eastern Kenya, bordered Somalia and Ethiopia) might also represent unease with the apparently Orientalizing clothing.

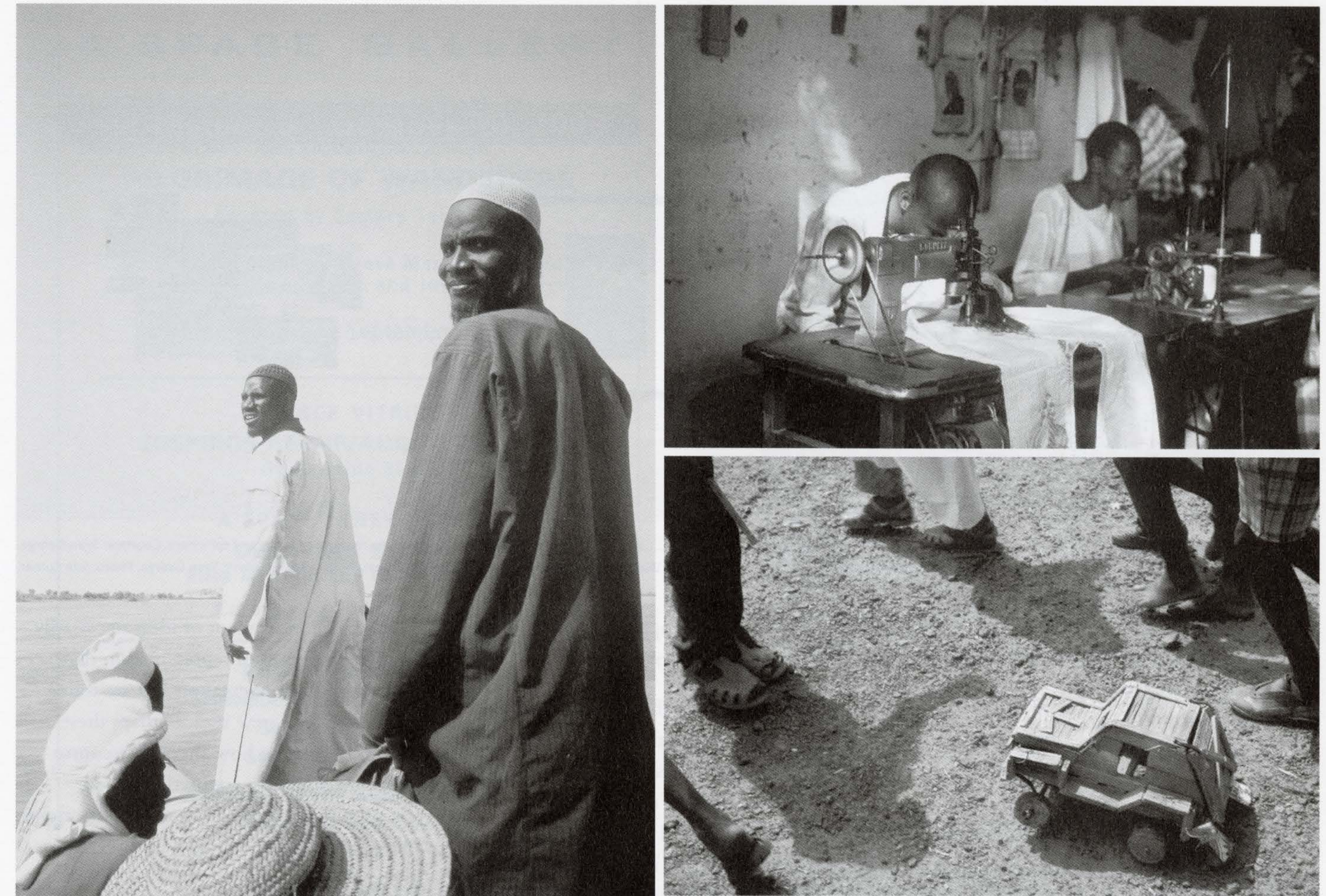
While history has handed us all a plethora of material culture informed by false assumptions and erroneous beliefs, artistic interventions can often display and deconstruct the ideological biases that dominate our mediascapes. Sean George's "Learning to Walk… a mediated journey to Africa" was fortuitously exhibited at the same time as *Orientalism and Ephemera* kitty corner to Centre A at Interurban Gallery. With this geographical juxtaposition, the Orientalist methodology surfaced yet again in George's own archives, artwork and selection of works by other artists (Geoffrey Bird, Christel Herzog, Sita Kumar, Luya Tshimbalanga and Natalie Vermeer). By exploring Africa as a metaphoric framework which is depicted but never deciphered, "Learning to walk…" is a subjective and poetic interpretation and intervention of the myth of Africa as will and representation. As George explains, "The term "heart of darkness," does not apply here. This body of knowledge is a well-lit place fuelled by science, literature, cinema, art, print media and the evening news. This mediated wave surfs my brown skin — connected but disconnected, never having set foot on African soil; yet a veteran of many journeys."[5] Located in the Downtown East Side of Vancouver, the exhibition showcased Africa as an apparition. As George writes,

"Africa like the Downtown East Side is a mediated and real place. …The slave trade and the rape of the continents' resources still echo today. The missing women and the use of the Downtown East Side as a Hollywood backdrop continue to complicate the way we imagine these two different but similar places."

George's collage works are particularly haunting with their traces of black figures (models, celebrities, etc.) from dated fashion and lifestyle magazines reconfigured to highlight homoeroticism, longing and body fetishism. Perhaps the artist has employed his own Orientalizing strategies that comment on personal and geographic mythologies of Africa by pulling its subjects out of their anchor of history. George seeks "to create another rumble in the jungle… a fantasy, an open-air market of ideas and information."

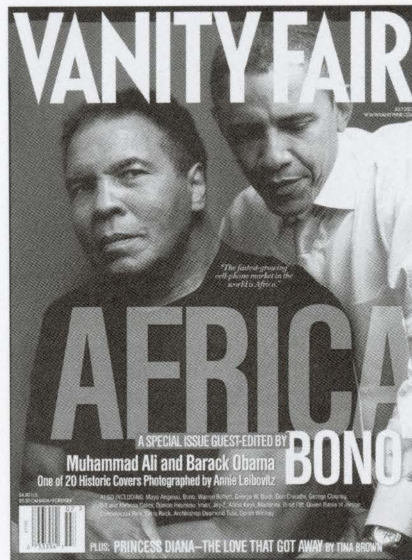
More recently, Ron Terada took up an Orientalizing strategy in his exhibition at Catriona Jeffries Gallery. Known for exploring the language of signs that pervade our modern landscape, Terada's new work attempts to locate the large-scale advertising billboard within the gallery through the construction of a video wall titled *Voight Kampff*[6] and is accompanied by a series of related photographs. Referencing the 1982 film *Blade Runner*, three young Caucasian girls dressed as maikos (apprentice geishas) are presented individually as they consume alcohol, cigarettes and pills. You might recollect that in the first 10 minutes of the science fiction film, a building size advertisement portrays a traditionally attired Japanese woman smiling as she pops something into her mouth. At the time, this cinematic image was both an acknowledgment of American drug culture and the increasing diaspora of greater Los Angeles.

The Catriona Jeffries Gallery press release states "Within this new body of work Terada in turn probes questions of "looking" and embeds references to the history of exoticism and Orientalism within the history of Western art." While the references are certainly present, the artist's intention is unclear. The allusion to Orientalism itself is capacious and elastic. The representation of Caucasian maikos does little more than employ an Orientalizing visual strategy. The nod to exoticism and Orientalism has become a visual prop or eye candy and falls short of implicating the viewer in the consumption of these images. Terada's Orientalist strategy dehistoricizes its subject in order to create his preferred narrative. Like the film, the maiko figure has been removed from its cultural context and placed within a different history. Perhaps Terada's point is that the lyrical luxury of Japanese geishas, simulating the excesses of consumer global culture for our delectation, is lost on gawky gaijins (foreigners).



<left> **Christel Herzog.** *On the Niger River*, (Nigeria), 1988. <top right> **Christel Herzog.** *Mali 2*, 1988. Courtesy: Sean George. <bottom right> **Christel Herzog.** *Burkina Faso*, 1988. All courtesy: Sean George.

NO LONGER A SPECIFIC HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCE OR SAID'S "FIRST POINT OF ORIGIN," ORIENTALISM HAS BECOME A PREFERRED NARRATIVE, AN ELASTIC REFERENCE, A TAPESTRY OF IMAGES, A HYPNOTIC MAKER OF CLICHÉS, A CRITIQUE OF WESTERN ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE SO-CALLED "EAST," AN ACADEMIC AREA OF STUDY AND A STRATEGY FOR VISUAL DISPLAY.



"It's easier to drive drunk in Zimbabwe, you will avoid the potholes."
Born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe - Hilton Goodes former Zimbabwean policeman.

Hilton is my stereotype of an African man – strong, tall, silent, but white.

<left> One of15 Vanity Fair magazines devoted to Africa in *Learning to Walk.........a mediated journey to Africa*, along with other magazines books and ephemera. Courtesy: Sean George.
<right> *Learning to Walk.........a mediated journey to Africa*, 2008, installation view. Courtesy: Sean George. Photo: Sita Kumar.

Finding reconstructed geishas in manga or anime culture, where prurient entertainment looms large, somehow makes sense. However in a work of art, the context and stakes are different. In Terada's project there is neither a cultural critique of the maiko nor an expanded understanding of its Orientalizing effects. His video and photographs are pure spectacle, neither complicating nor deepening our reading of these signs. Through its appropriating of a Japanese stereotype of traditional femininity, the work does not implicate the viewer but functions more obliquely. The *Voight Kampf* video wall uses the maiko figure as a hazy filter, making nebulous the false assumptions underlying Western attitudes toward the East. The Orientalizing visual strategy spins out from its source and yet does not realize a cogent interpretation or narrative. Obviously not designed as a critique of Orientalism, these young Caucasian maikos are an aesthetic homage to an idea or sign of beauty. Terada's geishas are like the singer Gwen Stefani's "Harajuku Girls,"[7] who exemplify pop culture revelling in free market aesthetics and visual excess. Perhaps this explains why I left the gallery with the simultaneous sensation of seduction and abandonment, attracted to both the science fictional reference and splash of geisha style while repulsed by the apparent and perhaps even strategic absence of meaning.

I continue to observe the exhibition of Orientalism as a contemporary methodology. No longer a specific historical circumstance or Said's "first point of origin," Orientalism has become a preferred narrative, an elastic reference, a tapestry of images, a hypnotic maker of clichés, a critique of western assumptions about the so-called "East," an academic area of study and a strategy for visual display. These aesthetic and scopic regimes depend less on taste than on our ability, and sometimes inability, to distinguish their mode of representation and intention. Does Orientalism have limits? With or without canonical motifs, has it become a preferred methodology within art theory, curatorial models and consumer display? The movement of ideas necessarily involves processes of representation that complicate their circulation and are transformed by their new uses. Perhaps these examples illustrate how theory, discourse and popular culture are mythologized, reconfigured and turned against their origins. Then again, maybe it is just another day in paradise. □

Randy Lee Cutler is an artist, educator and writer. Her practice investigates the expanded relationships between mediation, diversity and critical theory. As a professor and associate dean at Emily Carr University she teaches and fosters links between sustainability, embodiment and creativity.

Notes:

1. Edward W. Said, *The Edward Said Reader*, Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin, eds., (Vintage 2000), p.196.
2. Ibid.
3. Mathew Stadler, Public Lecture "Going Nowhere: Where Was Paradise?" at the Vancouver Art Gallery (March 20) and email correspondence.
4. This lust for ornament has also been used in the discourse of racism. Here I am referring to Adolf Loos' *Ornament and Crime* (1908).
5. Sean George's artist statement for *Learning to Walk... a mediated journey to Africa*.
6. Voight Kampff is the name of the polygraph-like machine in *Blade Runner* that detects whether a suspect is human or replicant by measuring their empathic response to emotionally loaded questions.
7. These are teenagers who dress like baby doll Lolita-esque caricatures and parade the Harajuku district of Tokyo.

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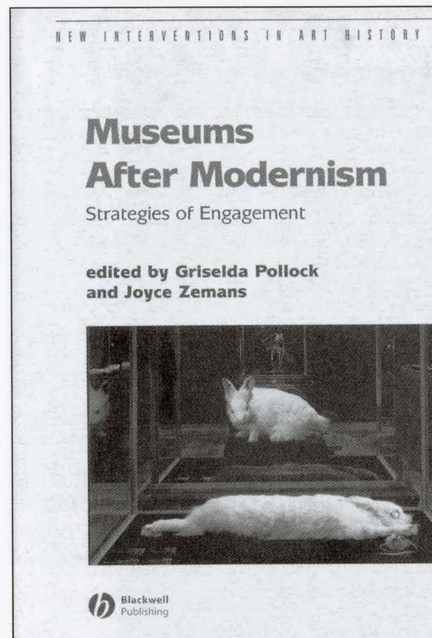

Judith Mastai's Sovereignty of Thought:
Museums After Modernism: Strategies of Engagement

EDITED BY Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans

Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Limited: 2007

REVIEW BY Anna Hudson

Museums After Modernism: Strategies of Engagement — as Griselda Pollock admitted at the 2007 book launch — is an odd if unusually thoughtful collection of essays. The thread of connection between the 12 papers by 11 authors is Judith Mastai, whom Torontonians knew as the provocative Head of Education at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) during the 1990s. Mastai was a force, and for those who never knew or met her, I cannot be sure how well the essays cohere. But for those who did, the edited volume reads from cover to cover as a revelation of Mastai's place in a "baby boomer" generation of post-war feminist *provocateurs* for a better world. In her bid for change, and for a discourse leading to a better world, her idealism assumed privilege.

The most important essay in *Museums After Modernism* is Mastai's "There Is No Such Thing as a Visitor." This essay would have been better placed first in the volume instead of Pollock's moat of a read, "Un-Framing the Modern: Critical Space/Public Possibility." If you can get past her interpolated museology, you will succeed in reading the whole volume. I must confess I can't really summarize the focus of Pollock's essay. Regardless, I have already encouraged students to source her description of the museum, "that distinctive product of modernity," (p.1) now floating "in a world of liquid modernity."(p.3) Paul Werner, a former museum docent, similarly likened the Guggenheim Museum as sailing under the infamous captain, Thomas Krens, "on golden waters, unaware it was floating on pee."[1]

Citing the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, Pollock describes museums after modernism as lacking. "There is no ultimate goal," writes Pollock, "no long-term narrative which leads to a revolutionary sweeping away of one order to be replaced by a new one, stable or as the consolidated modernity of the first age of industrial capitalism."(p.3) Her words strike me as nostalgic and frame Mastai's default "to intellectual play" as the healthy antidote for facilitating — at least ideally — the museum's responsibility for "publics, specific, contesting constituencies with a variety of different competences, positions, needs, histories and purposes in relating to this resource, to this site of provocation of debate and difference, of memory, amnesia and creative possibility."(p.24) I take issue, however, with Pollock's simplistic deference to Mastai, given that the "educator or public programmer must be the one who thinks outside either the adoring art-historical paradigm or the demonizing museological frame."(p.25) Mastai's "There Is No Such Thing as a Visitor" crystallizes the problems which plague museums after modernism as "the zeal-to-appeal."

Amazingly, Mastai did not believe "the visitor" (museological jargon for the customer) is always right, despite increased dependence on the gate (i.e. ticket sales) to make up for reduced government support. "Like any other educational institution," reasoned Mastai, "the mandate of the museum is not to pander to 'felt' needs but to use them as a starting point from which to build bridges between what is known and what must be known."(p.175) Mastai assigned educators the role of building these bridges by creating access points (which she did not define) to the art. She divided the roles of the curator and educator as follows: the curator creates an exhibition (albeit "a task much beleaguered by exhibition critique") and the educator must "bridge gaps between inquiry and authority, between desire and satisfaction, between length of attention span and volumes of potential information." For this to be successfully achieved, the curator and educator must work in tandem.

Last November, I moderated a panel discussion at the annual Ontario Museums Association conference called "Curators vs. Educators: Contested Responsibilities for the Paradigm Shift." The *paradigm shift* refers to a now familiar idea described by Gail Anderson in her introduction to the 2004 edited volume *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, as the remaking of an elitist institution into an accessible (democratic) museum by shifting attention from the object to the person experiencing it. At issue is the question: what defines the experience of the art gallery? Jan Allen, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in Kingston, privileges the object, arguing that a meaningful visitor experience must draw from "a real understanding of the work to a depth that will permit me to present it in a way that maximizes the kind of space of imagination for the gallery visitor."[2] Allen sounds as much like an educator as a curator. One might think that the overlapping of responsibilities, or rather of strategies of engagement with the artwork, causes friction. Kelly McKinley, the current Director of Education and Public Programming at the AGO, acknowledges the "mistrust between the curator, the keeper of the content, and the educator," but she insists on a new model of mutual respect and trust. Echoing Mastai, McKinley argues for the educator's role in creating "as many avenues as possible for people to come to experience those [examples of human expression] in the absolute richest way." "I think we are so beyond the educator versus curator"[3] The new metric for the measure of success of an art gallery must be teamwork, the objective of which is an optimal relationship between the visitor and the work of art.

The contributions of Mieke Bal, Gerald McMaster, and Ruth Phillips to *Museums After Modernism* imagine (to quote the Transformation AGO motto) bringing "art and people together." Bal's essay "Women's Rembrandt" is more revisionist art history than museology, yet it makes the point that curators and educators must consider the role of historical art in the present, as seen across cultural and generational divides. I like to think that Agacinski might ultimately find a flaw in the Western clock, being that linear time fails to address the desire for circular and ritual time proffered by non-Western perceptions of the big question of how "we" live and engage with the world. Non-Western and non-patriarchal perspectives might therefore be considered influential in a globalized world. Bal's feminist approach skirts (to make a bad pun) the plaguing issue of historical contextualization of Rembrandt's depictions of women. She suggests "we" empathize in the present to collapse the expanse of time and read those bodies as they have always been. McMaster, whose essay follows Bal's, need only describe James Luna's *Artifact Piece* (1987), where the artist staged himself as the object of museal contemplation, to make the point that the visitor is certainly not always right, if almost always White. Ruth Phillips provides a solid survey of installations of African art in the United States and the UK in "Exhibiting Africa after Modernism: Globalization, Pluralism, and the Persistent Paradigms of Art and Artifact." She focuses on "the appropriative role of the museum not only in terms of the physical removal of objects from originating communities, but also in overwriting Indigenous systems of expressive culture with Eurocentric and essentializing notions of *both* art and artifact."(p.81) Have postmodernism and postcolonialism redirected museum displays of African art away from "the aura of temporal remoteness, loss and fragmentation?"(p.83) The "museum effect" is a function of Western tradition, notes Phillips. But with "the increasing global extension of museum culture, of the diasporic interpenetration of Western and non-Western traditions of representation, and of the new hybridities that are beginning to emerge as museums adopt collaborative curatorial strategies and seek to address more diverse audiences," a new era has begun. (p.99) New "non-traditional" visitors, "socialized to understanding the hierarchy of value inscribed by the Western art and culture system," promise to level the playing field.(p.100) What is at stake, reveals Reesa Greenberg in "Mirroring Evil, Evil Mirrored: Timing, Trauma, and Temporary Exhibitions" is the preservation of the margins. Can or should art be a common denominator, bringing us together to view the past collectively as a shared reflection in the present? Then again, Greenberg asks, if one person's hope is another's peril, then how can a museum be a moral force? (p.117) "Mirroring Evil" asks for pause in the idealism of any museum purporting its social responsibility — a factor that so easily defines its relevance.

In closing, I must skip past contributions by the artists Vera Frenkel and Mary Kelly, both of which trouble any presumption that art can be measured and Janna Graham and Shadya Yasin's informative "Reframing Participation in the Museum: A Syncopated Discussion," which provides a welcome and fascinating review of Mastai's "special projects" legacy, to the final essay in the volume. Juli Carson's "On Discourse as Monument: Institutional Spaces and Feminist Problematics" is a brilliant recounting of how women of Mastai's generation succeeded in using the museum as a place to model change: a counter-aesthetic, an all–women staff and a rejection of any unanimous utopic female space. Carson addresses the different positions of the Americans and the British in the feminist debate of the 1970s. "While one model — 1970s American — consciously focused on women's access to institutions of power via the strategy of gender parity," states Carson, "another model — 1970s British — sought to theorize how these institutions constituted a symbolic to which men consciously had access but from which women were psychologically barred because they were sexually marked within it." Disentangling oneself from the forces of repression, opening the museum to multiple entry points, begs the question of what Carson calls "sovereignty of thought."(p.218) Mastai's "intellectual play" is vindicated in this essay as a limbering exercise. Only through debate, which the museum facilitates as a uniquely discursive site, can social, cultural and political relations constantly reconfigure free of preconceived position or practice. It's a totally Mastai ideal. □

ANNA HUDSON is an Assistant Professor of Canadian Art and Curatorial Studies in the Department of Visual Arts, York University, Toronto.

Notes:

1. Paul Werner, *Museum, Inc.: Inside the Global Art World* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press: 2005), p.26.
2. Unpublished transcript, "Curators vs. Educators: Contested Responsibilities for the Paradigm Shift," Ontario Museums Association conference, Toronto, 25 October 2007.
3. Ibid.

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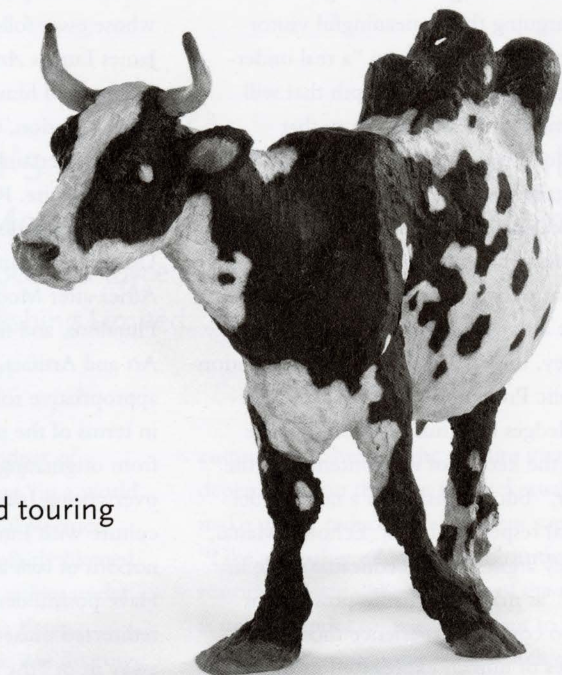
CURATED BY Terrence Heath **REVIEW BY** Andrea Terry



Joe Fafard's solo sculpture exhibition at the National Gallery aims to showcase the Saskatchewan native as artist, craftsman and designer, adept at handling materials ranging from bronze, plaster and wood to steel and ceramics. Produced in conjunction with Regina Mackenzie Art Gallery, this retrospective strives to demonstrate how Fafard's work bridges seemingly diametrically opposed concepts, such as urban and rural, east and west, English and French, "popular" and "elite" culture. Indeed, the directors of both institutions characterize Fafard's interests, accomplishments and art as simultaneously regionally rooted and cosmopolitan, an aesthetic that espouses "our communal narrative."[1]

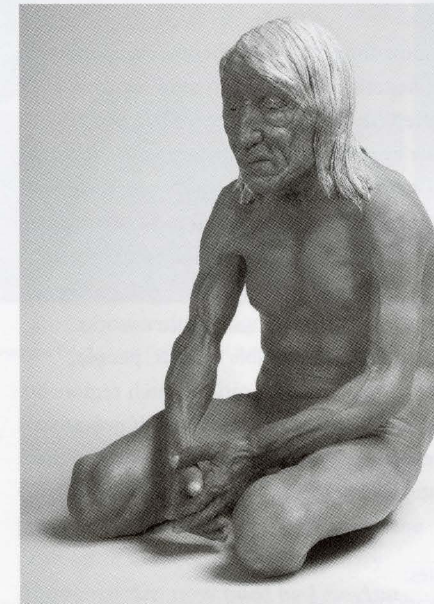
While both the curation and content appear to explore aspects of regionalism inherent in the artist's work, it is apparent upon closer inspection that the arrangement of the various pieces and subject matter connect different Canadian localities in order to re-invigorate the national narrative of contemporary art or, as Clive Robertson puts it, "re-mandate the local."[2] For example, a number of pieces refer, by allusions in subject matter, accompanying text panels and/or photographs, to other works by Fafard that are situated in specific locations outside the exhibition space. One particular work that visitors are frequently reminded of is Fafard's *The Pasture* (1984-5), an installation of seven bronze cows framed by Mies van der Rohe's TD Centre towers in Toronto's downtown core. Cultivating connections between works both in and outside the exhibition space seemingly legitimizes a (not so) insidious referencing of the "art of the nation." Using this artist's work as a vehicle for validating the continued existence of a contemporary "Canadian" art scene enacts a series of hegemonic processes by which institutional mandates and curatorial efforts remain dedicated to the advancement of a unified national culture — affected through the prolific representation of bovines as opposed to jack pines.

According to the introductory wall text, the exhibition aims to document the artist's development and the "variety" of his work. Sixty-nine pieces, ranging from 1965 to 2007, are arranged, for the most part, in chronological order. Upon closer scrutiny, however, is an intentional curatorial maintenance of traditional art historical, aestheticized and socio-political groupings. These groupings reveal insidious hierarchical orderings, possibly the most disturbing aspect of the show.

In order to introduce the communal aspects of Fafard's oeuvre, the first two rooms of the exhibition display works from the artist's formative years. Earthenware portraits of family and friends populate these rooms and attest to, firstly, the significance of Fafard's hometown and family to the development of his practice, and secondly, the significance of both personal and professional contacts. Portraits of artists, such as Victor Cicansky, Robert Arneson and Russell Yuristy, document the friendships and connections Fafard maintained during the course of his education and teaching career.

The content and arrangement of works in the next room, conversely, sever connections. In this space, a partition is set up in the centre of the room, separating the artist's sculptures of Indigenous peoples, all of which were produced based on photographs and stories, from Fafard's portraits of canonical artistic influences upon his work, such as Vincent van Gogh, Pierre-Auguste

<*opposite page*> **Joe Fafard.** *Smoothly She Shifted*, 1986. Courtesy: the MacKenzie Art Gallery and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. <*top*> **Joe Fafard.** *Manitoba*, 1975. Courtesy: the artist and the MacKenzie Art Gallery. <*bottom left*> **Joe Fafard.** *Wandering Spirit*, 1979. Courtesy: the MacKenzie Art Gallery. <*bottom right*> **Joe Fafard.** *Ma Mère*, 1972. Courtesy: the artist and the MacKenzie Art Gallery.

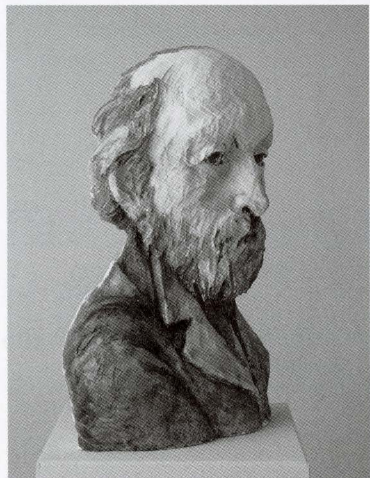


Renoir and Paul Cézanne. In terms of the Indigenous representations, exhibition curator Terrence Heath describes one work in particular, *Manitoba* (1975) — a semi-clothed reclining man whose pose echoes that of Édouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863) — as a "highly political piece of art" that espouses art historical references and simultaneously presents the Métis not as victim but as ruler of the Prairies.[3] The physical segregation of this work, however, problematizes this characterization.

The exhibition also juxtaposes the development of Fafard's ceramic endeavours with that of his bronze works. Katja Canini, Education and Public Programs Officer at the National Gallery, asserts that Fafard's first public art commission, *The Pasture*, marked him as a public artist and represented a shift in his production medium.[4] The exhibition documents various stages of his work in bronze, from inception of *The Pasture* to works that were produced following its completion, such as the larger-than-life bronze sculptures of cows, bulls and horses that populate the museum space. The latter works are in many cases positioned so that visitors might traverse their complete circumference. Through subject matter, text panel references and/or grouping, these same works, however, frequently harken back to those of *The Pasture*. The exhibition thus aims to cultivate connections between rurality and urbanity in both the content and location(s) of the artist's work, simultaneously emphasizing concepts of regionality and nationhood.

The regionalist articulations inherent in Fafard's work demonstrate the pervasiveness and malleability of nationalist endeavours in the National Gallery's mandate, operations and exhibition policies. Anne Whitelaw notes that regionalist explorations in contemporary art exhibitions frequently aim to move beyond "a singular vision of national identity in Canada."[5] These explorative aims within cultural institutions might gain greater

<left> **Joe Fafard.** *Cézanne*, 1981.
Courtesy: National Gallery of Canada. Photo: NGC.
<right> **Joe Fafard.** *Running Horses*, 2007.
Courtesy: the National Gallery of Canada Foundation.



currency in the contemporary moment as, for example, "have" provinces become "have-nots." This is particularly true in the case of Ontario, long considered Canada's manufacturing heartland, now struggling with substantial job losses, high energy costs, the strong loonie and the American economic downturn, while energy–rich provinces, such as Alberta, reap substantial economic rewards.[6] Furthermore, as energy-rich areas rapidly become recipients of increased corporate, government and private investment, thereby outpacing and ostensibly circumventing those replete with manufacturing capabilities, this type of regionalist transformation seems to be developing alongside various cultural initiatives.

The regionalist tropes explored in this particular retrospective not only showcase but also connect different localities across the country, Ste-Marthe, to Regina, Toronto, Ottawa, and others. Significantly, tensions between margin and centre persistently facilitate essentialist conceptions of regional identity in the discursive space of the museum, which provides, in Whitelaw's words, the "key to an understanding of the shifting definitions of national identity."[7]

Regionalism, with its inherent complexity, can negotiate the imperative of securing a unified national identity while simultaneously breaking down the expansive territory of Canada into "smaller, more manageable parcels which are perceived to have greater homogeneity on the levels of geography, culture and language."[8] In the end, while the retrospective brings together works that explore identifiable objects, people, animals, places and locations, such regionalist indicators — in conjunction with pervasive categorical organization — demonstrate the strategic development of a national narrative exercised, in this case, through pastoral images. As a result, the national conceptualization of land morphs from that of a picturesque landscape to a pasturized pastiche spread across the geographical terrain. □

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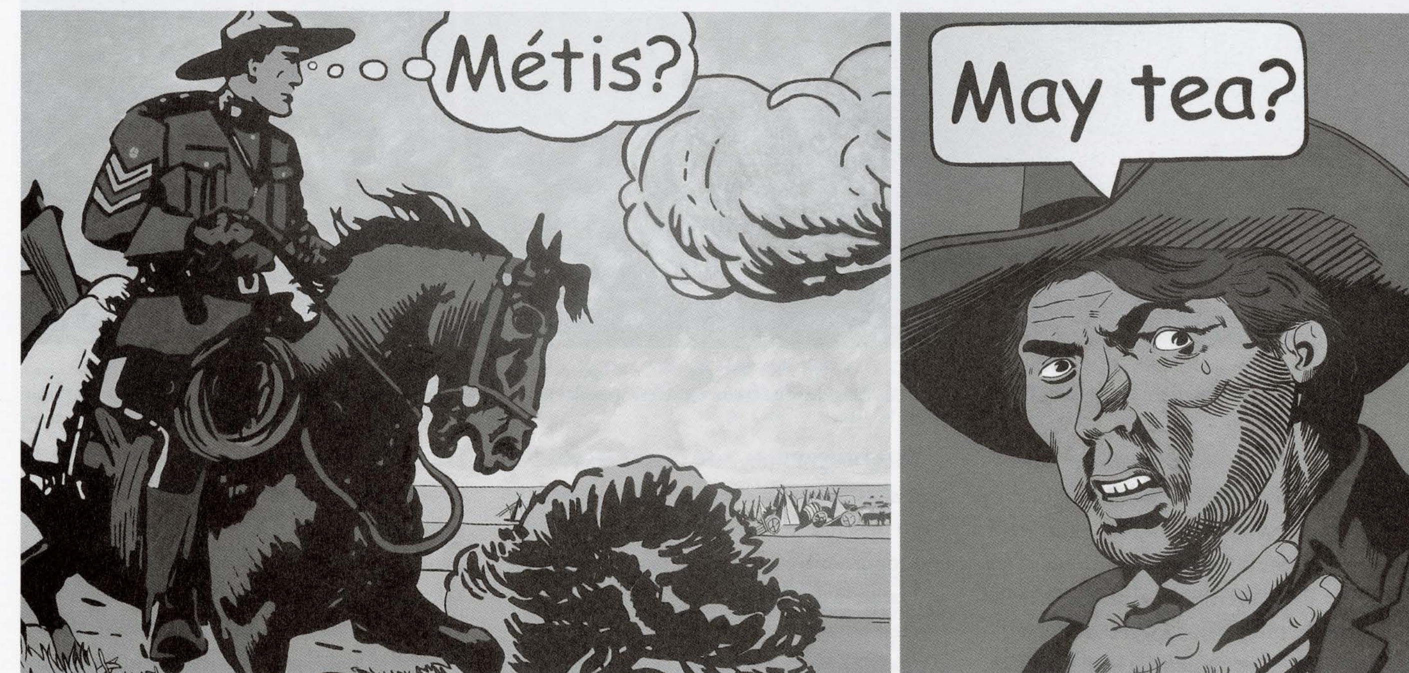
Notes:

1. Kate Davis and Pierre Théberge, "Directors' Foreword," in *Joe Fafard* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd.: 2008), p.1, emphasis added.
2. Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZBooks: 2006), p.210.
3. Terrence Heath, "Working With Clay: Cups, Portraits and First Successes," in *Joe Fafard* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 2008), p.112-113.
4. Katja Canini, "Joe Fafard: From Field to Foundry," *Vernissage: The Magazine of the National Gallery of Canada* 10.1. (Winter 2008), p.10.
5. Anne Whitelaw, "Statistical Imperatives: Representing the Nation in Exhibitions of Contemporary Art," *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies* 1 (1997), p.22.
6. Karen Howlett and Heather Scoffield, "From powerhouse to poor cousin: Canada's once-mighty economic engine could slip to have-not status within two years, a report predicts." *Globe and Mail* (30 April, 2008), p.A4.
7. Whitelaw, p.36.
8. ibid., p.35.

CLAIMING SPACE AND MAKING NOISE:
In My Lifetime: Contemporary Aboriginal Art

Canadian Museum of Civilization • 9 June, 2007– 16 March, 2008

CURATED BY Lee-Ann Martin **REVIEW BY** Carla Taunton

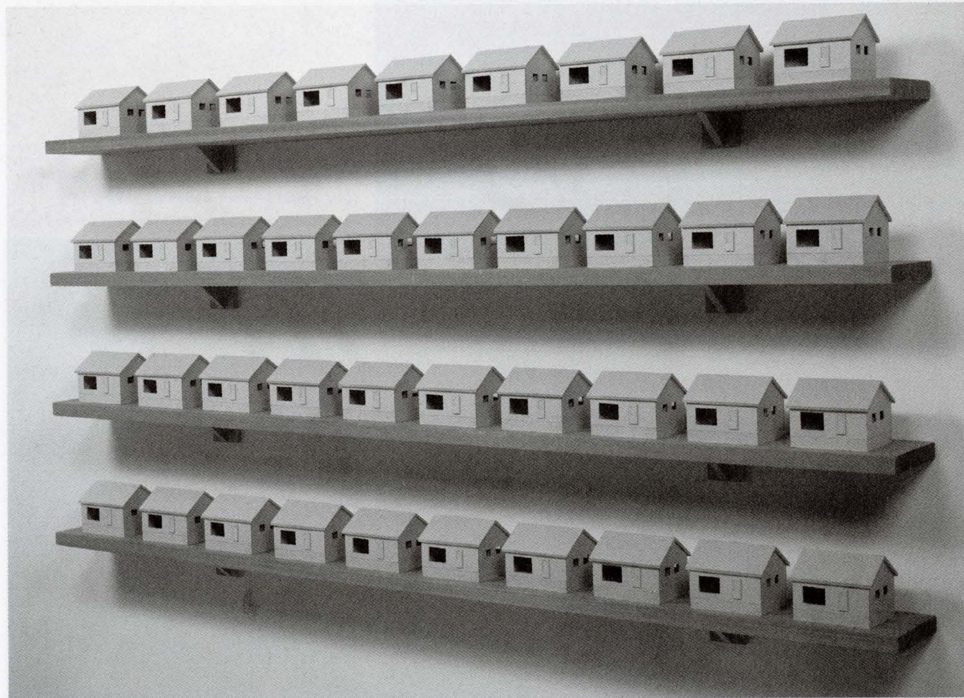


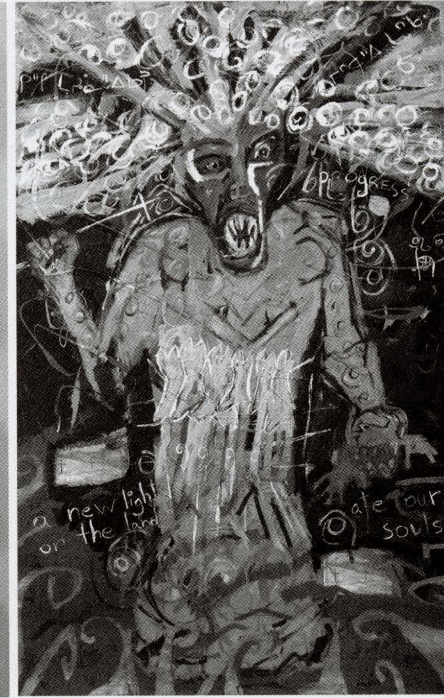
<left> **David Garneau.** *Métis-Mountie*, 2002. Courtesy: Pierre-Henri Aho, Montreal and the Canadian Museum of Civilization.
<right> **David Garneau.** *May tea?*, 2002. Courtesy: the Canadiana Fund, Crown Collection of the Official Residences of Canada, National Capital Commission and the Canadian Museum of Civilization.
Photos: Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, Patrick Altman.

In My Lifetime: Contemporary Aboriginal Art is a group exhibition featuring eight artists from across the Indigenous nations of Canada. The diverse works by Rebecca Belmore, Faye HeavyShield, Nadia Myre, Neal McLeod, David Garneau, Hannah Claus, Frank Shebageget and Sonia Robertson reveal a multiplicity of perspectives that contest the limited frames of reference from which many Canadians view and experience indigenous arts and histories. The pieces include installation, pop and video art, working in conjunction with one another to destabilize popular constructions of Indigenous cultural identities. It is significant that *In My Lifetime* is the first exhibition of contemporary Aboriginal art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization since the late–1990s *Reservation X and Emergence from the Shadow: First Peoples' Photographic Perspectives*. The CMC has not been developing its contemporary Aboriginal exhibitions because the position of Curator of Contemporary Aboriginal Art, now filled by Lee–Ann Martin, was empty for several years and the focus from the late 1990s onward was the opening of the First Peoples Hall (2003). That being said, the inclusion of this exhibition in the CMC's programming provides a critical moment for reflecting on the representation of Indigenous art within this national institution.

In My Lifetime is a re-installation, having previously been curated by Lee-Ann Martin at the Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Quebec in 2005. At the CMC exhibition, 14 works are installed in close proximity and within one large space. The inclusion of audio-visual interviews with the artists in the show contextualizes the works and offers opportunities for the artists to voice their perspectives. The title intimates the experiences of these indigenous artists, who vary in practice, age, ancestry and stages in their career. Martin acknowledges that the exhibition's title occurred to her while she was doing studio visits, encountering the diversity of issues, events, experiences and memories of individual artists and Indigenous communities.

Inserting Indigenous worldviews into the museum space, *In My Lifetime* exposes



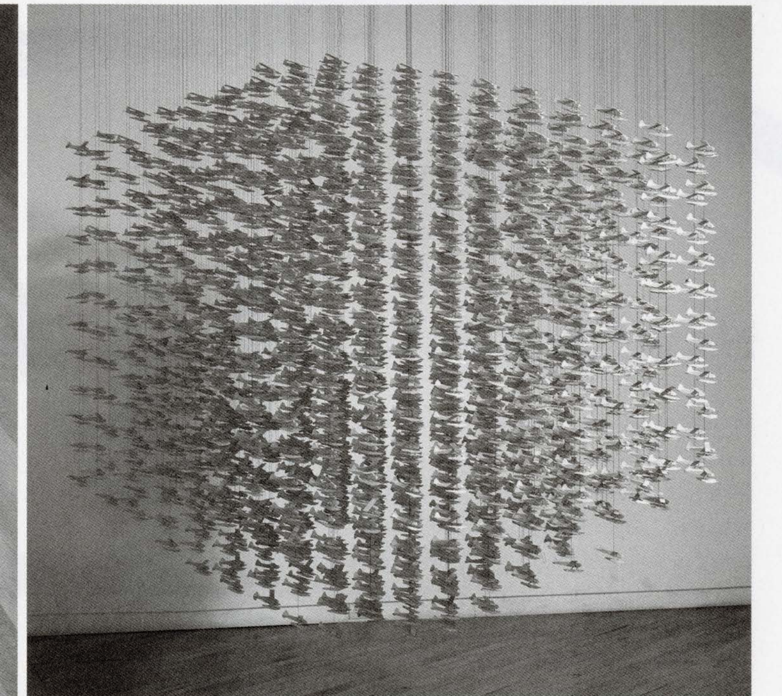


<left> **Frank Shebageget.** *Small Village*, 2000. Courtesy: Canada Council Art Bank and the Canadian Museum of Civilization.
<right> **Neal McLeod.** *Wîhtikow II*, 2001. Courtesy: the Canadiana Fund, Crown Collection of the Official Residences of Canada, National Capital Commission and the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Photos: Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, Patrick Altman.

inherent inequitable power relationships. As Jolene Rickard argues," by making sovereignty part of a national and international dialogue, museums shift the boundaries of control for the maker, Native nation, gallery and society."[1] Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination are thematic and curatorial frameworks throughout the exhibition space and the accompanying catalogue. This frame of reference alludes to Rickard's call for "The work of Indigenous artists to be understood through the clarifying lens of sovereignty and self-determination, not just in terms of assimilation, colonization and identity politics... Sovereignty is the border that shifts Indigenous experience from a victimized stance to a strategic one."[2] Included works explore each artist's self-determined position and reveal the intersections of colonial histories and contemporary experiences and realities.

Rebecca Belmore's *blood on the snow* (2002) is a minimalist floor installation of a chair, centrally placed and wrapped in an oversized white feather quilted duvet stained in red. The work references historic and contemporary violence against Indigenous bodies and the silencing of Indigenous experience, and is testimony to events such as the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee and the disproportionate number of disappearances of Native women in Canada. The white quilted installation presents an inversion of symbols associated with the colour white, such as purity, and substitutes an Indigenous point of view of colonial history: whitewash and white lies. In Nadia Myre's video-based work *Wish* (2002), her abstracted body's physical movements, jumping up and down, form a dialogue with her installation *Grandmother's Circle* (2002), which is placed in front of the projected video. Myre's actions show an attempt and a longing to join the circle of ancestors, portrayed by the sculptural installation of unstained wish-bone–shaped wood poles. The structure resembles a fish-drying rack, referencing food preparation and Myre's maternal ancestors, while the four poles placed outside the circle comment on her feelings of loss due to disconnection from Indigenous knowledge and experiences within her native community. Faye HeavyShield's *Aapaskaiyaawa (They are Dancing)* (2002), an installation comprised of 12 yellow canvas figures suspended from the ceiling, moves and sways like dancers, evoking the continuance of cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples, evident in the dances at the Pow Wow. The installations voice personal and communal lived experiences, interrupting dominant historical narratives and representations of Indigenous cultures. On the opposite side of the gallery, Frank Shebageget's *Communities II* (2003) is a large text–based work, which references the 688 First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities across Canada that are currently reclaiming territories, cultures and languages. The names of these Indigenous communities are listed in white acrylic paint on tarpaper, a material that is still used for the external covering of reserve houses. Shebageget's use of tarpaper comments on the history of land and cultural loss due to colonization; at the same time, the list of community names consider the resilience, continuation and adaptation of Indigenous peoples and their cultures, rendering Indigenous traditions as a tradition of continuous change.

In My Lifetime is in the same gallery space that hosted the groundbreaking exhibition of contemporary indigenous art, *Indigena*



<left> **Nadia Myre.** *Grandmothers' Circle*, 2002.Courtesy: the Galerie Art Mûr, the Canadian Museum of Civilization and SODART 2007. Photo: Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, Patrick Altman.
<right> **Frank Shebageget.** *Beavers*, 2003.Courtesy: the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program, Glen Bloom and The Ottawa Art Gallery's Acquisition Endowment Fund and the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Photo: Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, Peter McCallum.

(1992). It is also the original space of the Inuit and Indian Gallery. When the CMC opened in the late 1980's the Inuit and Indian Gallery assumed a prominent place on the main level of the museum; however, contemporary Indigenous art is now limited to a small end section of the First Peoples Hall, with sporadic sprinklings such as Shelley Niro's installation *Sky Woman* (2003). The location and history of the gallery heighten the significance of reinstalling *In My Lifetime* at the CMC.

The gallery's intimacy fosters conversations and promotes connections between the works, reminding visitors of the diversity of Indigenous contemporary experience and artistic practice. This dialogue transcends the walls of the gallery into the larger space of the museum, connecting contemporary works with the perspectives offered in the First Peoples Hall, ultimately negotiating a position of Indigenous self-determination. Ruth Phillips suggests that the primary role of anthropological museums, such as the CMC, is to decolonize Aboriginal histories, identities, and material culture.[3] This elucidates the impact that exhibitions of Indigenous art can have in disrupting public understandings of colonial histories and contemporary realities.

Drawing on Dana Claxton's recent question "Where is Aboriginal art headed?"[4], those of us who claim a commitment to continued and consistent exhibition of contemporary Indigenous art can ask ourselves what role we play in supporting this diverse, vibrant and politically rich body of work. *In My Lifetime* offers an opportunity for the CMC to reflect on its commitment not only to the exhibition of contemporary indigenous art but also to its continued collection. It is of note that, towards the closing of *In My Lifetime*, the watershed exhibition *Daphne Odjig: Four Decades of Prints* opened, marking a historic moment in the CMC's programming—for the first time, two exhibitions of contemporary Aboriginal art were mounted at the same time. As I walked through the gallery space being confronted by these powerful works, Lee-Ann Martin's remarks in *Making Noise!* came to mind: that Indigenous artists, curators and scholars are continuously affirming that they are individually diverse and collectively strong — that they are making "a noise too loud to ignore."[5] □

Carla Taunton is a Ph.D. Candidate and Teaching Fellow at Queen's University. She is a board member at Modern Fuel Artist–Run Centre and an alliance member of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective. Her current research includes Indigenous contemporary and performance arts, Indigenous activism, and globalization and decolonization theories.

Notes:

1. Jolene Richard, "After Essay—Indigenous Is the Local," in *On Aboriginal Representation in the Gallery*, edited by Lynda Jessup (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2002),118.
2. Jolene Rickard, "Sovereignty: A Line in the Sand," *Aperture* 139 (Summer 1995): 207.
3. Ruth Phillips, "APEC at the Museum of Anthropology: The Politics of Site and the Poetics of Site Bite," *Ethnos* vol. 65 no. 2 (2000) 172-94.
4. Dana Claxton, *"Re:wind," in Transference, Tradition, and Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual and Digital Culture* (Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery, 2005),16.
5. Lee-Ann Martin, ed., *Making a Noise!: Aboriginal Perspectives on Art, Art History, Critical Writing and Community* (Banff: Banff International Curatorial Institute, 2005), 22.

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Has Your Favourite ARC Gone Sour? by Sally McKay

Perhaps you are considering a job at an artist-run centre. The posting probably goes something like this: the position is part-time, 20 hours per week and pays $18–$20 per hour. The hours are "flexible," some weekends and evenings. The title is Executive Director or something equally impressive and cv-friendly. For an energetic, community-minded artist in need of an income it seems ideal. You can make a bit of money while participating meaningfully in the grass-roots network of artist-run culture. On your days off you can make your own art, inspired and stimulated by your job. Unfortunately, any readers who have actually worked in an artist-run centre are probably laughing (or crying) by now.

> Sadly, however, feelings of resentment inevitably arise when artists on staff and board are systemically forced to expect too much of ourselves and one another. It's time we talked openly about salaries and working conditions, without guilt.

The job description is a lie, written time and again by desperate boards in simple code. The phrase "part-time position" really means "this institution can barely afford to pay their top staff person $20,000 a year." The phrase "flexible hours" translates to "once you start work and realize that nobody can properly run a major institution on a mere 20 hours per week, the board will tacitly encourage you to put in full-time hours (or more) and take ownership of the institution's finances in the full understanding that there is no money to pay for your extra work." Forget about your art practice, you are now the face of an institution of historical importance. Both your reputation and your sense of self-worth suddenly depend on keeping that ARC on an even keel.

Alternately, you might be a board member. For any artist, being on a board is an excellent opportunity to become meaningfully involved in the local art scene. So you show up for your first meeting full of enthusiasm and curiosity. The agenda progresses with lots of tense discussion about tasks that haven't been accomplished yet. You interject, "I'd love to get a sense of the larger picture, your overall vision and programming objectives." There is an awkward pause. "We are in the process of revisioning our mandate," someone says, "we're planning a facilitated weekend retreat and we'll discuss it then." "I have ideas for programming," you offer, "there are so many interesting directions this ARC could take." The programming has already been set, however, for the next 2 years. "What we really need," someone suggests hopefully, "is a new person to sit on the fundraising committee."

I hope that my anecdotal descriptions are less universal than they feel to me. ARCs have provided my mentors, myself, my colleagues and several waves of younger artists with a myriad of unique opportunities. I don't want any of them to disappear. I have been reading *decentre*, the new book about artist-run culture from YYZ Books. Of the multiple voices represented many are positive and hopeful. Sadly, however, feelings of resentment inevitably arise when artists on staff and board are systemically forced to expect too much of ourselves and one another. It's time we talked openly about salaries and working conditions, without guilt.

Much of the rhetoric surrounding ARCs focuses on their need to engage with diverse publics, to somehow address the market, and to meet the contemporary requirements of today's non-mainstream artists. But the first step toward positive change is for board and staff to collectively reject unfair labour practices. These organizations have politically progressive histories and intentions, our programming cannot be structured to work off the backs of internally exploited staff. If a job is posted as part-time, it should really be part-time. If that means running shorter hours and fewer programs, publishing fewer books, so be it. Funders might baulk at cut-backs, but it is the artists in ARCs who must initiate the change, pressuring funders to update their priorities. Board members, struggling to find direction for the institution, would benefit by recognizing that staff are both the public face of the institution and the creative force behind it. Staff are the ones primarily taking the personal risks necessary to forge and foster the creative networks between ARCs, artists and audiences that make it all worthwhile. Under the leadership of such motivated artists, all of us ARC participants might just lose that sour taste and start to have some fun again.

Sally McKay is an independent curator, artist and writer.

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