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PAPERWALL



PaperWait

PaperWait

2007-2009
VOLUMES 10+11

aceartinc.

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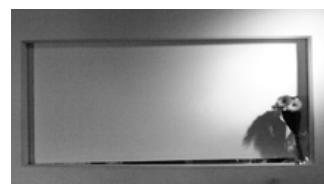
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AMANDA SMART

Winner
NIKI LITTLE



FOREWORD



Do It Yourself. Instead of an admonishment of laziness, this is a proactive cry, a way of getting things done the way you want, uncensored and uncompromising. Start your own revolution, high-low-light queer politics, publish a manifesto for women's work, or make a list of the beers of the world. Step outside the art ghetto and create one of your very own—paint, draw, scrawl, sculpt, whatever, but on your terms and keeping an ironic eye on The Man, who'll co-opt your creativity and sell his plastic ideals with them—your badge of mainstream success.

This is all a bit shouty albeit resonant. DIY is hard work. It's an expression of creativity and politics, doing something because it makes sense to you and the community you are in or wish existed. DIY and DIT (Do It Together) are characteristics of the Winnipeg artists and cultural producers I've met, who are also incredibly dedicated and rather disdainful of compromise. They (and now I) live on a traffic island in the prairies where there's not much money but a whole lot of ideas and weather. Of course we'll do it ourselves—who else will come here to help? And, yeah, we'll do it together, we are a community, we love each other. Most of the time.



The End

Winnipeg's unnerving number of Artist-Run Centres and self start-ups is evidence of artists' impatience and will-do attitude. Enough has been written about Winnipeg and about DIY without me adding too much here but with this PaperWait's artist pages and essays I wanted to share a cross section of local, national and international creatives who identify themselves with contemporary DIY/DIT.

We have a few extra features in this edition of PaperWait keeping in the spirit of DIY/DIT: the artist pages double as detachable postcards for you to mail to your pals; the bottom right + left corners are flip books; there is a cutout of ace's alternative logo, the donation pot(ty) for you to remove and use as a stencil; and lastly there is a page of stickers for you to draw, doodle or write something on + then stick up somewhere. Enjoy!

This PaperWait contains the last two years of programming put together by my predecessor, the irrepressible Theo Sims, with a few extras from me. I'm sure you'll enjoy reading the critical responses to the shows. A heartfelt thank you to the Loewan Foundation who continue to fund this publication. It is, of course, thanks to the generous

support of our funders that ace can put on such a range of exhibitions and we would like to express our gratitude to The Winnipeg Arts Council, The Manitoba Arts Council, the Canada Council and The Winnipeg Foundation. We are also grateful to our community sponsors—cheers, Halfpints! Thanks, Hi-Lo Youth Hostel!

As ace's new-ish programmer, I am really excited about implementing our mandate and welcoming you to exhibitions by emerging artists and cultural producers from queer, aboriginal and diverse backgrounds. This city has sorta set me on fire a little bit and I want to share the combustion. Oh boy, I CAN'T WAIT to show you all the stuff we've got planned for the next coupla years. **aceartinc.**, dear reader, is going to give you PLEASURE OVERLOAD after PLEASURE OVERLOAD shooting from your frontal lobe to the knuckles in your toes. Cripes! Just the thought of the conversations we'll be having in the gallery makes me swoon a little... into your arms or onto ace's floor—I'll be happy either way.

hannah_g



MANDATE



aceartinc. is an Artist Run Centre dedicated to the development, exhibition and dissemination of contemporary art by cultural producers. aceartinc. maintains a commitment to emerging artists and recognizes its role in placing contemporary artists in a larger cultural context. aceartinc. is dedicated to cultural diversity in its programming and to this end encourages applications from contemporary artists and curators identifying as members of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered), Aboriginal (status, non-status, Inuit and Metis) and all other culturally diverse communities.

aceartinc. est un centre d'artistes dédié au développement, à l'exposition et à la diffusion de l'art contemporain par des producteurs culturels. aceartinc. maintient un engagement envers les artistes émergents et reconnaît son rôle à l'endroit des artistes par rapport au contexte culturel plus large. aceartinc. est dédié à la diversité au niveau de la programmation et vers cette fin encourage les inscriptions d'artistes et de commissaires qui s'identifient comme étant membre des communautés GLBT (gaie, lesbienne, bisexuelle et transsexuelle), Premières Nations (avec statut, sans statut, Inuit et Métis) ainsi que toute autre communauté culturellement diverse.



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Background Image:
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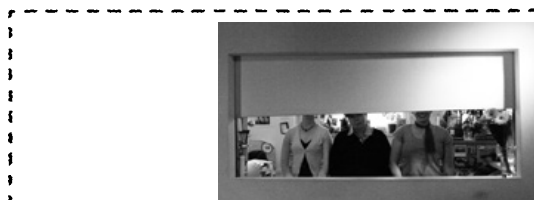
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DIGSHIFT ROEWAN CROWE JUNE 22 – AUGUST 4, 2007



EXCAVATIONS AS TRANSMUTATION ROEWAN CROWE'S DIGSHIFT

A response by
HEATHER MILNE

Dig (*verb*): the act of unearthing layers to reach something concealed beneath the surface. Dig (*noun*): an event during which one unearths fragments in an attempt to piece together an understanding of the past.

Shift (*verb*): a change or reversal, to move from one place to another; to undergo transmutation. Shift (*noun*): a movement to do something; an expedient, an ingenious device for affecting some purpose; the length of time during which a person works.

The play of images and words in Roewan Crowe's *digShift*, reveals how the act of digging creates a transmutation that is both a process and an object. In this compelling, moving, and strangely eerie installation, Crowe stages the work of unearthing. The abandoned gas station and its environs function as an affective geography, a landscape of emotion into which the artist digs in order to come to terms with the past.

Crowe works with a "queer equation" that functions as both mathematical problem and concrete poem:



Left: Installation view, *digShift*, aceartinc. 2007 © Roewan Crowe
Remaining images: Video stills from *digShift*, 2007 © Roewan Crowe



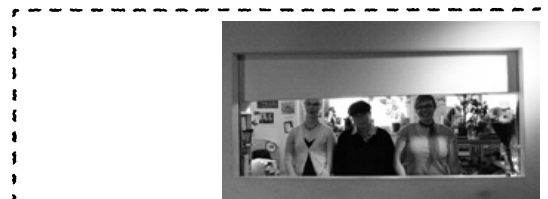
$$\frac{\text{digShift}}{(\text{unearth})^3} = \frac{\text{transmutation}}{x}$$

The bottom section of each fraction is akin to what lies beneath the ground and also to what lies submerged in the unconscious. “Unearth³” most obviously corresponds to the play of words and images on the three screens. Since this is an equation, the three will also increase the occurrence of transmutation. X, the unknown value, lies beneath the surface waiting to be unearthed through the process of digging.

The abandoned gas station is a powerful symbol of the excesses of western expansion, colonization, and imperialism. Sitting at the edge of the highway on what was once aboriginal land, the gas station serves as a reminder of the transportation networks that were built to facilitate the industrial development of the west. The fact that the gas station sits empty suggests a kind of wasteful decadence. By revisiting the site and transforming it through creative artistic engagement, Crowe enacts a reclamation of the abandoned site. The fact that Crowe and her family lived

out back of this gas station when she was a child suggests that this reclamation is also a very personal one.

digShift plays at the interstices of word and image, present and past, light and shadow, and natural and industrial landscape. Time seems to pass slowly, measured only by the constant sound of cars on the highway, the movement of sun and shadow, and the rhythm of Crowe’s shovel striking the hard, dry earth. The installation consists of four screens, three on one wall and one on the opposite wall. “landscape,” “window” and “dig” play on one wall (at first in turn and eventually simultaneously). Each of these segments has a corresponding poem, which we hear over a speaker as each video plays. The incorporation of poetry and the visual effect of the titles of each segment (the titles appear to be, quite literally, formed from elements of the landscape) suggest the interrelatedness of text and image. The opposite wall features a single screen that is divided into four smaller segments, presenting four images that play simultaneously. The segments that play on this screen offer a slightly different perspective: In “shadow” we see Crowe engaged in the act of digging. “inside” takes us





inside the gas station where we can observe the landscape from within the shell of this abandoned and decaying structure.

As we watch “landscape,” we hear Crowe’s voice read “the sky moves through her” suggesting the affective power of this landscape and the extent to which it is as much a psychic space as a physical one. The reflection of passing cars in the gas station window, the noise of the highway in the background, and the sight of the gas station make it clear that this landscape is far from pristine. Following “landscape,” the screen on the opposite side of



the gallery plays a segment called “shadow” that features Crowe humming to herself as she digs down into the dry earth. Crowe appears to be digging directly into her own shadow, suggesting a kind of excavation of the self. The fact that the shadow continues to shift and change suggests the elusive and ephemeral quality of memory. In one frame, the tip of Crowe’s shovel sways like a pendulum, suggesting the passage of time, and by extension, the relationship between past and present.

In “window,” the camera is trained on the window of the gas station. Notably, this window refracts rather than allowing the viewer to look through into another context. More mirror than window, it frames and reflects an image of the artist in the landscape. In the poem that accompanies this section, we hear Crowe read:

Her fingers tap the pane from inside
Look her in the eye and you will see
Every busted face and broken bone.

Here the eye is presented as a window through which one might glimpse the physical and psychic trauma of busted faces and broken bones. But unlike the eye, the window reflects rather than offers a glimpse inside. The screen on the opposite side of the gallery provides a coun-



Video stills from *digShift*, 2007 © Roewan Crowe



terpoint. “inside” shows us the perspective from inside the gas station where the shattered window frames a view of the outside. From this perspective we can look *through* the shattered window to see the play of light, shadow, wind, and leaves. The interior of the gas station is an empty shell devoid of movement and life. Instead, movement and life are located in the leaves framed by the window. From this perspective, outside appears lush, green and light, while the interior of the gas station seems eerie, claustrophobic, and dark. “window” and “inside” provoke us to think about how windows serve a double function of framing and reflecting, revealing and obscuring.

Word and image are perhaps most powerfully aligned in “dig.” Over images of the shovel digging into the earth, Crowe reads:

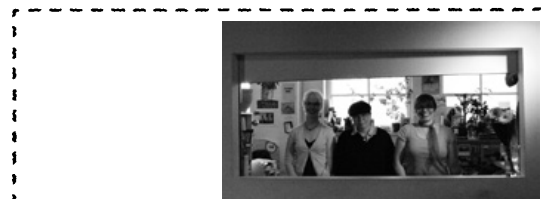
Deep into the heart of I
 She slices borders
 Edges of herself
 Strikes history
 The debris of story

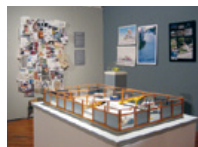
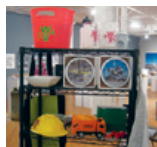
As the artist digs into her past, both literally and metaphorically, she seems to find some kind of release. The poem ends with the words “She digs/ Cracking open the world”



suggesting an unleashing of the burden of the past, a transmutation and reclamation of the abandoned gas station and its environs that take place through the act of digging.

This installation is accompanied by a publication called “Second Dig,” which features the three poems, “landscape,” “window,” and “dig,” and a short story called “she dug a small hole.” On the page, the poems appear fragmented, sparse, and powerfully compelling, not unlike the videos. The short story is linked to the installation through its setting in a gas station diner, and through the theme of digging. Clem, the child protagonist, tries to make sense of a complex set of dynamics that play out in the world of adults but that have a direct material and emotional impact on her. This is a story of a child’s uncertainty, and of a childhood lost and buried like the dead sparrow Clem buries in the small hole she digs behind the gas station. Like Crowe’s videos of the gas station and its surroundings, the accompanying story suggests the transformative potential of human creativity: Clem and her friend Kitty turn a booth in the diner into an imaginative landscape by throwing a blanket over it and drawing stars on the underside of the table. It is the kind of story that might be exhumed through the processes of digging and the transmutation that this digging brings about.





THE WINNIPEG TRASH MUSEUM FRIESO BONING

SEPTEMBER 14 – OCTOBER 13, 2007



TOWARD AN INSTITUTION OF OBLIVION

A response by
KENDRA BALLINGALL

The Winnipeg Trash Museum will be the largest and perhaps only museum of trash in the world! Museum highlights include samples from the scavenged comb and glove collections as well as the founders' own patinated trash collection; a gallery of art featuring found-object works by Robert Rauschenberg, Joseph Cornell and Brian Jungen; and CAD models of each proposed Museum design and possible location, such as a hub cap/tuna can-inspired metallic heap of hope at the Forks site adjacent to the Goldeye's baseball stadium, where the Museum's peak would join hands with the Esplanade Riel, the revolving restaurant, and the Golden Boy, forming the city's architectural crown. The gift shop offers an assortment of much-coveted items, including a unique hardcover coffee table book with glossy, full-colour images of the landfills of Manitoba, and WTM t-shirts in six elegant designs.

The exhibition of works by Winnipeg-based artist Frieso Boning is, of course, standing in—becoming the museum proposal as well as the museum itself. The WTM implies an architecture of the abject, where the neglected, discarded, rejected, and obsolete go finally to die or to find an afterlife. The collection of artifacts, sketches, plans, projections, models, giftware, and security



All images © Frieso Boning



guards mobilizes trash and trash studies in the service of an irreverent and ambitious interrogation of current museum institutions, exploiting the disorienting abundance of contemporary museum display, the persuasive tone of submissions to architectural competitions, and the hyperbolic rhetoric of associated public relations material. The architecture itself, however, is always only represented; never transforming the gallery walls, the WTM remains hypothetical yet effectively over-stimulating and disciplinary.

The artist, too, is standing in—for the researcher, collector, curator, director, and architect. It is worth mentioning that the design processes of Frieso Boning share a common genealogy with those of Frank Gehry, the architect so frequently standing in as artist. Both echo to different ends the tradition of the readymade and the found-object. The low-grade, found materials like chicken wire, corrugated steel, and chain-link fencing that Gehry used in his early, domestic projects were substituted for one simple yet far from innocuous crumpled sheet of paper in his later public works, the crumpled paper serving as the prototype for his curving, unpredictable titanium-clad Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao.

Bilbao's Guggenheim was such a successful reification of avant-garde ideals that for many it became the first example of post-millennial architecture, despite being built between 1991 and 1997. As Gehry's work became less structural and more imagistic, as Hal Foster would suggest,¹ the confrontation between architecture and art/artifact found its newest front at the museum. It is certain that the round walls of Frank Lloyd Wright's 1959 New York Guggenheim were no less sympathetic to the object than Gehry's (nor was the building less beloved), yet the latter's influence on subsequent museum prospectors leaves one wondering whether the so-coined "Bilbao effect" wouldn't more appropriately be described as Bilbao's wake. One might also wonder whether Daniel Libeskind's astonishing Jewish Museum in Berlin, with almost 400,000 visitors before it even opened its doors as a museum to the public, would have been more effectively left completely empty.

The current approach of museum architecture to museum collections is, by way of illustration, antithetical to G. Ellis Burcaw's as outlined in his 1975 *Introduction to Museum Work*. The author reminds us that "a museum is not a building





(except for convenience in colloquial usage)”; that the “building must be created for or adapted to the needs of the museum operation.”² An obedient historical materialist, Burcaw attempts to define the museum by constructing a glossary of related terms. His list graduates from the specific and small-scale to the abstract and large, beginning with object, specimen, artifact, and work of art, moving through collections, cataloguing, display, and exhibition, toward art gallery, herbarium, aquarium, children’s museum, and planetarium.³

As a collection of trash housed in trash, the WTM is by no means a materialist affirmation of the museological artifact. In this way, it is an artistic intervention somewhat akin to



those of artist Krzysztof Wodiczko, who bypasses the museum interior with his enormous (immaterial) projections on exterior walls of cultural institutions, exploring site-specific ethics, memory, and private and public histories, visible to thousands. Yet how does the WTM, as a museum without walls, forward a critique of institutions?

The final two terms in Burcaw’s glossary are inadvertently telling: *alienation*, the loss of objects from the collection, and *fungible*, a legal term for interchangeable assets, referring in museum contexts to collections of live specimens, as in zoos: “The objects in the collection are not permanent, since all living things die, but as new specimens are added, the collections on the whole continue.”⁴





Without the euphemistic protection of the museum walls where things become objects in collections for display, these terms take on a rather gruesome quality that the WTM recognizes, a third term in the dialectical suggestion that art and artifacts are either reanimated or reified in the museum:⁵ oblivion as a result of appropriation or decay. For if, as Rem Koolhaas reminds us without a trace of guilt, the world is running out of places to start over, it must also be running out of places to end, and does it not make sense that an institution—the museum—that originated as imperialism’s giant, locked cabinet of pillaged, precious curiosities would end here as history’s dustbin, history’s dust, and tourism’s destination?

While contemporary museums negotiate the rather bipolar trends of reflective, confessional, post-traumatic memorializing versus the celebratory search for absolution, cultural identity, and direction, the WTM excavates a different approach to the destructive and genocidal modern histories in which museums are so complicit. With site-specific satire—and optimistic nihilism—the WTM engages

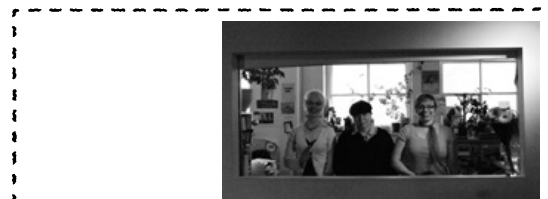


the expanded field beyond the walls of the museum. Trash, then, is the museum’s last starting-over point but art’s final source of inspiration, turning art into the critical institution that it so often wants to be.⁶

NOTES

1. Hal Foster, “Master Builder,” *Design and Crime (and Other Diatribes)*, New York: Verso, 2002.
2. G. Ellis Burcaw, *Introduction to Museum Work*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1975, 163.
3. Burcaw, 1975, 13-17.
4. Burcaw, 1975, 17.
5. As suggested by Hal Foster, “Art and Archive,” *Design and Crime (and Other Diatribes)*, New York: Verso, 2002.
6. See Andrea Fraser’s discussion of institutions, criticality, and the necessary historical specificity of critical interventions in her essay “From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique,” *Artforum* September 2005, XLIV, No.1. The Homeless Museum, or HoMu (a Brooklyn-based critique of the Museum of Modern Art) is another example of artistic practice engaging institutional critique with historically- and site-specific, localized strategies.

All images © Frieso Boning





ART IMITATING LIFE IMITATING ART DAN DONALDSON

OCTOBER 26 – NOVEMBER 24, 2007



THE POST-BOLSHEVIC (OH NO...NOT ANOTHER PREFIXED WORD)

A response by
DEREK BRUECKNER

By now most people who are familiar with the local Winnipeg art scene have heard of various art collectives emerging from the School of Art at Winnipeg's University of Manitoba. There is of course The Royal Art Lodge, Two-Six collective and the more recent *Those Who Walk with Legend and Creation*. Even *General Idea* members had connections to the Art School in the late sixties. There was however a period some time after this and before the former mentioned emerging collectives that gave birth to a group of artists who appropriately christened themselves The Student Bolsheviks.

One of the first officially published texts on The Bolsheviks appeared in a 1993 *Border Crossings* article.¹ It was an interesting piece, although incomplete, and I thought this would be the perfect time to address its omissions. Firstly, Dan Donaldson and Ralph Dueck, though members of the collective, were never mentioned in the 1993 article. Secondly the Bolsheviks for the collective was spelt with a "c" not with a "k" as in the article.

...It was a very late evening in 1988, working as a 4th year BFA student in my drawing thesis space on the ground floor of the now infamous Art Barn, that I glanced out of the open



Connected section of individual works in *Art imitating Life imitating Art*, 1992-2007, sizes varying from 36" x 48" to 60" x 96".

Photos: Scott Stephens



doorway and watched two young art students carrying a large assortment of supplies to and from parking lot E. The two lanky, young and energetic students were John (Bunny) White and Ralph Dueck, but I wasn't certain what I was witnessing of the bouncing long curly-haired White and the redheaded Dueck.

I recall a flurry of activity in their (now defunct) work area. I quietly watched the uninhibited artists as the floors and walls quickly filled up with their massive "combine paintings". Their fresh combination of truth to materials and anything goes use of popular and subculture images caught my attention. In many ways, Donaldson's show at *aceartinc.* demonstrates those same sensibilities.

In some ways seemingly no more than your typical art school party group, looking back I can't deny that this collective broke ground with their work, challenging the definitions and boundaries of painting, sculpture, installation, video and performance. I suspect they viewed themselves as I viewed them, antithetical to the established art world and to the theoretical buttressing of visually illiterate work and the academic structures within parts of that world. Therefore, though undoubtedly representative of the eighties neo-expressionist

type aesthetics, this collective pushed the boundaries of what was deemed 'acceptable' tastes.

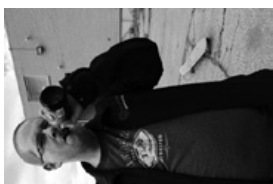
With some of its members heading off to graduate school in the early nineties, The Bolsheviks remained an active part of Winnipeg's art community. While the Winnipeg Art Gallery held its *EDGE Manitoba Exhibition*, The Bolsheviks responded with the satirically titled *HEDGE Show*. This massive hybrid salon show meets installation art exhibition included invited non-members, such as myself, to show their works (as long as we brought our own lighting and extension cords!). But a Bolsheviks Christmas spoke loudest in understanding what was acceptable to a Bolshevik member. Donaldson and friends once again challenged the boundaries of acceptable tastes. The party I attended had for its centerpiece a fountain that had a liquid recycling from one life size female sculpture's very visible vagina and detailed urethra flowing down with a slight arch into a reclining Santa sculpture's mouth. And knowing that Dan and his accomplice transported the said Santa avec erect penis on foot through downtown Winnipeg streets, the bearded man must have received a few gazes.

Bordello Fantasy, 2007, oil, paper (computer printout) on canvas, 94" W x 48" H.





I will now jump ahead to the fall of 2007 and to Dan Donaldson's *aceart* opening night, which is really why I'm here, by the way. Given the history of the Bolsheviks it was no surprise to me that his exhibition presented charged images. One part of a wall combined a large, black ace of spades with the charged image of an African American man chained to a tree. Like many of the images in his exhibition, this one was also sourced from a Life magazine photo, this hate crime image presenting us with the irrevocable results of barbaric behavior. Some spectators have interpreted the appropriation of that image in Donaldson's work as racist or at the very least problematic. I see it in the context of the work as a whole, though perhaps used a bit too freely, but a free association of imagery, which should not be used to discredit his work. The juxtaposition of Lincoln's image along with the cartoon children and the dialogue balloons is more suggestive to me of a criticism to racism, rather than racism itself.



Thinking back to the late eighties, artist Robert Gober, known for addressing such issues as gay rights, religion, gender, and sexuality also used an image of the lynching of an African American man. The controversial image for Gober was his 1989 wallpaper work, "Hanging man/Sleeping man" which elicited horror for some, with its interspersed images of a sleeping white man and a hanging black man.

Now, taken out of context, a KKK member may find parts of both Gober or of Donaldson's works quite appealing, but when those images are taken in context of their installations, I would think it loses its appeal to the white supremacists. It is perhaps true that both of these artists are formally playing with images that might be viewed differently by the African American community.

In terms of semiotic theory (or as a post-colonial critique) the repetition of these images perhaps reinforces the terrible hate crime murders. Most white people aren't able to share the personal and cultural pain connected to those images, or own them in the same way. Does that mean Gober or Donaldson should avoid using these images altogether? In terms of art making do the poetics of a work of art have to be crystal clear on its intent when using politically charged subject matter such as in these two examples? If we answer yes to these questions, the making of art runs the risk of being reduced to a utilitarian device for political messages, which would then be equally as problematic.

I see these criticisms as a kind of semiotic hang over. The new ground within the ideas that semiotics and issues surrounding the representation of the "other" has been gained is obviously crucial in any dialogue and needs to be maintained. Unfortunately, the marginalization of the other is still stronger than ever. These ideas and criticisms are and have been misused (formerly with Gober's work, currently in Donaldson's) with the intent to discredit an interesting painter and sculptor. To accept this does very little in changing or stopping systems that are still marginalizing groups and individuals.

LIVEVIL, 2007, detail, acrylic and oil on canvas, 58" W x 68" H.

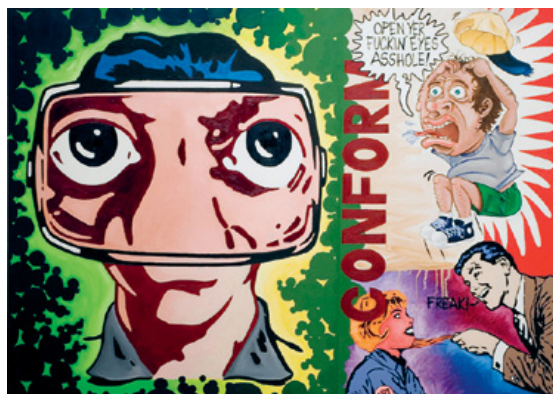
Photos: Scott Stephens

Donaldson's images are taken mainly from the lexicon of media and more recently from cyberspace. There exists a manner of attraction to some of the images by the every-day observer, but these images are quickly transformed once painted and immediately re-contextualized as a formal free association device, and at times not always with conscious intent. His work is sometimes densely thematic/metaphorical in it's layering and at other times, it is left for the viewer to decipher, which I suspect is what Donaldson prefers.

This free association of pop culture images references some ideas from Robert Rauschenberg's work (an influence of Donaldson's). In alluding to Rauschenberg's work, Leo Steinberg is quoted as saying, "...it seemed at times that Rauschenberg's work surface stood for the mind itself—dump, reservoir, switching center, abundant with concrete references freely associated as in an internal monologue—the outward symbol of the mind as a running transformer of the external world, constantly ingesting incoming unprocessed data to be mapped in an overcharged field."²

Donaldson's work operates with very similar ideas. I wonder if we should perhaps rename Steinberg's "The Flatbed Picture Plane" essay, to "The Scanner-bed Picture Plane" or "The Cybernetic Picture Plane"? It might be more fitting in the context of Donaldson's work. Like Rauschenberg the artist shifts outside the paradigm of painting while still offering his reaffirmation of painting, though I've discussed the issue at length regarding the reaffirmation of painting and the repeated premature declarations through out history of painting as "dead" in another article written a decade ago. (http://www.aceart.org/archives/cd/cd97/CD_98_brueckner.html)

Even now I still disagree (along with Donaldson) with the redundant declarations that "Painting is Dead". After all here we are in 2007 and painting still exists. Indeed, painting is alive and kicking in Donaldson's work, albeit in an illustrative style and as an installation which may not have a beginning or an end. Overall I recognize *the painter* and Donaldson



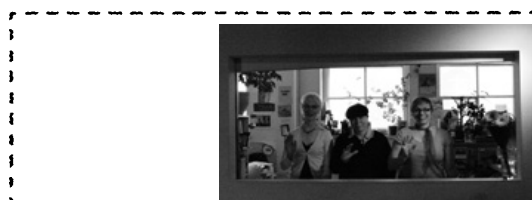
as researchers who explore painting as a viral medium that continues to mutate and adapt to new technologies, new environments and new contexts.

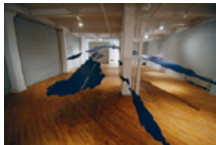
Duchamp has been attributed to releasing the art world from many constraints, thus moving the artist away from the romantic notion of the artist's hand and eye, and moving the artist into interdisciplinary terrain. It is in that terrain where art began to have a more conceptual emphasis, which after a century of Duchampian and Dadaist influences is continuing to thrive among contemporary art practices. Donaldson's work is navigating this Duchampian terrain as much as any of the other pop artist from the sixties (the Neo-Dadaists of the era) or the current 21st Century *conceptual artists*. But Donaldson advocates the sense of touch and the ocular processes involved with painting more than those artists while still harvesting some ideas from Duchamp, the Dadaists and the pop artists. For Donaldson, painting continues to "fester" along as part of the dialogue.

NOTES

1. Scott Ellis, *Border Crossings*, "Storming the Ramparts with the Student Bolsheviks", Winter 1993, pp.62-63
2. Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria*, "The Flatbed Picture Plane", 1972, pp.61-98

Ode to Rob Kelly, 1995, oil on canvas, 48" W x 36" H.





VANISHING POINT JAROD CHARZEWSKI AND COLLEEN LUDWIG

JANUARY 18 - FEBRUARY 23, 2008



JAROD CHARZEWSKI AND COLLEEN LUDWIG'S *VANISHING POINT*

A response by
MILENA PLACENTILE

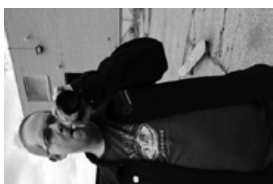
When discussing their work, Jarod Charzewski and Colleen Ludwig are ambivalent about referring to themselves as activists. Yet, as creative and concerned individuals, they engage in processes that raise questions to present critical issues and ideas in ways that provoke multi-faceted contemplation.

Transcending politically imposed geographical boundaries, Lake Winnipeg's visible surface and its watershed (which is astonishingly forty times larger than the lake itself), makes contact with four Canadian provinces and four U.S. States. The declining condition of the lake, and its international reach, underscore environmental pollution as something that affects everyone, everywhere. The lack of affirmative direction to protect it underscores the difficulty of forging cooperation between governments and other competing interests.

Vanishing Point is a mixed-media installation in two movements that addresses the ongoing degradation of Lake Winnipeg. It expresses the physical character of the massive nearby landmark and draws attention to its status as geographical feature held hostage by a lack of understanding, funding, and accountability.

Vanishing Point 2008,
installation views, *aceartinc.*

Photos: Scott Stephens





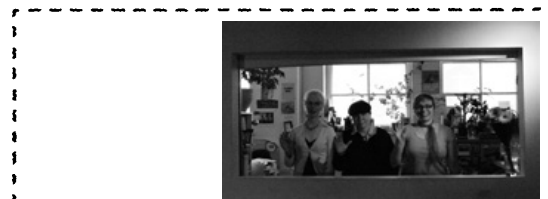
Charzewski and Ludwig's installation remarkably transports the psychological aspect of water into the gallery by harnessing an aesthetic strategy aimed at heightening phenomenological awareness of how space is quantified within the econo-political discipline of geography. Speaking to the ability of water to flow freely into any form, and to its tremendous potential weight and volume, the first component of *Vanishing Point* recalls a powerful force caught in time. Its deep blue mass appears capable of washing gallery visitors away. The work is thus confrontational yet, at the same time, compelling enough for audiences to desire becoming lost within. It elicits memories of water and prompts instinctual response.

The sheer physicality of the first component fulfils an effectively dualistic purpose. Its scale within the gallery is consuming and it acknowledges the tininess of each individual person. At the same time, its orientation slices through space to let audiences locate themselves within the landscape it signifies. Most viewers seem prompted to absorb the structure from a distance before navigating a passage toward its apex at the back of the gallery: a

freestanding white wall covered with topological markings in graphite.

Walking into the installation is like swooping into a digital rendering of the Earth presented via the convenient click of a mouse. Once top-secret data, satellite photos are now a common means by which we can recognize the sheer vastness of our planet. But we're not insignificant specks. Our individual being, and the resources used to sustain each one of us, are very real things and that is an important point of consciousness this work aims to raise.

Cables below the ceiling establish a grid from which forms approximating a nearby major system of lakes and rivers are suspended. They recall the manner by which the world has been carved into measures of latitude and longitude, time zones, and territory. The lines are imposed human constructs that reject the natural, organic forms of the Earth itself. The wall stands in a reservoir and serves as a surface down which water trickles in thin and shifting streams. Over time, the water will wash away the graphite and, as it circulates through the fountain system, it will become dirty as a result of collecting material... just like a





natural water system, moving across land marred by unrestrained sites of industry.

The notion that the work extends beyond the confines of the exhibition space is intentional and may serve as a metaphor for the status of the work as an idea. It is a reflection of the outside world within a place where such concepts are identified, discussed, and later carried back into the world via the minds of each person who has witnessed and considered the piece.

Charzewski and Ludwig met at the University of Minnesota and were drawn by a mutual interest in installation. Despite backgrounds in sculpture and media arts respectively, commonalities included interests in experimental sites and materials, multiples, realizing imaginative places, and most significantly, the relationship between human physicality and space.

Charzewski and Ludwig typically produce two distinct pieces joined by dynamic process-oriented production emphasizing conversation and experimentation. They work



with different approaches and in different temperaments. Charzewski prefers to embrace intuitive and tactile principles whereas Ludwig is more cerebral and intent on finding logical strategies. Furthermore, Charzewski tends to discuss his practice in formalist terms and has, at times, translated data collected via participatory methodologies. Ludwig, alternatively, expresses abstracted narratives and welcomes the interplay of natural elements such as water and air. The artists recognize that by presenting their work in proximity, the arising dialogue generates meaning. With *Vanishing Point*, they have moved from producing simultaneously to collaboratively.



Vanishing Point 2008,
installation views, aceartinc.com.

Photos: Scott Stephens

The artists were once content to let their work speak for itself, but are now interested in making their inspirations, motivations, and processes as present as possible. They explain that when submitting proposals, they offer to create new, site-specific projects based on a localized context. Working from floor plans and models, research for *Vanishing Point* was supplemented by online resources, which helped Ludwig understand the geographical environment Charzewski knew so well. Pouring over maps, the artists were struck by the commanding presence of Lake Winnipeg. They soon learned about its deteriorating condition due to high levels of phosphorous and nitrates, and were struck by the paradox of people seeking to preserve the lake while, at the same time, exploiting it.

For the first time, the artists sought to express a real world situation, and this may possibly have led to *Vanishing Point*'s polished aesthetic. The installation recalls models found in science centres but, while such didactic materials aim merely to disseminate information, the artists seek to confront viewers with the challenge of moving forward.

At what point will the seemingly infinite richness of the Earth vanish? At what point will a critical mass acknowledge our crisis and adopt systems that put environmental protection first? The warning signs are readily apparent and it is clear which human activities are destructive and which are sustainable. By reminding us that even vast resources need meticulous management if we hope to survive, Charzewski and Ludwig invite audiences to do something before it's too late.

LAKE WINNIPEG: ARE WE TOO LATE FOR ECOSYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY?

A response by
STEPHEN PAGE

In Jarod Charzewski and Colleen Ludwig's installation, "*Vanishing Point*", the artists pose various questions concerning the future of changing ecosystems, water resources and our interaction with the environment around us. All of these elements are of particular relevance to the current situation in Lake Winnipeg.

Over the past few decades, scientists have observed significant changes in the state of Lake Winnipeg, which has in turn spawned an environmental awareness for many Manitobans and Canadians. Since the 1990s, algal blooms on this great lake have increased in size, frequency and intensity: a threatening indicator of a deteriorating ecosystem.¹ While these algal blooms have often been linked to increased human activities in the watershed (e.g. municipal sewage, septic fields, industrial discharge, livestock manure, agriculture, urban runoff)², there is now evidence that suggests climate related events may be having a more significant and pressing influence on the occurrence and extent of these algal blooms.³ But ecosystems are complex entities, and how one views change is largely determined by one's perspective.





Recent scientific research has suggested that Lake Winnipeg is becoming more eutrophic, a term describing an ecosystem exposed to excessive nutrient enrichment (generally phosphorus and nitrogen) and the consequential excessive algal growth. These conditions have led to large unsightly algal blooms fouling fishing nets, washing up on recreational beaches and increasing the prominence of certain species of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) that sometimes produce neurotoxins and hepato (liver) toxins. Poisonings of wildlife, pets, livestock and humans have occurred in other lakes from the ingestion of these toxins during recreational contact or from insufficiently treated drinking water, making this issue a potentially serious health hazard.^{4,5}

Upon entering the gallery, *Vanishing Point's* first impressions of depth and exaggerated perspective of the familiar provincial water bodies immediately conveys a message of largeness and abundance. As you glide through the myriad of lakes suspended in their deep blue state, one is compelled to quantify the vast amount of fresh water within our legal borders. Charzewski and Ludwig's creative use of an altered landscape perspective, with northerly locations represented on a true scale and the southern zones drastically exaggerated, strongly emphasises the influence of the

densely populated regions of the lower latitudes. In reality, the south basin of Lake Winnipeg comprises only 12% of the lake's surface area, however *Vanishing Point's* south basin depiction gives the impression it represents well over half of the lake. Intentional or not, this instrument works well as a reflection on the influence of the human presence in the southern regions of the watershed (6.6 million people live in the watershed, of which 80% live in major urban centres, predominantly in the southern latitudes)⁶.

What is missing from the experience though is the impact that the entire watershed has on the aquatic network presented. Lake Winnipeg has the 2nd largest watershed in Canada (953,000km² second to the Mackenzie Delta at 1,800,000km²) but the largest land drainage area to lake surface area ratio of any lake in the world.⁷ This extremely high ratio (40 km² of land per 1km² of water) amplifies the effect of land use practises and inflates the potential for nutrients, contaminants and other land-based derivatives to enter the Lake. With a watershed spanning four provinces and four states, one can't be cognisant of the changing ecosystem without considering the effects and contributions of upstream sources. This significant influence of the watershed combined with the complex interactions of humans and geology yields a very unique ecosystem, which without thorough scientific investigation is a challenge to fully understand.

While the Lake Winnipeg watershed is undeniably large, researchers have concluded that some areas in the basin have more impact on Lake Winnipeg than others, specifically the Red River basin. Of the rivers that feed Lake Winnipeg, both the Winnipeg and Red River have had significant increases in flow over the past 100 years, meaning more water is flowing off the land and into our rivers. Between 1960 and 1980, Manitoba drained 75% of its wetlands in favour of agricultural terrain. The loss of these wetlands has increased the rate at which water moves off the land, and arguably bringing with it a source of herbicide and pesticide residues as well as sediment and nutrients from



Vanishing Point 2008,
installation views, aceartinc.

Photos: Scott Stephens

croplands and livestock activities. Some areas in the Red River basin have had over a 30% increase in precipitation in the 90s (compared to the 80s). It is obvious ecosystems are changing, but what is the impact? From computational modelling of the major river systems combined with the water chemistry of the rivers, we estimate that most of the observed increase in nutrients in Lake Winnipeg can be attributed to the changes in flow from the Red River, something we cannot easily control. The last decade has seen some of the highest river flows of the last 100 years, which may explain the sudden changes in size and frequency of the algal blooms that has brought so much attention to Lake Winnipeg in recent years. If so and despite our best intentions, Lake Winnipeg water quality may remain primarily at the mercy of weather and climate.

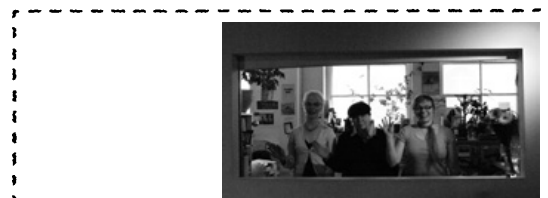
Charzewski and Ludwig ask a fundamental question, “Can we imagine governments collaborating to protect what is left of our environment?” The Government of Manitoba recently passed legislation, the Phosphorus Reduction Act, which will restrict the phosphorus content of fertilizers applied to lawns and virtually eliminate phosphorus⁸ from household dishwasher detergents sold in Manitoba by July 2010.⁹ While innovative public education programs and environmental legislation based on current scientific research is moving in the right direction, other government initiatives often confuse the issue. The fact that the City of Winnipeg purposely adds phosphorus to its drinking water to control lead in Winnipeg’s tap water¹⁰ sends a completely different message. Since provincial and national borders are artificial constructs, nature is not aware of them. Are those upstream and isolated from the media exposure of Lake Winnipeg’s ailments, aware of their role in affecting an aquatic ecosystem that resides in another province or even another country? Does, “out of sight—out of mind”, direct our actions when it comes to the environment?

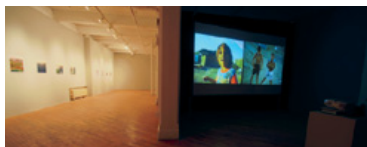
Clearly there is a need for deeper understanding of how our ecosystems are changing, and what, if anything we can

do about it. Our collective delayed response to these changing ecosystems has crept up on us, and we have paid too little attention for too long. Under our current governance structure it is up to our governments to erase the isolating effect of borders when it comes to issues of water. As we implement our management strategies, we must take into consideration that some areas of the watershed have a larger impact than others, and focus our efforts accordingly. But if these recently observed climatic and human-induced changes are to continue, adaptation may become just as important as mitigation.

NOTES

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2. Reducing Nutrient Loading to Lake Winnipeg and its Watershed, Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board Report to the Minister of Water Stewardship, December 2006 www.lakewinnipeg.org/web/downloads/LWSB_December_2006_Report.3.pdf
3. Modelling Lake Winnipeg Nutrient Concentrations, S. Page, Hesslein, R., Stainton, M. March 2006 Presentation at the International Water Institute www.internationalwaterinstitute.org/forms/IWI2007/B2%20Climate%20Change,%20Runoff,%20and%20Lake%20Winnipeg,%20Eutrophication%20Part%202.pdf
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5. Kotak, B.G., Lam, A.K.-Y., Prepas, E.E., Kenefick, S.L., and Hrudey, S.E. 1995. Variability of the hepatotoxin, microcystin-LR, in hypereutrophic drinking water lakes. *J. Phycol.* 31: 248–263.
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10. winnipeg.ca/waterandwaste/water/leadOrthophosphate.stm





RE:LOCATION

SCOTT CONARROE

BOJA VASIC AND VESSNA PERUNOVICH

MARCH 7 - APRIL 5, 2008



REGARDING AND LOCATING A RESPONSE TO ACTS OF WITNESSING

A response by
LEAH DECTER

In some ways both of the pieces in 'Re:Location' bring us a viewpoint and render a study that is generally overlooked in mainstream culture and media. They each ask us to bear witness: one to the disregarded and mundane spaces of a city, the other to the plight of a disregarded population.

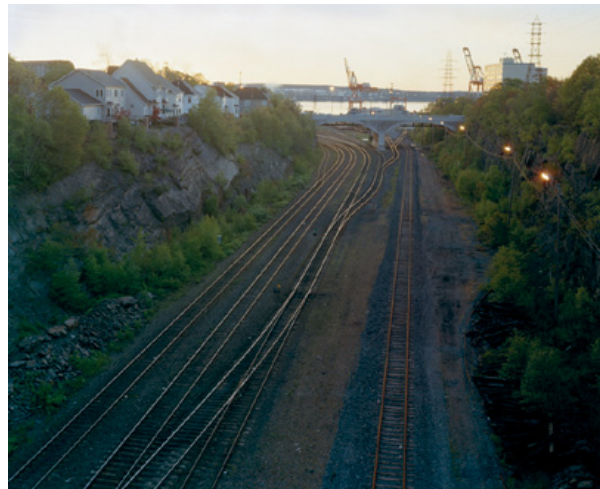
CIVIL TWILIGHT

Scott Conarroe's photographic works reside in quotidian, backside views of the urban landscape, and are inhabited by the understructures and mechanisms of everyday life. Devoid of people they are subtly animated through the labour implied by tools, debris, machinery and tasks that are yet to be completed.

The artist's previous works have laid the groundwork for Civil Twilight. In 'At Leisure' recreational facilities are portrayed alternately as workplaces through the processes and tools of their upkeep, and as empty shells in a state of quiet limbo. The black and white series 'Bridgeworks' reveals the architectural undersides of several Vancouver bridges. In this work Conarroe works with markedly long



Gallery installation shot of Re:Location,
aceartinc. Photo: Scott Stephens



exposures that make use of ambient lighting, both natural and electric. This work uncovers poetry in the function of overlooked, undesirable cityscapes resulting in quiet, meditative images imbued with the weight born by the columns that populate them. Vancouver is also the subject in the 'City' series. Utility is front and center once again in these images presenting a compelling view of this city that resists the presumptive touristic embrace.

In the 'Civil Twilight' series Conarroe engages again in a city with a picturesque reputation. Here Halifax is characterized largely through economic activity, urban infrastructure and unremarkable locations. True to the artist's tendency there is not a soul in sight, although the evidence of human presence is everywhere. From the faint trails of car headlight that swivel along the road in 'Smith Street' and the neatly ploughed terminus of a dead end street in 'Average Pictures # 3', to the tire tracks that mark dirty snow in 'Dealership' and the knocked over road sign in 'Average Pictures # 10'.

Conarroe's long exposures which span the time of day known colloquially as dusk are both conceptually and

aesthetically relevant in this work. Officially referred to as 'civil twilight', this roughly 30 minute interval after sunset and before dark is described as the time in which objects can still be observed accurately without artificial illumination. Used in law as a measure of the severity of crimes such as burglary in some jurisdictions, part of Conarroe's interest in civil twilight revolves around "point where the vast romance of twilight meets something that is definite and arbitrary and managerial." Clearly civil twilight also provides an opportunity for him to harness unique and evocative lighting situations through the extended exposure common to his work, the coexistence of daylight and artificial light in the work capturing a quality that does not exist in real time. Through Conarroe's lens the ordinary is rendered ethereal. Through the photos in 'Civil Twilight' we are witness to a nuanced, poetic fiction immersed in the reality of the everyday.

PARALLEL WORLD

In 'Parallel World' we also bear witness. It is initially difficult to locate the geographical and cultural particulars

Left: Scott Conarroe, *Smith Street, Halifax, 2005.*

Right: Scott Conarroe, *South End Tracks, Halifax, 2005.*





of the shanty-town we encounter in this two channel video installation. Young boys mug for the camera, calcified into incremental slow motion in the right hand projection, while people go about their business locked in a perpetual loop in the left hand projection. The videos are silent. The accompanying music suggests something Eastern European, however we could be looking at any number of places we've seen on the evening news or in ads soliciting charitable donations.

My first sense is that of trespassing— of stepping into someone's intimate space, of peeping through a mobile window. The camera undulates with the rolling gait of its operator. Riding this movement my gaze periodically meets that of one of the inhabitants. I am drawn to the detail of meticulously maintained homes and yards that seem to grow from the edges of landfill. The dust is swept in what might seem like an exercise in futility. Carefully bundled sheaths of cardboard are neatly stacked near walls of mattress springs. Clearly great care is taken in the salvaging

and repurposing of materials. This place speaks of desire and tenacity in the face of making home despite barriers perpetuated by systems and circumstance.

I have a need to locate: myself as observer and the position(s) from which I see, this place as both symbolic and distinct, the people in the video within their political and economic context.

Part of a larger body of work, the video installation is a window into a Roma enclave built amid a garbage dump

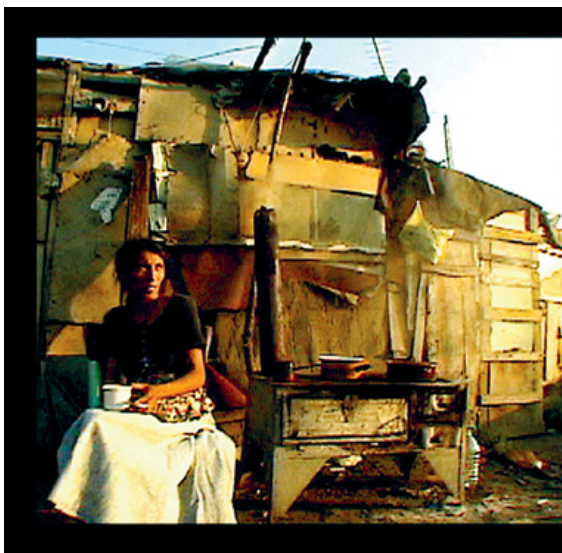


within the city of Belgrade in Serbia. Romas, pejoratively referred to as gypsies, have been positioned as an underclass and have a long history of persecution that is still pervasive within contemporary Europe.

Artist Boja Vasic, who immigrated to Canada from the former Yugoslavia, first came upon this settlement on a trip back to Belgrade 20 years ago. In the past "Vasic held the same 'romantic' misconceptions as the majority of his compatriots, that the Roma were nomadic, ungovernable and living in these circumstances by choice." He states that, "This project was my way of attempting to change myself, to address my own prejudices," and that he is "also hoping



Left: **Scott Conarroe, U-Haul, Dartmouth, 2005.**
Right: **Scott Conarroe, Parked Car, Dartmouth, 2005.**



that in some small way I can change their circumstances and position in the world.”

As a journalistic endeavour this piece brings the day-to-day struggles of impoverishment into focus. It reveals resilience and the ingenuity of need. As a process of observational proximity one can only imagine that Vasic achieved his personal goal of addressing his own prejudice. In a larger social context however, fissures appear.

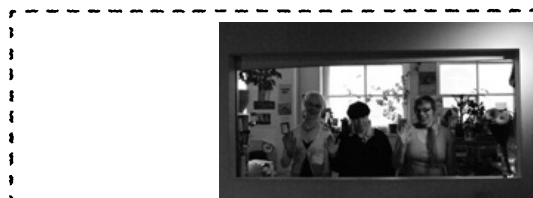
We are observers, thrice removed from the scene by the artist, the lens and the projection, not to mention geographical and economic divides. The artists speak through their aesthetic and conceptual choices, the inhabitants of the images seem to have little agency in their depiction and no discernable voice in the piece. What do we make of the way they are positioned in the relation to the access we are given to their home? Does witnessing in this way contribute to the advancement of the subjects as intended or is this particular engagement further perpetuating a dehumanizing process?

Boja Vasic and Vessna Perunovich,
Parallel World - The Architecture of Survival, video still, Courtesy Boja Vasic and Vessna Perunovich.

The works in ‘Re:location’ share the use of a detached but sympathetic eye to very different ends. They each enlist us in an act of witnessing. Witnessing location, the passage and suspension of time, labour, human presence and the marginal. ‘Civil Twilight’ presents the poetic rooted in the common-place functions and every-day life in a Canadian city. While admittedly grappling with considerable complexities ‘Parallel World’ feels uncomfortably close to poeticizing the marginal in the every-day functions of an othered location.

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SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

EAST MEETS WEST

OCTOBER 26 – NOVEMBER 24, 2007



THE FURTHER EAST YOU GO, THE FURTHER WEST YOU COME (OR, TO BE PEDANTIC, THE MORE CENTRAL YOU COME)

As performance artist Alastair MacLennan, once commented, the further east you go, the further west you come. In a way, this exchange between Gallery Connexion in Fredericton and aceartinc. in Winnipeg seems to offer a time for reflection on and insight into our own communities even more than an exploration of the connections and similarities between the two centres and locales. While keeping this reflection in mind, I am also selfish enough to realize the benefits to the Manitoban artists. By participating in this exchange, some of the artists have the opportunity of their first show outside the province and a chance to show with peers who are at different stages in their careers. For Mélanie Rocan and maclean, who both live in Montreal, the exhibition gives new life to the notion that their roots lie in Winnipeg's unique Winnipegness and that subtly carries



through into their work. This exchange is also an opportunity for the Winnipeg-based artists to network and have more recognition outside of the province, and, ironically, to have more visibility here in Manitoba too. I hope that this exchange will also serve to raise the profile of all the participating artists from New Brunswick here in Manitoba, but also, with equal importance, in their own province also.

I must thank Eleni Bakopoulos, whose vision got this project underway, Meredith Snider who has tirelessly coordinated much of the project and the board of Gallery Connexion for their perseverance in promoting and connecting local artists. I wish to thank all the participating artists and the two sets of jurors who selected the works for both shows. Aceart and Gallery Connexion are indebted to Ray Cronin, for his timely insight into the relevance and importance of acknowledging the efforts and contribution of artist-run centres. Much gratitude also goes to the Manitoba Arts Council, Winnipeg Arts Council and the Canada Council for their ongoing support and to the Manitoba Arts Council who helped with travel assistance for some of the artists. Finally, this project would not have been possible without the support from Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

Theo Sims *Programming Coordinator, aceartinc.*

As director of Gallery Connexion, I started my tenure when this project was underway. The concept and the groundwork were completed by my predecessor, Eleni Bakopoulos. Theo Sims, the programming coordinator at aceartinc, has been active on his side from the beginning and together we have finalized the East Meets West exhibition and catalogue. The process has given me the opportunity to familiarize myself with another Canadian artist-run-center and to get to know the artists active in both memberships. Thank you to Eleni, Theo, both selections committees, and

the Board of Directors at both galleries for pursuing this project, it represents a model of exchange that all artist-run centres could benefit from.

I would like to thank the New Brunswick Arts Board for generously financing the production of this catalogue, in which East truly meets West. This publication serves to bring together the simultaneous exhibition of Winnipeg artists at Gallery Connexion and Fredericton artists at aceartinc in Winnipeg. Ray Cronin, who writes so true to the cause and importance of artist-run centres, has contributed greatly to the catalogue with his insightful text. Thank you.

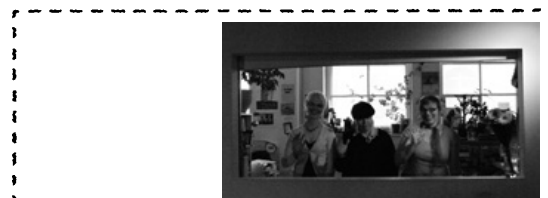
To the participating artists; your interest and continued support of your local artist-run centre is greatly appreciated. Organizations such as ours rely on active artist members and we are pleased to offer you this exchange opportunity. Your work will show among that of your peers and be placed in a larger context conceptually and visually. Congratulations to all the artists, and we look forward to meeting those traveling from Winnipeg to Fredericton.

Thank you to the following organizations for your continued support; The Canada Council for the Arts, The New Brunswick Arts Board, the New Brunswick Department of Culture, Wellness and Sport, and the New Brunswick Foundation for the Arts.

Meredith Snider *Director, Gallery Connexion*

EAST MEETS WEST ARTIST-RUN CENTRES, EXCHANGES, AND OTHER STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL

In the current climate of the international art scene, one driven by auction houses and seemingly insane prices for contemporary art, it often seems as if the opinions of artists have become dispensable. Collectors drive the art market and, more and more, the market seems to be the only thing



that matters in the art world. What's more, collectors collect things, competing for them, trading them back and forth amongst themselves, conferring value on objects based in little more than their own desires and obsessions. The current boom is driven by resale more than anything else. As a result, while many people are getting rich from the current explosion in contemporary art prices at auction, relatively few of them are artists.

It remains to be seen whether we're experiencing some sort of bubble, though it seems increasingly likely that we are. And, as with the last art boom of the 80s, one can expect it to pop, taking with it many galleries and consultants, stranding numerous artists whose main talent seems to have been simply to contrive to be wanted. Canadians are bit players in this world, and will likely not face too much hardship from any collapse of the over-heated art market in London or New York. Nevertheless, the ripples will be felt, from East to West and back again, even, it must be said, while the real effect will be from South to North (but, of course, not back again). Should such a collapse come most Canadian artists will be insulated by the fact that they are not dependant upon the market—one can't miss what one does not really have. But more so than by this (maybe) negative fact, Canadian artists will be protected by the system that they themselves have created: by the network of Artist-run centres founded and operated by artists across the country.

Issues of markets aside, in Canada the main challenges we face in terms of having something approximating an "art scene" is geography. As the cliché goes, we're the largest small country in the world, and all of the space in between us is an ongoing barrier to developing some sort of coherent sense of Canadian art. What's more, unlike our neighbour to the South, Canada does not have one centre of the art world. Toronto is certainly our richest and largest city, but no one would claim that it is the Canadian equivalent of New York, at least insofar as the visual arts are concerned.

Young artists outside of the "centre" do not have one logical city to go to: Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, even Winnipeg and Halifax, all have claims on their attention. Canada's decentralized nature is the reason we have such a weak art market, but it is also the reason that our visual art scenes are so strong. With multiple "centres" open lines of communication become vital.

The most consistently talkative institutions in Canada are ARC's. Whatever is unique to the Canadian conversations about visual art is owed, in no small part, to the vitality the originality of ARC's and other manifestations of artist-run culture. This is not usually reflected in the funding they receive, but perhaps that very lack is what makes the conversation so vibrant—there are few opportunities for entrenched opinion in your average artist-run centre, little, if any, power to be contested. Of course, no battle is dirtier than one over very little, so ARC's also add to the Canadian conversation punctuations of conflict and subversion, moments of discord as well as more common, though sometimes unexpected, areas of concord. Art is a conversation: it is a conversation of individual artists with history and with their peers, of audiences with works, of institutions with each other, and more. The conversation begins in the studio, but its first public utterance is most often in an ARC. Admittedly, ARC's tend to have small audiences, mostly other artists and other arts professionals, but that is, of course, what makes the conversations played out within them so vital. For all the cant one can read about dealers "promoting" artists, "fostering" or "developing" them, and the notions of curators "discovering" or "introducing" artists, the reality is that dealers, collectors or curators only know about new art from the artists, and most new art is shown first, here in Canada, in ARC's. Dealers, collectors and curators also tend to be locally-minded, paying attention to what they can see close to home (or at least close to Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal, in addition to wherever their actual homes may be). They also are not democrats. ARC's, with their committees



and ever-changing memberships, have an egalitarian mindset that follows artists where they want to go, without trying too hard to direct the route. The strength of ARC's lie in this communitarian ideal, and despite the risks inherent in such a model (nepotism, naïveté, political and other blinkers, etc.) it remains a unique and important contribution to Canadian cultural life. After all, what is art but the product of a series of risks?

In the institution that I work in, one driven by the need to constantly raise money, risk is, well, usually too risky. Public museums have their role, of course, and Canadians have, I believe, been well-served by the trend of curators coming to museums and galleries from ARC's. But the curatorial mindset is not, as stated above, democratic. The exhibition review process at an ARC usually is, and as a result things happen there that would likely never be considered at larger, richer institutions. This project, *East Meets West*, is a case in point. The two exhibitions in this exchange program have been prompted by a desire on the parts of two communities of artists to reach out, to break down some of the regional barriers that mar our ongoing conversations. There are no themes here, though I can note with interest that three of the five artists from New Brunswick are painters, and that the range of media and approaches from the Winnipeg artists is much broader, ranging across collage, painting, video, sound, photographs and more. Lacking a curatorial premise, or any specific theme or schema for inclusion, these works are truly surveys: glimpses into communities, snapshots rather than statements. But what happens, in terms of art making, with exchange? Perhaps the most important thing is that communities of artists expose themselves to different approaches, to different notions about what art making is or can be.

No themes, but there are links, or perhaps not so much links as echoes, threads of connection across this virtual map of Canada. Carol Taylor's *"Firstbird"* has line qualities that are shared with Cyrus Smith's drawings, Stephen

May's paintings of objects reflect ideas of representation that, for me, find resonance with Sylvia Matas' *"Cloud Machine."* The obsessive attention to detail of Michael Benjamin Browns drawings bears comparison to Sarah Petite's painterly obsessions. Perhaps there is more of a sense of insouciance in much of the Winnipeg work, whether in Rob Fordyce's photo-text works, in Doug Melnyks' audio *"Lucy,"* or in Martin Finkenzeller's *"Ice-Cream Headache"* series of constructions. On the Eastern side of the exchange, Stephanie Weirathmueller's paintings of snapshots share this as well. It feels youthful, a kind of irreverence, not cynicism or irony, but rather a playfulness, a kind of teasing. Much of the New Brunswick is more serious, and as a result more introspective. Witness Janice Wright Cheney's research into the history of the silk trade, or Sarah Petite's remapping of Atlantic Canada. But the echoes continue in Maclean's sky maps, which, for all their rootedness in the everyday, still brook comparison with Cheney's exotic textiles and Petite's careful maps. Veronica Preweda's photographs are maps of a sort as well, documents of a particular journey. Collin Zipp's *"Videoscapes"* have their own sense of place, another sort of mapping. Their pixilated surface continually breaks down and re-asserts itself, digital wavering that leads one on to Melanie Rocan's painterly illusions. Echoes are funny things, they bounce off surfaces and return distorted, but they still can only return what you've given. I don't know what this project will return, what responses will be garnered from this cross-country calling, but I look forward to hearing the echoes reverberate for a while.

Ray Cronin *Halifax, NS, 2007*





AUDITION

GUNNHILDUR HAUKSDÓTTIR
AND KRISTIN ÓMARSDÓTTIR

MAY 10 – JUNE 7, 2008



WITCHES AND FISHERS

Those who have tried hand-line fishing know the feeling of lowering a multiple-hook baited line into the green and grayish sea and waiting. When you draw the line back it can happen that a glistening, wriggling fish hangs on every hook. Your first move after the catch has been hoisted onto the boat, is to slit each fish's pharynx, fling it quickly aside, then bait and slide the line overboard again. But sometimes when you draw the line there are only fish on the occasional hook; more often than not the hooks surface bare and empty from the dark.

A porridge is cooking in a large saucepan, it boils and bubbles and subsides again lazily. Someone watches over the saucepan and stirs occasionally with a large spoon. It is not so very in today to envisage two women stirring occasionally in a plain saucepan, and probably even worse if the saucepan or cauldron would be cooking in a fireplace and smoke would permeate the room. Perhaps the approach would be more acceptable if one would hear a strange and obscure mantra from within the smoke, and

two witches would stand hunched over the cauldron, stirring their infusion.

Gunnhildur and Kristín fish and stir. They slide their hooks into the deep blue depths of the subconscious and fish, more often than not, wriggling fish, an occasional sheepish sea monster is dragged on board, or they add mermaids, shore zombies or sea devils. In the subconscious one finds dangerous creatures, there the blood flows and heads roll off, misshapen demons leap forth at every corner, omens of everything but good, half-chanted verses freeze you to the marrow. But if you listen closely, you can also discern the ambiguous resonance of unfulfilled wishes, there you can even stretch out on a hammock in between two palm trees with a sombrero, nursing a glass of rum for all eternity.

Kristín and Gunnhildur do not only fish for dinner, they also hunt on dry land, gathering daylight-flotsam, from leaves to the roots of genealogical trees, worn-out words, daydreams, cats and old ladies. They take their brooms out onto the streets, into the universities, into the homes and the minds, into every nook and cranny. The things that the brooms collect can be as slippery as the hooks. If I were asked which tools they use, the answer would be hooks and brooms. These are dangerously enigmatic tools, belonging by nature to both the female and the male, at home in two worlds: One is dry, the other wet, one bright, hard and flat, the other deep, dark and cold. On a close encounter, Gunnhildur's and Kristín's art originates from riding broomsticks and swallowing hooks.

Hannes Lárusson

Translator: Ása Helga Hjörleifsdóttir



Video Still from a video as part of Audition,
featuring Guðmunda Elíasdóttir, 2008, courtesy of
Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir and Kristín Ómarsdóttir.

A FERRYMAN

An old, pregnant lady.

AN OLD, PREGNANT LADY: I was used, and still am, now because I choose it willingly. Someone has to ferry the nestlings into the world—why not me? My experience as a ferryman has been good and prosperous; I've brought a few over without them being marked with a single scratch. During the first weeks, months, years, and decades, everything looked fine. But gradually, the flaws became visible: there's a hidden flaw in all of my children—or what I call the smuggle. This one, however, (and she caresses her belly), will not sustain the human tragedy. I'm hopeful for mankind, yes, finally, he has arrived—or she! (laughs heartily)—but who would take a female character seriously? (laughs) Let's hope it will be him, for with him, the birth might be a success. My mistake: credulousness. My husband's mistake: disappointment. Flaw. Flaw. Smuggle. This lad's only merit is love, the one I've offered to ferry into the world. Light into the darkness. (laughs, sings:)

my children in the morning

my kids in the evenings

my children in the morning

my kids in the evenings

my children in the morning

my kids in the evenings...

Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir and Kristín Ómarsdóttir

Translated by Birna Bjarnadóttir.

A PSYCHIC SKELETON OF THE ART EXHIBITION AUDITION

You walk along the streets of Winnipeg City on a Sunday afternoon. Your friends are away, nobody has answered your calls, and yet no one has called. If you'd see a river you would throw the mobile phone into it. You are totally idle, you lost the book you were reading early in the morning;

you're not hungry, or thirsty; but you're in such a lonely state of mind that you would enter a prison to seek human company. And we haven't said it yet: You haven't met any animals on the streets. All of a sudden you pass an open door.

You enter a space—aceartinc—which has a blue-mare-sea colored walls, ice-white floor, its ceiling is invisible. "Isn't this a space wherein the will of decision becomes lost," you contemplate because you don't know which way to turn. You see two new doors, bigger than the first one. And that is why you let your perception choose or decide—you hear a song sung by a female voice, and you reckon that this song has either been written in ancient times or it remains still uncomposed, waiting for its composition in distant future. You also hear some murmur—so ordinary, normal and everydayish. Of course you choose to follow the song.

You pass a well organized desk, with cheap photocopied essays and free city-maps, on your way to a gigantic big saloon. The color of the floor is pink, the walls pearly white, and in spite of its humongousity you get the claustrophobic feeling that you're inside of a dictator's coffin. And then you want to cry. Because you remember something words cannot describe. And this song. —This song—where does it come from?

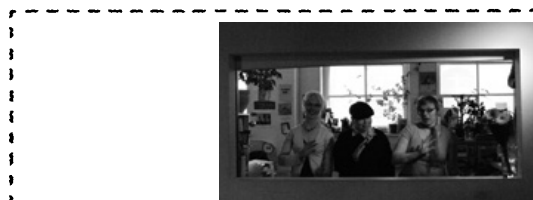
Oh, that we don't know yet.

p.s. Something about the audition.

p.p.s. We want to collect all the cats we meet on the streets of Winnipeg, and move them to the gallery, feed them prawns and milk. The floor of the dark saloon will be covered with cats and plates with cat food. On one of the wall we screen our lady, the opera singer, who sings and talks, smokes, contemplates. Something about the inspiring gift of her wisdom—

Gunnhildur and Kristín

Reykjavík April 1, 2008



MOTHER'S MOTHER'S MOTHER

THE LEGACY AND REBELLION OF ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S ART

MAY 10 – JUNE 7, 2008



JENNY WESTERN

I have a great grandmother who I know only through pictures. Photographs of my mother's mother's mother reveal her to be a thick-waisted woman with deep-set eyes and high cheekbones. People called her Lizzie. When she was young, she had black hair and when she grew older, it turned white. These physical characteristics are all that I know about her concretely. But, as the daughter of her daughter's daughter, I wonder whether the blood that runs through my veins carries the memory of her. I wonder if I know more about her than I think, simply by being her direct matrilineal descendent.

In a photograph of Lizzie in her younger years, my great grandmother appears shy and controlled. As she ages through a series of photographs, her eyes seem filled with stoicism. An underlying sense of good-natured humour could be read from her gaze too. In those eyes, I also sense my own grandmother Lue. She was Lizzie's daughter and a strong but gentle woman who was present in my life for almost thirty years. Geography separated us, but phone calls and photographs filled in the gaps of our relationship.





Lue's high school graduation photo hung in the hallway outside of my bedroom for a long time. I mistook it for an image of my mother with her long dark hair cut into a neat bob. To young eyes unaccustomed to reading the historical cues of fashion, the two women (my mother and her mother) looked so similar. They shared the same dark deep-set eyes and a shy smile revealing large, slightly crooked teeth. The similarities of their appearance were so beautiful. As I got older and began to discern the differences between their images, I was equally enchanted by what it was that made them different.

When I turned fifteen, my own physical appearance changed and I entered their circle of physical resemblance. There in my face were my great grandmother's cheekbones and my grandmother's deep-set eyes. My hands were just like my mother's hands, which were apparently just like her mother's hands. I don't have a photograph of my great grandmother's hands but I would hazard a guess that they looked something like my own. I like the notion that my hands are part of an inherited bundle of traits passed down from generation to generation without my control.

What else could be inherited in this way? Is it possible that I laugh like my great grandmother? We will never meet in this world and so I will never know whether she actually was shy, controlled, stoic or good-natured. But, I know that I am shy and that by participating in her lineage I may also be sharing in some of her traits. It is possible that I know her in a way that no one else can. This way of knowing is intuitive and a knowing of blood memory.

Of course, there are other ways of finding out more about my great grandmother and where she came from. I could research her life and maybe uncover a forgotten diary or a stack of letters that would inform my knowledge of her daily life. I could also research the status of women from her era, class, education, and geographic standing to get a broader sense of what informed her existence. I could further research the movement of the Oneida and Stockbridge-Munsee tribes from New York state to purchased lands in Wisconsin, trying to figure out how one of their daughters ended up in Minnesota and went on to become my great grandmother. I might find out that like a lot of families, we have nothing in common on the surface.

Shelley Niro, *The Shirt*, 2003, digital video.
Courtesy of the artist.



But deeper down there are certain similarities that remain uncontrollable while other traits can only be wished for.

My great grandmother was a daughter, a wife, and a mother. She worked as a housekeeper while living in a small Minnesotan town. Lizzie was a descendent of the Iroquois nation and inheritor of a traditional matrilineal social structure where an elder and her daughters formed households. Women were leaders in the community and generational relationships held weight. Power and identity came down from the mother's side of the family. But, between the ancient ways of the Iroquois people and my great grandmother's lifetime came colonization, assimilation, and cultural diaspora. Between my great grandmother and myself came the social revolutions and theories of the twentieth century such as modernism, post-modernism, post-colonialism, Marxism, identity politics, queer theory, and before that, the various waves of feminism.

Feminism is generational in its own way, with the first wave leading to the second wave and the second wave giving way to the third wave and so on. Each generation establishes an ideology, either to be inherited or rebelled against by the next generation. Early second-wave feminists pointed to the reclamation of images of women for women and by women. Activism was encouraged through collaboration and community. The recognition of traditionally feminine handiwork as fine art was of major importance as well.

However, later feminists would stress the need for a deconstructivist examination of "the feminine" in art. They also pointed out the complexities of identifying women under one feminist label when there existed a diversity of cultural, racial, sexual, and religious understandings. Feminism's roots in the sphere of straight, white, Protestant, middle class privilege is inescapable. Critics point to the flaws of a political movement whose founders rallied for equality while employing women like my great grandmother as their housekeepers. Yet the feminist strategies that inform

contemporary society with a sense of empowerment for women are pervasive in a popular worldview today.

My understanding of myself as a woman is heavily entwined with my great grandmother and the legacy she handed down to me through my grandmother and my mother. It forms a personal history based on intuition, mythology, chance, archival research, logical and illogical reasoning, ancient traditions, contemporary understandings, as well as the inheritance and sometimes rejection of legacy. I believe that my identity as a contemporary Canadian woman of Aboriginal ancestry is at times informed by both matriarchal traditions and feminist strategies. For other contemporary Aboriginal women in Canada investigating their personal and communal identities, how do the modern-day influences of feminist strategies relate to a cultural heritage often rich with matriarchal tradition? While not necessarily descendants of a matriarchy like that of the Iroquois or adherents to feminist theory in any personal way, the six artists of *Mother's Mother's Mother* offer a unique take on honouring tradition and acknowledging present realities.

What remains consistent in the artwork of these six distinct artists is the importance of relationships among women. The generational relationships of the matriarchy and the waves of feminism provide two valuable models through which to examine the work of six amazing contemporary Aboriginal female artists: Daphne Odjig, Maria Hupfield, Hannah Claus, Shelley Niro, Rosalie Favell, and Tania Willard. Whether directly received, unknowingly absorbed, or purposefully resisted, these artists of similar and varying ages, backgrounds, tribal affiliations, and political stances offer influence and honour to one another through their participation in a legacy of creation and creativity.

DAPHNE ODJIG

The late mid-twentieth century was a time of great social change across North America. By the 1970s, second wave feminism had truly hit its stride and the American Indian



Movement was making its voice heard from Washington, D.C. to South Dakota. In Canada, the Professional Indian Artists Inc. (a.k.a. the Indian Group of Seven) was co-founded in 1973 by a group of men and one woman of Odawa, Potawatomi and English heritage named Daphne Odjig. As the sole woman in the group, Odjig stands out as a female figure and forebear of the contemporary Aboriginal art scene. For me, Odjig demonstrates a historical entry point where modern feminist strategies and contemporary Aboriginal art begin to mingle. Out of this meeting, a strong Anishnaabe woman's artwork spoke of the complexities of identity. The work of female Aboriginal artists who follow chronologically may not be doing so in a purposeful manner, but they partake in a kinship as fateful as any family tree.

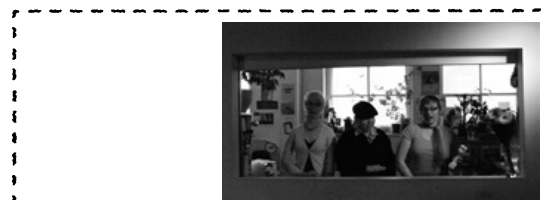
Odjig's work itself often deals with images of women and family. *Untitled (woman with two children)* from 1970 and *The Babysitter* from 1977 offer two prime examples of her integration of this subject matter. More recent examples of her work, such as *Song of Spring* and *Life of Harmony* display a gentle, lyrical, and arguably "feminine" style in keeping with Odjig's image today as something of a symbolic grandmother. Yet her body of artwork remains vast, varied, and sometimes surprising in view of this presupposed identity. In 1974 Odjig created the illustrations for Herbert Schwarz' book *Tales from the Smokehouse*. The text was a collection of erotic short stories with Odjig's prints providing the visual cues. In pieces like *The Squaw Man* and *Nanabajou and his daughter*, she did not shy away from using bold colours and strong lines to illustrate images of sexuality and taboo. While this artwork does not, at first, seem to jive with the stereotypical notion of Odjig as an elder to be treated with delicacy, it reinforces the understanding of Odjig as a woman of feeling and desire. These shared emotions transcend the generations.

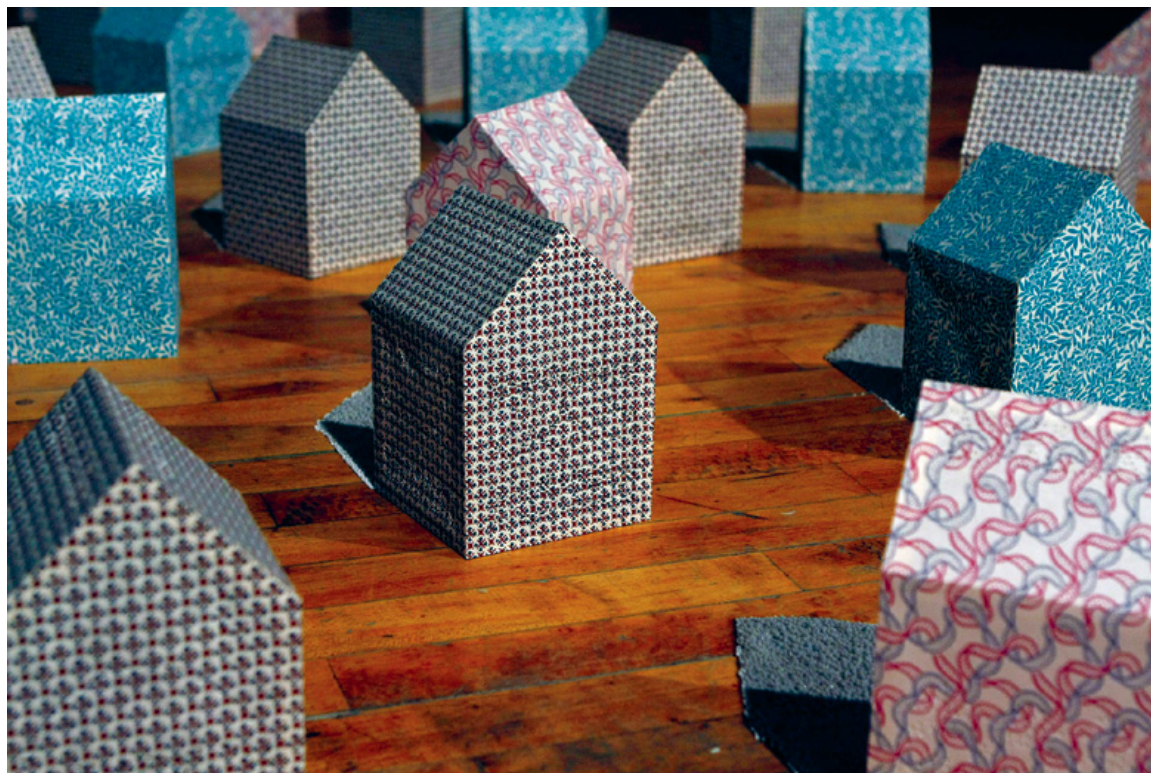
With pieces drawn from the period of 1968 to 1992, the artwork by Daphne Odjig included in *Mother's Mother's Mother* offers a very brief sampling of her style and subject matter. All of the artworks are on loan from the collections

of the University of Winnipeg and St. John's College in Winnipeg, suggesting the need for a re-reading of this work frequently seen in public spaces without much critical reflection. These works are often passed by without any direct engagement yet they continue to influence widely held perceptions of Aboriginal women's art through their presence. By placing Odjig's work in a gallery space, the works are seen as more than relics of a 1970s Woodland era style. Instead, they are viewed as the creative output of a woman who remains contemporary and engaging. Through the juxtaposition of younger artists, a new perspective on with Odjig's work can be considered. As with my great grandmother and myself, the consideration of female Aboriginal identity by a younger generation offers a deeper understanding of the relationships that exist between the generations of artists and artworks.

MARIA HUPFIELD

Anishnaabe (Ojibway) artist Maria Hupfield is one of the artists following in this legacy yet forging a path that is very much her own. Her artwork, like the 2004 floor piece *Sacred Circles*, has focused on sculpture and installation. But, Hupfield is also interested in performance art and has more recently been involved with photographic projects. Often collaborative in nature, these projects include the three chromagenic photo works from 2007 *Fountain, diptych*, *Rock in lot, triptych*, and *Merritt and Maria*. These works depict Hupfield and artist Merritt Johnson in mirrored poses at various urban locations. The settings of *Fountain, diptych* and *Rock in lot, triptych* speak to the elements of water, earth, and humanity's relationship to nature in the manufactured landscape of the city. The relationship of these women to each other and their environment also figures prominently in Hupfield's *Counterpoint Series* where she explains: "The figures represent a relationship with self, friend and environment, one of support, struggle, pain, endurance, strength and balance of symmetry."¹





In all of the work, the women wear the same clothes and have similar hairstyles. For the piece *Merritt and Maria* the two women's hair was braided together, linking them to each other despite sharing a gaze pointed directly at the viewer. The mimesis of these two characters suggests the relationship of twins or sisters. Yet upon closer inspection, the women share only a passing resemblance, exaggerating their sameness and differences all the more. For Hupfield these images reflect on the reconciliation of binary opposites, including concepts of the internal and external, presence and absence, urban and rural, and the dual

spaces in which Aboriginal people live out their daily lives in Canada.

By incorporating a fellow artist along with an image of herself, Hupfield's photographic work further nudges the viewer into a consideration of female relationships. Both of these configurations depend on the relationship of one woman to another, sometimes in solidarity and occasionally in rivalry. While the women in Hupfield's photographs are branded similarly, a closer look reveals unique identities and aids in dismantling some of the stereotypes that attempt to define Aboriginal womanhood. States Hupfield,



Hannah Claus, *unsettlements*, 2004, screenprint on Kozo paper, basswood, seed beads, quilt. electronic components, microcontroller, sensors, fiberoptic filaments, LEDs. Wallpaper patterns courtesy of the Victoria & Alberta Museums in London, England. Photo: Scott Stephens

"Representation in my work is often centered on reconciliation of binary opposites, exposing the double-sidedness of reality and existing contrary multi-truths."² Like the diversity of Daphne Odjig's subject matter, Maria Hupfield's work offers an acknowledgment of the intricacies of Aboriginal female identities today.

HANNAH CLAUS

Working from a standpoint that recognizes both her Mohawk and Euro-Canadian backgrounds, artist Hannah Claus uses her 2004 piece *unsettlements* to underline the complexities of contemporary Canadian identity as well. In sharp contrast to the curatorial supposition put forth by *Mother's Mother's Mother* regarding the significant role of the matrilineal line, Claus' own Mohawk heritage has been passed down through her father's side of the family. While her work may often speak to other issues, this heritage remains a poignant element of her art practice. Through her practice, Claus employs pattern as a sort of language that can be read as a communication of her own identity and its makeup of seemingly opposing cultures. The intricacies of this post-colonial inheritance are reflected in *unsettlements*.

unsettlements is a floor-based installation bringing together 100 small paper houses placed alongside a rumpled quilt laced with fiber optics. The houses invoke a sense of Victorian fragility and comfort through their peaked-roofs, wallpaper patterns, dainty wooden frames, and miniature scale. Claus has created a pretty village, humble in size but rich with meaning. Upon closer inspection, viewers apprehend a subtle disruption to the houses' paper surfaces through a series of pinpricked holes whose patterns are borrowed from Iroquois beading motifs. It is through this mark making that Claus explores the presence of absence in her own cultural identity. "With the pinpricking action," Claus says, "I am reinserting or giving voice to the presence of aboriginal culture within the colonial paradigm."³ As the

paper's surface gives way to Claus' pin, a pattern emerges evoking community, language, personal identity, and loss.

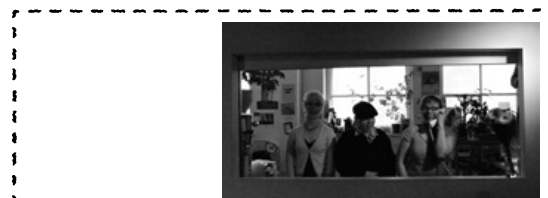
The role of pattern is also integral to the quilt that lies alongside the houses. Recalling the colours and designs of the wallpaper façades, the surface of the quilt ultimately reveals itself through the presence of others' interaction with it. Through Claus' alteration of a well-worn quilt with fiber optics, she is touching on the history and transformation of community and labour demonstrated by this familiar and often personal object. While the homes point to organized settlement, the quilt lies next to them like a rumpled landscape.

unsettlements presents the viewer with what Claus describes as an "idea of belonging, exclusion and blending Aboriginal culture within the assimilation policies of pan-Canadian hegemony."⁴ Since the piece reflects on a mixed cultural identity, *unsettlements* offers a reminder of the diverse possibilities of Canadian identity resulting from historic colonial encounters. It is an identity that can be studied in a very public or theoretical sense, but it is also an identity that remains tied to family and a personal search for community. It is an identity based on the intersections of traditional understandings and the transformative knowledge of new generations. It is an identity we are free to explore and need to communicate.

SHELLEY NIRO

As a child, Mohawk artist Shelley Niro was fascinated by a phrase she encountered repeatedly in texts by anthropologists, archeologists and historians "The Iroquois is a Highly Developed Matriarchal Society." What did this phrase mean to scholars at a time of contact between Indigenous North Americans and Europeans? What does it mean for people living in a contemporary period? Furthermore, what has been its repercussion on the lives of women?

Niro's series *The Iroquois is a Highly Developed Matriarchal Society* from 1991 is made up of three hand-tinted



photographs depicting her mother under a hairdryer in a household kitchen. As Niro states, "It was confusing to be living in an historically important part of the country, nodding our heads to this description of my community but at the same time accepting violence against women as normal living conditions."⁵ She acknowledges that things have changed since the phrase was initially used to describe the Iroquois people (including the Mohawks) and that there is a need "to make things as they should be."⁶ Her image of a mother poised in the moments of having her hair done is a glimpse at Niro's own idea of a matriarchal tradition set in modern times. The connection between the past and the present remains, as evidenced by the design on the photo's matting. Like the subtle patterns found in Hannah Claus' work, this design is drawn from ancient Iroquois beading motifs.

The second piece by Niro in *Mother's Mother's Mother* is *The Shirt* from 2003. As in Maria Hupfield's piece *Merritt and Maria*, Niro incorporates other artists into the work as performers. *The Shirt* is a collection of beautiful landscape shots interspersed with images of American artist Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie. Tsinhnahjinnie stands in an open field wearing blue jeans, sunglasses, an American flag bandana, and a white shirt. Four series of text appear on the shirt over the course of the video. These are separated by images of landscape, water, power lines, and dams. With her hands on her hips or her arms crossed over her chest, Tsinhnahjinnie stands warrior-like as the following words appear on her shirt: "My ancestors were annihilated, exterminated, murdered and massacred"; "They were lied to, cheated, tricked and deceived"; "Attempts were made to assimilate, colonize, enslave and displace them"; "And all's I get is this shirt." The last view of Tsinhnahjinnie shows her without the shirt, naked from the waist up with her eyebrow cocked inquisitively. The video's conclusion reveals curator Veronica Passalacqua now wearing the shirt and grinning.

Tsinhnahjinnie is the channel for an ancestral voice and the gravity of the issues expressed her shirt. Passalacqua is a depiction of non-Aboriginal privilege. While reflecting on the sacrifice of Aboriginal people and land for the settlement of North America, the final shot of Passalacqua is a representation of "all that is taken and what is left."⁷ The rearrangement of the shirt from Tsinhnahjinnie to Passalacqua is a glimpse at the non-Aboriginal acquisition of land, resources, commodities, and symbols of Aboriginal nationhood without a full appreciation of what was given up for the free and abundant life lived by North America's middle class. As in the feminist critique mentioned earlier in this text, Niro's video is a reminder that oppression is not a thing of the past and continues to require a keen and critical eye.

ROSALIE FAVELL

The incorporation of text into art was one tactic employed by second wave feminists who wanted to get away from the subjugation of gender, race, sexuality, and religion through visual representation. Like Shelley Niro's *The Shirt*, Métis artist Rosalie Favell used text in her 1994 photographic series *from an early age* to communicate her message. Favell's work has evolved since that time and yet many of the key concerns of her work are apparent. The works are photos of her family from her childhood resembling slides or Polaroid from the 1960s. Over the images Favell has written a variety of phrases all approaching issues of family relationships and personal identity: "It bothered me that my skin was different from my Mom's"; "I looked like my Dad's Mom I adored her"; "I wanted to be just like my big sister"; "My skin was darker than my little sisters."

Favell explains that this series was created at a time of reflection about who she was, what she looked like, and the colour of her skin. By revisiting old family snapshots, she began searching for clues. These photographs, often taken of the family by Favell's mother, are the source of *from an early age*. As well as the brief memories she expresses



through text in the work, the series also offers a consideration of a specific incident from her childhood:

I often recall the time I was sitting in the bathtub trying to scrub my tan off. My mother asked what I was doing and I told her that no matter how much I scrubbed and scrubbed I couldn't get my tan off. I wanted to look like her. She told me that my dad had "Indian blood" and I had "Indian blood" and that was why my tan would not come off. We didn't talk about it much until many years later when I started exploring my Métis heritage.⁸

Favell's series is a collaborative project in its incorporation of personal oral histories and photographs taken with her family. Like Shelley Niro's usage of her mother's image, Favell is depicting real women with real identities living in a post-colonial era. Using her contemporary knowledge of these issues, Favell is able to revisit the sites of her past and offer a deeper comprehension of their significance in her life.

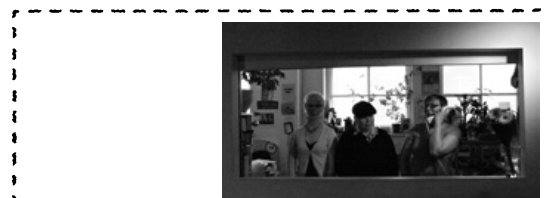
TANIA WILLARD

The reality of womanhood as givers of life was apparent for Secwepemc artist Tania Willard while preparing for *Mother's Mother's Mother*. On July 20th 2008, just before the exhibition's opening, Willard was due with her first child. As she looked forward to becoming a mother, Willard reflected on the mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers who came before her. *Kye7e dress* is a visual representation of her meditation on the life of her great-grandmother, Adeline Willard. Like Hannah Claus, this relationship is not strictly matrilineal as Tania's relationship to Adeline is through her father. As Willard explains it, Adeline was "a Secwepemc woman, a Catholic, a mother, grandmother and more to many generations of Secwepemc people all over, as well as on her home reserve of Neskonlith Indian Reserve in Chase, BC."⁹

Willard was fortunate enough to have known her great grandmother, even participating with her in Chase's annual

town parade. Willard recalls a sense of pride in donning "Indian" garb made with care by mothers, aunties, and grandmothers for the event. Although the dresses they wore were not "traditional," the effort of these female family members to impart their children with pride in their culture left a lasting impact. When Adeline passed away several years later, Willard was not able to be present at her funeral. Yet a thoughtful aunt gave one of Adeline's parade dresses to Willard's sister. Although made from simple buckskin-like material with plastic beads and shells foreign to the Chase/Neskonlith area, this garment remains a powerful memorial of Tania Willard's female forebears.

Willard's way of honouring the garment was to create a stencil based on its form. While eight months pregnant, she went out to the urban streets of Vancouver and spray painted a simple tri-colour version of the dress onto city walls and back alleys. States Willard: "I stencil the dress onto concrete walls, this urban centre where her great granddaughter travels in and out of, carrying her dress in my blood, complicated and mixed up identities form interlacing fringe that dances to the drum. Leaving a mark of womanhood, a mark of remembrance, a mark of culture, care and love on these desolate urban landscapes."¹⁰ Willard's photographs of the three sites of the stencil's installation in Vancouver are exhibited alongside an image of the stencil on canvas. A Cheyenne proverb is also stenciled onto the canvas which reads, "A people is not defeated until the hearts of its women are on the ground." Among other things, this quote is a call to respect and honour the role of women in society. Willard's piece is an honouring for her great grandmother in the urban spaces and gallery walls on which Willard's artwork exists. Willard explains, "She is part of me as are all my ancestors, I honour all the women whose blood runs also through my veins, white, Indian, assimilated back and forth and forced up against European and settler societies' forced into lateral violence and trauma."¹¹ It is all of these influences that make Willard and her artwork what it is



today. All of these women have come before, offering an example for which Tania Willard can follow and of which she hopes to share with her child and in her artwork.

SACRED CIRCLES

The final piece in *Mother's Mother's Mother* is Maria Hupfield's *Sacred Circles*. This is an installation piece created by Hupfield in 2004 out of red linoleum circles. The larger circle pieces are representations of *My Mother's Skirt* while the smaller circle pieces are called *Bev's Pants*. These circles are cut with flowered organic designs and placed on the floor. Reflecting on the skirt as a symbol of femininity and tradition, Hupfield guides viewers into a recollection of their childhood memories about the women they have known who raise the next generation. *Sacred Circles* offers a reflection on the continuation of female strength and wisdom, whether in the traditional skirt attire or even in a contemporary pair of pants. The positioning of these pieces on the floor leads the viewer to contemplate the women they revere who stand within the sacred circles and offer guidance.

Mother's Mother's Mother has been equally informed by conversations with my mother as by the writings of women like Winona LaDuke. As well as both being brilliant women whose wisdom I seek to learn from, my mother and LaDuke bear a striking physical resemblance to one another. The physical similarities between my mother and LaDuke suggest a miniscule possibility of shared ancestry. Yet their true kinship is based on the present day realities of Aboriginal womanhood manifested in its various identities. Although I do not know Winona LaDuke personally, both she and my mother are two women who stand in my sacred circles.

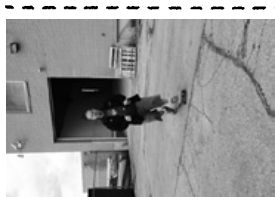
In a contemporary era when formal matriarchal structures have been relegated to the past by anthropology, archeology, and history, modern feminist strategies have in part encouraged me to look for intergenerational female relationships through a new sense of community. The kinship shared by contemporary female Aboriginal artists examining

their varied identities—identities that may have nothing to do directly with matriarchy, feminism, or even each other's work—offer an investigation into a broad scope of subject matter. The topics broached by these artists include family and children, sexuality and gender, artistic collaboration, images of self and relatives, personal and shared identities, the language of design and pattern, “feminine” arts such as textiles or beading, the incorporation of text, and of course, colonization.

The thematic of *Mother's Mother's Mother* is not groundbreaking or even particularly original. The argument could be made for kinship among many different peoples, groups, identities and the artists who struggle to represent them. But, the thematic is mine and can be shared by many. It illustrates a search for connection with elders, ancestors, and relations. My personal historiography is incomplete, imperfect and far from exhaustive, like the models of matriarchy and feminist strategies that I perceive in *Mother's Mother's Mother*. But, it is my hope that this exhibition will be a link in a continuum of many group and solo exhibitions by contemporary Canadian Aboriginal female artists working in dialogue with themselves, their communities, their audiences, and each other.

NOTES

1. Maria Hupfield, Artist Statement, 2008
2. Maria Hupfield, Artist Statement, 2008
3. Hannah Claus, Artist Statement
4. Hannah Claus, Artist Statement
5. Shelley Niro, Artist Statement, 1997
6. Shelley Niro, Artist Statement, 1997
7. Shelley Niro, Email from the artist, 2008
8. Rosalie Favell, Artist Statement, 2008
9. Tania Willard, Artist Statement, 2008
10. Tania Willard, Artist Statement, 2008
11. Tania Willard, Artist Statement, 2008



media arts centre
VIDEO POOL

((send + receive)))

PARTNERSHIPS


manitobacraftscouncil



OUT OF HAND

Manitoba Crafts Council Juried Exhibition
June 18 – 28, 2008

THE DAY WE CUT NETTIE'S CURLS, SHE WAS 7 YEARS OLD

Richard Dyck

presented by VideoPool Media Arts Centre
April 18 – May 2, 2007

SEND + RECEIVE

A FESTIVAL OF SOUND
May 8 – 13, 2007

ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND INTERNATIONAL RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Amy Russel

September 2007

Amy Russell is originally from West Cork Ireland. She graduated with a Masters of Fine Art from the University of Ulster, Belfast in 2005.

She is a practicing artist based at Queen Street Studios, Belfast for the past two years. Her practice is a mixture of sculpture and photography. Amy has coordinated and been involved with a number of cross-community art based projects in Belfast. She has exhibited both nationally and internationally. Recent group exhibitions include "The Space Shuttle Project" PS2 Belfast and "Engendered Species" LA California.



MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

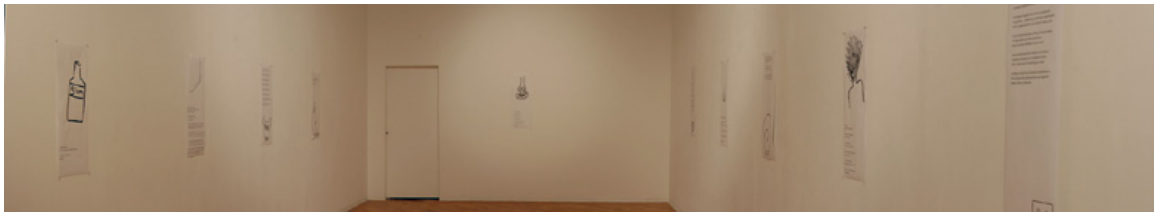
PROJECT ROOM

JJ KEGAN MACFADDEN

PARLOUR GAMES

EXPERIMENTAL POEMS & DRAWINGS

JUNE 22 – 30, 2007



Presented along with the launch of the chapbook, *Parlour Games*, by As We Try & Sleep Press.



Photo: Doug Melnyk

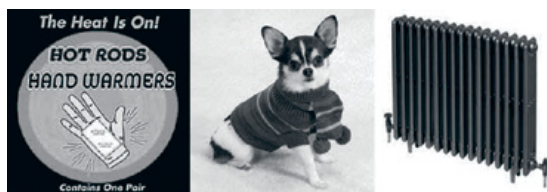
WINTER WARMER ANNUAL MEMBERS SHOW

DECEMBER 7 – 15, 2007

PDF

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA SCHOOL OF ART ANNUAL JURIED SHOW

APRIL 18 – MAY 2, 2008



Volume 11

2008/09



Background image:
Source: Amy Wong, *What?*, 2008.

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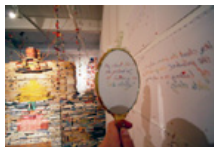
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HEYSEEDS NHAN DUC NGYEN

SEPTEMBER 12 – OCTOBER 4, 2008



A response by
WHITNEY LIGHT

The installation *Heyseeds* felt like a festival but also like a place of prayer. Nhan Duc Ngyen transformed the Flux Gallery using coloured ribbons, flowers, incense, sparkling confetti, mirrors and more. He built the central structure of the installation, a re-imagining of a Vietnamese shrine, out of books, which was accompanied by incense and a video of people practicing Vietnamese animist rituals that suggested a time and place in the past. Other aspects referred to the modern world: sparkly dollar-store party favours, for example. So many things drew your attention that they seemed to suspend ordinary experience to make room for something more profoundly encompassing, and that is really what made *Heyseeds* work: it was a challenge to open up one's imagination and turn it toward new ideas. One way Nhan did this was by writing questions and placing them around the shrine. They mostly addressed political change—making “heyseeds.” But what are those? Nhan's title is a subtle reference to Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and the idea that being human is about responding to sensory experience with emotion, an idea that is all too easy to forget in an art gallery. *Heyseeds* reminded us of that idea, and



Left: Photos: Dennis Persowich
Middle, right: Photo: Scott Stephens



how experience shapes our lives as citizens too. Whether you explored the exhibition alone or with others, you were immersed in sights and sounds and smells, building the kind of moment that can make you believe change is possible.

As a Vietnamese-Canadian, part of Nhan's art practise is collecting and disseminating oral histories of families who came to Canada in the wake of the Vietnam War. He used to be a restaurateur and now often conducts his research in Vietnamese restaurants. Concurrent with *Heyseeds*, Nhan created another installation at Winnipeg's Little Saigon restaurant where he also recorded oral histories. That project was part of the ongoing dissemination in North America of the oral history of Ba Ba, a loved and respected woman who, as the story goes, once sold noodles in Nhan's hometown of Qui Nhon but went missing in the chaos that ensued as thousands fled by boat after the fall of South Vietnam in 1975. On the gallery walls in *Heyseeds*, little confetti ghosts hovered over origami boats, perhaps as symbols of Ba Ba and the Boat People, and there was also an excerpt of a poem by Nhan that vividly described the sun and hills of Qui Nhon. Mostly, however, these created a background that spoke to

the context of the creation of the shrine at aceart. The details revealed Nhan to us as someone engaged with his own past and attuned to how memories of tangible things like foods, landscapes and people affect how people think about their situation now. *Heyseeds* was laced with these intrigues of his personal story that invited us into the artwork.

Other elements of *Heyseeds* suggested a more traditional perception of history: we might learn from it. The most striking part of the installation was also its heart: a tall, freestanding temple structure built of books stacked around a wooden frame and dotted with incense, flowers and colourful braids of yarn. On the one hand, it was a literal reinterpretation of the eleventh-century Temple of Literature that still stands in Hanoi, Vietnam. It was rather unexpected and wonderful to be reminded that such a place exists. On the other, it also referred, architecturally, to the building style of the seventh century of Vietnam, a time when across Asia religious diversity combined with cosmopolitan attitudes to create a significant but now forgotten period of cultural flourishing. So, embedded in Nhan's shrine is perhaps a lesson for today. In Winnipeg (and Canada and North America), when the conflicting concerns

Photo: hannah_g





of different minorities and ideologies seem to muddy the way towards equal prosperity and growth in our communities, we might take the approach that strength comes from diversity, if diversity also means hybridity and freedom from prejudice.

You couldn't open the books that made the shrine and most of the spines were worn and unreadable, yet they formed a kind of library. One of the pleasures of going to a library is feeling surrounded by a vast repository of information, where ideas sit in harmony with each other. A library is a kind of temple and in *Heyseeds* this metaphor was embodied. This collection of books—a plurality of texts—formed the focus of an opportunity for viewers to sit, meditate, talk or pray and generally reflect on the tradition and meaning of religious practise. Perhaps it's a small point, but what stood out was how much *Heyseeds'* image of the sacred contrasted with the one that predominates in the media today. We are more likely to hear stories about religiously or politically motivated book banning and burning than book embracing. Too, seeing these tattered and faded tomes we are reminded that books, as tangible objects to hold, collect, treasure and pass down, do not last forever. We're losing books with time

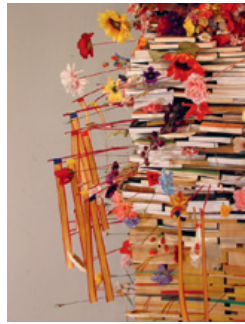
and changes in the privatized and digitized world, libraries struggle to maintain and grow, and yet we still seem to need and want to touch and regard books like hallowed things. How will the word look and feel in the future? The temple of literature prompted a question about where the world of learning intersects with the sacred. What animates the writing of fiction or science or history more than a writer's desire to share some sacred experience of the world?

Several elements of the installation helped to create this awareness of the sacred in the everyday. There was the burning incense, a signal to meditate that most of us are familiar with. There was also a kind of altar at the head of the gallery space that featured an image of Nhan himself. Referring to the tradition of Vietnamese families today, photos of ancestors are kept in a similar place of honour for prayer and tribute, relating to a long-held tradition of believing certain objects and words to have almost tangible power if their names are said aloud.¹ Here Nhan's photograph symbolized his personal heritage as the inspiration and corner of the thoughts and focus of his art.

Viewers were also provided with words, maybe to say out loud and maybe to recall the past with. Written backwards cursive on white paper, questions were posted around the temple. Some were Nhan's and some were raised in conversation with various Winnipeggers he met. They asked about a wide range of open-ended topics. What is the Canadian Dream? What is multiculturalism? Why aren't our senators elected? Is that we learn nothing from history what we learn from history? Does art matter? What is self-determination? Why aren't more rental apartments being built in Winnipeg? Through these questions, viewers became participants in the artwork and activated it. On one wall, plastic-handled mirrors in a rainbow of colours and decorated with flowers (mirrors are also popularly used in Vietnamese tradition) were meant to be picked up and used to decode the "mirror script" questions, otherwise the installation would be silent and non-participatory. Once you were viewing the questions, you were



Photo: hannah_g



viewing your own face, too. If they had been written left to right, the questions might not be read with such attention. Mirrors have often been used to evoke the idea of a window into the past and present, or to make familiar things appear strange. The mirrors put the participants and the issues in one image, perhaps giving rise to new questions from individuals about the connections between one's own identity and the big picture of society. To that end, Nhan provided pens and notepaper so viewers could jot down their ideas.

Perhaps an art gallery is the safest place to talk about the sacred. A shrine such as *Heyseeds* situated almost anywhere else would elicit a very different reaction. It might be hard to get past seeing it as only an exotic and didactic cultural display—a Folklorama pavilion on wheels. In a gallery we are apt to see connections between (seemingly) unlike things and consider signs and symbols with uncharacteristic uncertainty or with an eye for irony. So it seemed that *Heyseeds* used aspects of Vietnamese animist tradition with objects and ideas from the everyday to at once point to divides—between religious and secular, past and present, living and dead, personal and political—and away from them.

I have already said something of how *Heyseeds*, in being a temple of literature, speaks to a border crossing between the sacred and the profane, a notion that often gets buried or forgotten under the assumed necessity of their discreteness, or power over one another. In part what *Heyseeds* offered

was the consideration of what is, from a subjective point of view, a tolerant and perhaps inspirational form of religious practise. A television monitor fitted into the back of the shrine played a tape comprised of several takes of Vietnamese people enacting various appeals to gods. There were food offerings, costumes and songs. As Nhan explained, these rituals are done to invite the spirit world to attend so the living can ask a spirit for something that may help them in their life. Engaging with the installation did not require making leaps of faith as such, but it did suggest that the past, in the form of memories, stories, ancestors, rituals and tradition, is part of life, and that we might wonder where and how clear the line is between our past and our present social and political situation. And how does it affect how we live? In *The Past Is A Foreign Country*, David Lowenthal wrote, “we are paralyzed unless we transform or replace inherited relics.”² Combining roots, history, ritual and politics into a meditation on art and the spiritual imagination, *Heyseeds* suggested a way for relics to renew their meaning and for empirical, rational explorations to use the past when looking to the future.

NOTES

1. Hue-Tam Ho Tai, “Religion in Vietnam: A World of Gods and Spirits,” *The Vietnam Forum* 10 (Summer/Fall 1987): 113-145.
2. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is A Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 69.

Photos: Nhan Duc Nguyen





EVERYTHING IS EVERYTHING

AMY WONG

SEPTEMBER 26 – NOVEMBER 14, 2008



A response by
ALLISON DASILVA

What appears to be pages of an adolescent's diary strewn across the walls of the gallery is the multi-faceted artwork of Amy Wong. Using a variation of controlled and loose brushwork, text, stickers, logos and gems, Wong creates complex work not only in form but in concept as well. By incorporating eclectic elements of popular culture, language, humor with a naïve charm, Wong brings attention to global social politics, economic systems and the inherent problems of communication. She raises questions regarding the pervasiveness of images and how an abundance of information contributes to our understanding of culture, life and, well, everything.

Wong's exhibition at **aceartinc.**, *Everything is Everything*, consists of paintings, works on paper and collages, many of which explore a playful use of language. Two works in particular address the importance of interpretation and communication, *What?* and *Talk Bananas*.

In the painting *What?*, Wong presents two mirrored portraits of herself in conversation with each other. The text used in this painting was inspired by a conversation Wong had with a girl who was learning English. The girl



Left: Amy Wong, *If drinkin' don't kill me (her memory will)*, 2006, charcoal, ink, marker, acrylic on paper.

Middle: *Suburb in the Rough*, 2006, oil and collage on canvas.

Right: *Part of Personality test (great place/terrible place)*, 2006, ink stamps on paper.

Photos: Scott Stephens



earnestly asked how to say, “Don’t fuck things up.” To which Wong responded, “What?” which, in the painting is written backwards. Wong is referencing 15th century Flemish painting in which “words that were spoken from a figure facing left would come out of their mouths backwards.”¹ Wong explains that she used this technique to pay homage to different representational philosophies and to explore what happens to understanding “...when a meaning is intended but the reception is different because of cultural differences.”²

Wong’s penchant for appropriating forms and techniques from painting traditions is also evident in *Talk Bananas*, the accompanying piece to *What?* She refers to *Talk Bananas* as, “a playful take on absurdity in identity politics and culture jamming.”³ This multi-media painting was created during a residency in Xiamen, China, and the references to Communism run deep. This is evident through the inclusion of, Krték, a 1970s Czechoslovakian cartoon character, and *Super Junior*, a South Korean pop band, which are both popular in Communist China. Wong’s blurred depiction of the boy band evokes the intensity with which they are dancing; her loose brushwork and vibrant palate echo the spontaneous, energetic and

overall joyful sentiment of the painting. This energy contradicts the highly controlled and regulated imagery carried by the Chinese media. Another cultural reference is the text written across the painting like graffiti, the words, “Talk Bananas.” “Banana” not only refers to the delicious dancing fruit that is being enjoyed by the two caricatures in the painting, but is also a term sometimes used for Westernized Asians. As Wong explained, a banana (used in a racial context) is someone who is “yellow” on the outside and “white” on the inside. Wong’s use of text in *Talk Bananas* indicates how the most innocent of words may conceal an adverse, ulterior meaning.

Wong’s calculating use of language in her artwork is reminiscent of the work of American artist Bruce Nauman, who like Wong, explores the role of an artist as communicator and the inherent problems within language. Nauman’s piece *Violins, Violence, Silence* (1982-82), uses the three words of the title to explore their dichotomous relationship. The neon and glass tubing words, “violins,” “violence” and “silence,” have been arranged to support, overlap and stand alone, echoing how one perceives words and their relationship to one another. Wong states, “his play with language show how

What?, 2008, detail, oil, acrylic, charcoal on canvas.





one can use and twist meanings into something new.” Wong continues to explain that Nauman’s sense of humour and mischievous character are sensibilities she identifies with and these elements are prevalent throughout her work.

The formal properties of Wong’s paintings can be compared to another American artist, Jean-Michel Basquiat, whom Wong mentions as an influence. Reoccurring themes found in Basquiat’s artwork include those of identity and racism, themes that are also present in Wong’s paintings. Other similarities can be found in Basquiat’s mixed media work, *Notary* (1983) where we see the use of text, references to popular culture and music and the gestural application of multiple layers of paint. Basquiat’s rough and expressionist style is characteristic of the Neo-expressionist movement, which emerged during the late 1970s as a reaction against conceptual and minimalist art. Neo-expressionism is generally defined as depicting recognizable objects, such as the human form using vivid colours in a rough way, often expressing violent emotion.⁴

The influence of popular music is found in Wong’s oil on canvas painting, *Everything is Everything*, in the exhibition of the same title. Wong has represented the album cover for R&B singer Diana Ross’ 1970s album of the same name. Wong says that Ross became the “mascot for the exhibition” when she discovered that Ross’ album had the same title as her show. The painting/album cover, features Ross dressed in a sparkly outfit, an outfit that is strikingly similar to one worn by Britney Spears in the video for the song *Toxic*. Wong describes how this reflects her interest in the linkage between “seemingly disparate points” such as the connections between past and present popular culture.

In her mixed media work *Googly Eyes*, an entire paragraph is written on the surface of the painting so faintly that I suspect it often goes unnoticed:

“How come someone hasn’t noticed that I’m dead and decided to bury me god knows I’m ready.”

Wong first wrote the words in pink pencil crayon but felt it was “a failed first attempt at capturing a sentiment”⁵



Above: *Part of Googly Eyes*, 2006, oil, ink and googly eyes on canvas.
Below: *Talk Bananas*, 2008, acrylic on canvas.

Photos: Scott Stephens



so she washed over it with a thin layer of yellow ink and enjoyed the way the message thus obscured still peeked through. This “peeking” is very much part of Wong’s practice in that she touches on many ideas in one work, some more deeply than others. The degree to which Wong looks at different notions and ideas affects the viewer’s understanding and can lead us into multiple directions—as long as we look beneath the surface.

Accompanying the almost invisible quote is a decapitated head, the face vigorously painted; bold brushstrokes create the features and the exaggerated tear between the head and neck. From a distance, the figure’s eyes appear void, but close up we see that each eye is made up of small plastic “googly” eyes. Googly eyes are often used because they move when shaken, but in the hanged painting they are immobile. This contradiction underlines the morbid nature of the picture; the vacant eyes next to a text beckoning death.

The most surprising work in the exhibition is *Chinese-Canadian Poops*, which consists of six oval collages. Three poops were created while Wong was in China and the others were made in Canada. The six poops consist of images

cut out from advertisements, flyers, magazines, to-do lists and take-out menus and were inspired by “all the crap a person consumes and expels culturally.”⁶ The tremendous number of images from two distinct cultures evokes the pervasiveness of advertisements and junk mail evidently found in both Eastern and Western hemispheres. The stools question the role publicity images play in society. I think these collages signify the overall concept of Wong’s exhibition—the omnipresence of the visual, how we ingest and expel the visual imagery that defines our materialistic, consumer-driven culture and our role and responsibility as consumer, whether we live in the East or West.

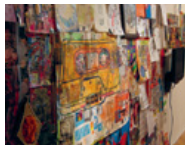
NOTES

1. Amy Wong exhibition statement.
2. Amy Wong interview conducted via email by Allison DaSilva.
3. Amy Wong exhibition statement.
4. Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-expressionism>
5. Amy Wong interview conducted via email by Allison DaSilva.
6. Amy Wong interview conducted via email by Allison DaSilva.

Left: *The Solidarity of Sisters*, 2004,
oil and pencil on canvas.

Right: *Chinese-Canadian Poops*, 2008, collage.





DON'T GO TO YOUR MANSION DEARRAINDROP

CURATED BY PAUL BUTLER

OCTOBER 18 – 31, 2008



SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT THE COLLECTIVE SPIRIT OF DEARRAINDROP

A response by
KERRI-LYNN REEVES

In consultation with Ricardo Lopez,
Megan Tough, Jennifer Delos-Reyes,
and Amy Karlinsky

Title by Jennifer Delos-Reyes

It's wild. A frenzy of colour, collage, and cultural references, the kind that you would expect from a hip young collective like dearraindrop. One does not need previous knowledge of the collective to get a sense of who they are, culturally plugged in artists in their twenties with a penchant for the current aesthetic of hipsters across North America, and what they do, bright colours, pop culture icons, counter-culture feel, mash-ups of images and ideas, graffiti inspired, irony, music, flashy, and busy. From predominant neon colours in the busy collages to strange electronic contraptions, it is an exhibition that moves.

When the viewer walks into dearraindrop's exhibition "Don't Go To Your Mansion" (curated by Paul Butler, a Winnipeg based artist who shares an affinity for the collage aesthetic) passing an obvious protest of President Bush and his policies, one encounters a world of colour, movement, and layers of objects, ideas, personalities, stories, images, and materials. Like the displayed Rolling Stones' "Flowers", which is a hodgepodge album of old, new, and remixed songs (one of many small but very telling pop culture trivia details), this is a mishmash collection of work. An adolescent's

Photos: hannah_g





wet dream aptly describes the scene with frank but oft-unrealistic references to sexuality, experimentation with adult substances, nostalgia for childish innocence, and nods to adult knowledge. TV monitors, one retro white and one sleek black flat screen, are found amongst copious amounts of vinyl records, 80's cartoons, and movie characters. Elvis, The New Virginians, and Sonic Youth, along with C3PO, Woody the Woodpecker, The Flintstones, Power Rangers, and Sylvester the Cat grace the collage walls and paintings. Depictions of cigarettes, beer, and moonshine are mixed with decapitated bare breasted and bikini clad women, and overdone machismo demonstrated through soldiers, super heroes and buff aliens. Sex, drugs, and rock and roll candy coated with Saturday morning cartoon fun.

Flashing blocks of colour glowing from TV monitors mimic the layers of static colours throughout the exhibition and make them live, harking back to Op Art and its use of colour to create optical illusions. A swaying purple hand on a clock-like construction swings slowly over the orange block of wood on which it hovers, never actually advancing the time forward, but always undecided as to what moment it

inhabits, much like the installation itself. References stretch from mid-twentieth century to present day, though it is heavily laden with the 1980's culture that corresponds with the youth of collective members, Joe Grillo, Laura Grant, Billy Grant, Owen Osborn, and Christopher Kucinski.

A house fan oscillates from a cord suspending it from the ceiling, acting as the source of life and movement from its spot on high, gently blowing the eleven large wooden raindrops hanging from the beams. Mirrors, cut and shattered, adorn the raindrops and send refractions around the room. The spots of light gently swing from the crinkling paper banner to the densely covered wall of pinned up items that create a large collage of impermanency, bringing the viewer's attention to specific items; one small part of the bigger whole.

The viewing experience is changed drastically depending on the amount of people in Ace Art's Flux Gallery where the dearrraindrop exhibition is housed (save for the few random bits which spill out into the common area of the gallery). When viewed alone, one has the privilege to experience, explore, and extract at one's own pace. When viewed in a



crowd however, it can become overwhelming as the room becomes increasingly laden with the physical and emotional. At a crowded reception held in the gallery, a common reaction was to become overwhelmed as I overheard people state “I need to get out of here”, making apparent the intense nature of the sheer volume of what is on display.

The quantity of what is on display leads one to wonder where editing comes into collage, collaboration, and collectivism. In learning more about this Virginia Beach, VA based collective it becomes apparent that curating is a large part of their collaboration. With each member working on different aspects, according to their passion, the real collectivism comes in during the install. Here they inhabit the space and over the course of a few days build it up, editing and collaborating as they go. While the result is one of immense volume, with works that range to include paintings from small to large, electronic gadgets, found objects, and collage walls filled with many made and manipulated objects, there is a tidiness and organization to the chaos that you might not expect. Like a freshly cleaned teenager’s bedroom with all of the posters and filled to the brim cork boards, but none of the dirty laundry. Once one feels comfortable in the space enough to look past the flashiness, it is apparent that this collective editing helps to ensure that nothing stands out as anomalous.

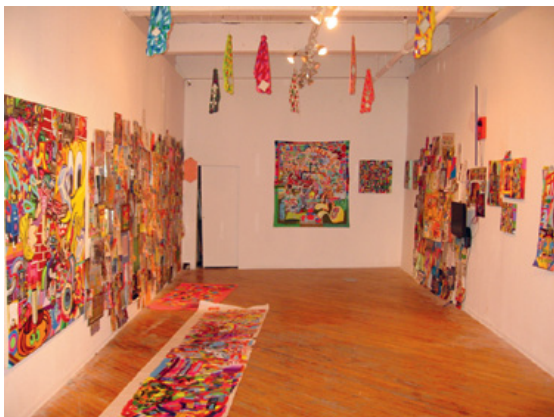
The exhibit manifests itself as a cohesive whole as dearraindrop address the whole space with their work. This is further demonstrated with the noticeable lack of individual labels and titles for the pieces making one consider the whole experience and not the individual works. The sole signage remains the exhibition title at the entrance to the gallery space. “Don’t Go to Your Mansion” serves as a friendly reminder that one need not go to a place of solitude and privilege but to the common and communal culture for what they seek. An obvious camaraderie between these collective members, born from being siblings, childhood friends, high school sweethearts, and university roommates, and creating



work collaboratively for nearly as long, can be seen. All work appears to address the same themes and come from the same place—dearraindrop.

dearraindrop is a living entity and constant being under which they all work. Although one can see the similarities in the pop culture content, the collective steers away from Andy Warhol’s Factory method of collective production where one leader stands out as the face of and force behind the art work, and sticks to a more communal collectivity in which all members are the artists and the producers. The work remains the face and driving force of dearraindrop. Specific roles within this, as in any group, tend to be taken up by the individual with an affinity to it and looking to their educational backgrounds, which includes programs





in art, music, and telecommunications, it is clear that they all bring different experience to the table. One cannot be certain who adds the technical and electronic touches, or who does the painting, drawing, collaging, and textiles bits. Individual recognition is not of interest to this collective. Their individual names do not appear in the exhibition, but one can be certain that their stories and talents do.

The individual members did appear in person at the other dearraindrop events during their stay in Winnipeg with workshops, artist talks, performances, and screenings at various venues. Butler, the curator behind all of the activity, brought this young collective in "an attempt to resuscitate Winnipeg's art community as a leading collaborative centre".¹ Looking to Winnipeg's rich history of art collectives and its collaborative spirit, Butler invited dearraindrop here to engage in the current art climate and test the waters. From The Royal Art Lodge, a noted inspiration of dearraindrop, to 26 to links with General Idea members, Winnipeg truly seems to breed collaborative spirit. Perhaps, dearraindrop will not only help to resurrect Winnipeg's collectivity as Butler hopes, but give us some insight into the reasons behind it.

The critic and writer Lucy Lippard, stated recently during her visit to Winnipeg, "Collaboration is the social version

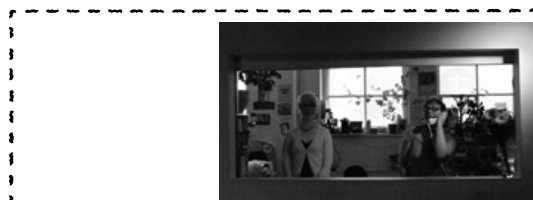
of the collage aesthetic".² So it stands to reason that these methods of art making are obvious partners, and both have a rich history in Winnipeg. Collaging is a way to bring together different realities, and collectivity is a way to bring together individuals to create a new whole, stepping away from the idea of artist as individual genius and into the realm of artist(s) as cultural facilitators and highlighters.

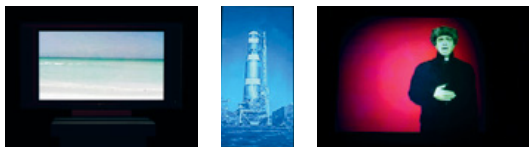
dearraindrop create a peek into the collective lives of young middle class Americans with a consciousness of war, politics, and the economy, and the struggle to engage with these when being bombarded on all fronts with pop culture and the lure of the lifestyle that it tends to perpetuate. Being an American collective heavy on cultural references does not seem to have made them inaccessible to international viewers, as they have exhibited widely throughout the world. In the case of "Don't Go To Your Mansion" most pop culture references are easily accessible and in fact identifiable by Canadian viewers. This is strengthened as dearraindrop looks at each new city as a treasure chest of discarded culture to explore, take from, and install alongside the work brought with them. The 'made in Manitoba' beer labels adorning the larger of the two collage walls attest to this. Not only did they find and include these labels, one gets the sense that they likely drank the beers that went with them. This fact demonstrates dearraindrop's dedication to finding fun and fostering friendships through their work as they explore the worlds they come in contact with. Heavy on fun, and seamless collective spirit, this is a collective and an exhibition that works well as a whole. Just as they intended.

NOTES

1. Press Release - dearraindrop's "Don't Go To Your Mansion", *aceartinc.*, October 2008
2. Wendy Wersch Lecture, Winnipeg Art Gallery, October 2008

Photos: hannah_g





TERRORISM, DEMOCRACY, LEISURE

AFSHIN MATLABI

JANUARY 23 – FEBRUARY 28, 2009



A response by
NONI BRYNJOLSON

The title of this exhibition refers to three related elements that artist Afshin Matlabi believes have become the basis of everyday life for those living in the West. It is true that in our post-9/11 society, terrorism has become more than a distant threat occurring elsewhere. Mass destruction on North American soil, present after WWII only in action movies, entered the sphere of reality with the symbolic destruction of two towers that once represented America's dominance within a global market. Viewed from within the binaries proliferated by mass media, terrorism is a unified entity, practiced by supposedly freedom-hating groups of Muslim fundamentalists. It is in direct opposition with western systems of democratic liberalism. How do we deal with, and in some cases escape the fear and paranoia that accompany such threats to our everyday existence? In Matlabi's artwork, leisure is depicted as the escapist fantasy by which we relieve these feelings.

Matlabi, a Montreal-based artist of Iranian descent, attempts to cover a wide range of ideas in *Terrorism, Democracy, Leisure*. The exhibition looks at the connections



Left: Afshin Matlabi, *Four Cuban Impressions*, 2004, video.
Middle: *WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction)*, 2005, video animation.
Right: *National Anthems*, 2006, Performance video.

Photos: Scott Stephens



between politics, aesthetics and spectacle, while the artist also inserts his own political and cultural subjectivity into the mix. The results are, at times, chaotic. Matlabi has a diverse and occasionally contradictory array of influences. The exhibition makes one wonder, is this confusion intentional? Is Matlabi attempting to reveal the inadequacies of rational western thought by exposing the slippage between meaning and expression, aesthetics and politics? Where might his work fit within an exploration of art that has dealt with war, and more specifically, terrorism? With such a political title, what kind of statement does Matlabi ultimately make?

The exhibition can be divided into three components. Matlabi implicates himself and his family in the western, middle-class conception of leisure in the video *Four Cuban Impressions*, in which he documents a scene from a favoured holiday destination. In this work, as well as in the digital photograph *Cuba*, a kind of utopia (which can be translated from its Greek roots to mean “no place” as well as “good place”) is created. The scene does not contain any cultural or historical referents, simply white sand, waves, and sky.

The replenishment offered to tourists at these destinations seems to be what Matlabi is referencing here. Vacationing is an opportunity to rest, relax, and indulge one’s body. We eat and drink excessively, concerned only with packing each moment with pleasure until our impending flight back to reality: job, mortgage, marital problems, and in Matlabi’s mind: fear of terrorism.

In the video, the Cuban beach scene has been pixilated and slowed down. This technique of digital impressionism has been used by many artists. German artist Thomas Ruff, for example, has made images dealing with the mediated representations of terrorism and war. These kinds of strategies highlight the conflation of contemporary aesthetics in art-making with images of war circulated by mass media. Borys Groys has written about this relationship, claiming that “contemporary mass media has emerged as by far the largest and most powerful machine for producing images, vastly more extensive and effective than our contemporary art system.”¹ Matlabi aims to simultaneously reference the aesthetics of media, as well as the techniques of the Impressionists. This could be looked at as a way of emphasizing

Anxiety Apology, 2003, detail, mixed media drawing.



the ties that our current outlook on the world have to nineteenth century modernism and industrialization. One thinks of Baudelaire and the flâneur, as well as countless paintings of prostitutes, the city streets, flower gardens and social events depicted by Monet, Renoir and Degas. Matlabi's reference to Impressionism misses the radicalness behind such works, however. While Impressionist paintings are now celebrated and worshipped as masterpieces, their original ties to an artistic avant-garde should not be forgotten. Many of these works, especially those of Manet, widened, and in some cases annihilated, the horizons of their present to make space for the new, the different, and the challenging.

represents the idea that the public apologies of government to their citizens (like the recent Harper apology to Canada's Aboriginal people) are insufficient. Referencing Persian miniatures, they are drawn from a side perspective, and therefore, like the piece *WMD*, brings elements of Matlabi's Iranian background into his artistic exploration of political issues. In a discussion following the opening of the exhibition, Matlabi described his influences as Magic Realism, Persian miniatures, faith-based art, and political art. He abhors abstraction, believing that art is more politically powerful when it is representational. Matlabi named Théodore Géricault's *Raft of Medusa* as an inspiration, a



Missiles are featured in many of Matlabi's works. In *WMD*, a video of a missile is shown while Persian music plays. In the crayon and paper pieces *Ballistic Missile's Weekend Family Outing*, plump tourists dive alongside grey missiles into vast expanses of swirling blue. Water, symbolic of refreshment, rebirth, and also salvation, is another common theme throughout the show. Nearby, the piece *Anxiety Apology* shows dozens of zombie-like figures running over surreally coloured hills, towards a spouting fountain too small to allow for mass atonement. Who are these figures? They have blood on their hands; could they be caricatures of terrorists? Apparently, the drawing

painting used journalistically to condemn the French government for corruption in 1819. In contrast with Géricault's accusatory work, however, the political intent of Matlabi's works is less clear. Matlabi's own political beliefs add another layer of opacity. After he discussed reconsidering "family values, core values, a faith-based system, and religious texts, which are more sophisticated than philosophy," he stated that "voting dictates the value of your artistic creativity," adding that he had voted Conservative in the last Canadian election.² Does this change the political message associated with the show? Matlabi sees democracy as flawed, but what kind of change is he after?



Anxiety Apology, 2003, mixed media drawing.

To me, the artist's words were more confusing than enlightening, both aesthetically and politically. Considered next to each other, one might piece together a critique of the inhabitants of western liberal democracies: unquestioning, flabby followers whose political systems inherently result in war, and who relieve their anxiety by escaping to warm, sandy beaches to regenerate. However, the works were more difficult to comprehend after hearing Matlabi speak. It seems to me that the satire and parody present in Matlabi's work moves him away from any effective criticism of social realities. Groys writes about the continued relevance of the criterion of radicalness in judging art for its political value, stating that "the worst thing that can be said of an artist continues to be that his or her art is "harmless."³ This is a fair criticism in the context of this exhibition, since Matlabi claims to be making a political statement. Humour has been used as a postmodern strategy to create distance and critique social issues since the 1960s. However, the strategy doesn't seem to match with the overall intent of Matlabi's exhibition, which is to expose the contradictions inherent in western life that allow us to enjoy luxuries in the face of threats made by small groups of Islamic fundamentalists.

The artwork of Shirin Neshat, an artist who also left Iran for North America, does this effectively, and beautifully. It seems questionable that Matlabi would describe her work as an influence, when her attempts at visualizing cultural contradictions have been sincere rather than parodic. In a *Fuse* magazine review of *Terrorism, Democracy, Leisure*, Leila Pourtavaf wrote that the work of Neshat "can easily be read through a binary opposition," while Matlabi's work "functions outside of a binary" and has therefore been ignored by Western art institutions.⁴ I disagree with this analysis of both artists' work. While Neshat does intend to make work dealing with binary oppositions, this does not reduce it to an easy reading. Instead, her work confronts the complexity of Muslim society, dealing with the interplay



between intellectual and religious forces, the tension between change and tradition, and the shifting and complicated relationships between men and women. Neshat's work could be said to exist within an oppositional sphere, perhaps aligned with Jacques Rancière's notion of reconfiguring the distribution of the sensible by "modifying the very aesthetico-political field of possibility" to create new forms of life and of community.⁵ Matlabi's art works on the level of parody, but if his intention is to challenge a sphere

Above: *Ballistic Missile's Weekend Family Outing*, 2006, detail, colour crayon on paper.
Below: Installation view.

Photos: Scott Stephens





of culture politically and aesthetically, then sincerity would have been a more effective strategy.

Two of Matlabi's videos deal with anthems and flags, symbols that constitute the unity behind democratic nations—or do they? In *National Anthems*, Matlabi sings the anthems of several countries from memory. The results are entertaining, as the performance reminds us how similarly strained stances and facial expressions articulate a deep, seemingly natural patriotism, regardless of which country one pledges allegiance to. From the days of singing 'O, Canada' in elementary school, we are instilled with a sense of nationality and loyalty. In some cases, this causes us to join the military, in others, we become activists unafraid to challenge our own country's record on human rights. Often, we just become more enthusiastic sports fans. Matlabi's video, while humorous, could have used some editing. The same problem exists with the adjacent video, in which flags of the United Nations repeatedly flash on the screen. The words "United Fuckin' Nations" are interjected repeatedly. Sloppily drawn using computer Paint, they highlight an issue with many of the works in the show: they fall flat in mimicking the aesthetics of mass media. MTV-style music videos and news



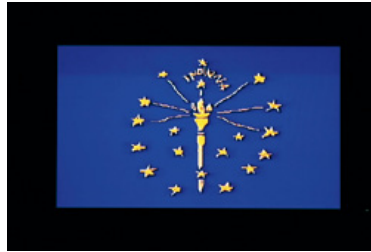
clips on CNN are quick, slick, and seamlessly clean. These works have a more DIY appearance, which could be interesting if it appeared to be done self-consciously.

In reflecting on *Terrorism, Democracy, Leisure*, I considered the potential for politically themed art in a post-9/11 context to express and articulate the kinds of oppositional strategies initiated by avant-garde artists—including the Impressionists—at the end of the nineteenth century. This is not naiveté. Certainly, contemporary avant-garde



Left: *Cuba*, 2002, digital image.
Right: Installation view.
Below: *Four Cuban Impressions*, 2004, video.

Photos: Scott Stephens



artwork incorporates an awareness of new media, new social, political and historical contexts, and new considerations of identity and globalization. This can be seen in the cultural work of many artists, curators, writers and galleries. As T.J. Demos makes clear in *October's* Winter 2008 issue centred around the American-led invasion of Iraq, "the artistic and curatorial responses to the war...have been immediate, diverse, and profound," and "there are plenty of contemporary models that represent nuanced and complex forms of engagement, whether they be theoretical, analytical, documentary, or aesthetic."⁶ This could include the work of Shirin Neshat, as well as others such as Walid Raad, Paul Chan, Emily Jacir, and Steve McQueen.

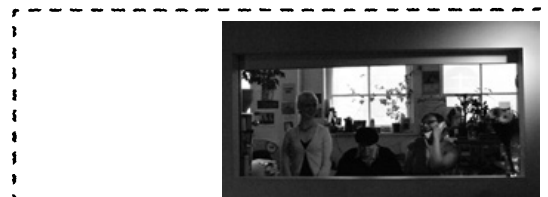
In Canada, a 2007 exhibition called *Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow of War* was held at Toronto's Blackwood Gallery, and featured Canadian and international artists. In many cases, these artists are politically committed activists (sometimes through their art, and sometimes separate from it) who can be said to occupy an oppositional space between aesthetics and politics. Matlabi makes work that touches on these issues. He brings up the forces that structure our society, seeming to describe the kind of global empire described by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt: "the dominant nation-states along with supranational institutions, major capitalist corporations and other powers," which exists within a state of constant war.⁷ Matlabi introduces elements of his Iranian background, creating a *mêlée* of references and influences. Overall, however,

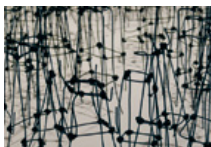
the artist's approach limits the potential of his work to go beyond parody, and risks becoming what Groys described as "harmless." *Terrorism, Democracy, Leisure* could be so much more. While making us aware of the contradictions of western society, we need to be able to do more than just escape—whether that escape is found in parody, or whether it is found on the white sand beaches of Cuba.

NOTES

1. Borys Groys, "Art at War," *Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow of War* (Toronto: Blackwood Gallery, 2008): 9.
2. Afshin Matlabi, artist talk, *aceartinc.*, January 24, 2009.
3. Groys, 11.
4. Leila Pourtavaf, "Cracking Up the Nation: Terrorism, Democracy, Leisure," *Fuse* 30.1 (2007): 46.
5. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006): 3.
6. T.J. Demos, *October*, 123 (2008): 33, 34.
7. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004): xii.

Left, middle: *United Fuckin' Nations*, 2003, video animation.
Right: *United Fuckin' States of America*, 2003, video animation.





ARCHIVE COLLIN ZIPP REVIVAL HEIDI PHILLIPS

MARCH 13 – APRIL 10, 2009



A response by
SARAH SWAN

"Soul" is an insipid word these days. Its meaning has gone soft, linked as it is to clichés about eyes and books about chicken soup. "Soul stirring" is employed much too liberally in the blurbs of dust-jackets and movie reviews, indicating a collective impression that soul is a place provoked, like the painful tickle of a bumped funny bone, when the world, bathed in light, becomes unbearably pretty. But the soul in Phillips' work, *Revival*, is not merely a place somewhere in the body where beauty and sublime moments are palpable. In a manner that is spiritual without being overtly religious, *Revival* describes the soul as residing in a much further place.

In Phillips' installation, six rickety 16 mm film projectors sit on the floor, their lengths of film stretched high to reels on the ceiling. If the wonky, tipped projectors are anthropomorphic, these tall stretches of film are their deliberately exposed, strung out innards. The six crooked, overlapping projections that surround the viewer are a near hypnotic flickering of the elements of hand processed colour printing; fractured black and white negatives, sprockets, and bleach stains shift and collide with occasional bursts of



Left, middle left: **Collin Zipp, *Archive*.**
Middle right, right: **Heidi Phillips, *Revival*.**

Photos: Scott Stephens



cyan, magenta and yellow. Despite brief moments of luminous colour, the imagery in *Revival* creates a dark and murky atmosphere, much like the grainy and mysterious life transferred to screen via ultrasound.

Phillips' found footage compilation does not play like carefully crafted art, rather it plays like the process itself; a series of accidents, discoveries and chemical experiments. A big-bellied rescue helicopter hovers in the air, sometimes receding, sometimes approaching, but never quite touching down. A crowd of hands waving slowly in the searchlights are waiting to be rescued, their posture also reminiscent of the raised hands of a holy spirit revival meeting. This loose narrative of rescuee and rescuer seems to ask, What if the soul is a massive, spreading wasteland? What if it is more than a sub-sternal sensory pad that tingles like a bumped funny bone? What if it is really a depraved, dark place that needs saving?

Phillips' process, that of manipulating old films abandoned in the bins of thrift stores and giving them a new, albeit scratched and distressed existence, fits hand in hand with the fact that the old projectors were given a

deliberate, central focus in the installation due to their susceptibility to collapse. But if the film projectors are as much a character in the work as the content of the film itself, so are the walls of surround sound. Weaving in and around the chronic tickity-tick of the projectors, the chopping helicopter blades change speed and pitch as they recede and approach, at times providing a bass-y, grounding presence. Sound bytes taken from Werner Herzog's "Little Dieter Needs to Fly" float in from above, and when brought together in Phillips' artist book, read like the transcribed nightmare of a solemn omnipresent narrator.

This is basically what death looks like to me

It was like an all mighty being as it came out

Floating along in a
real thick medium

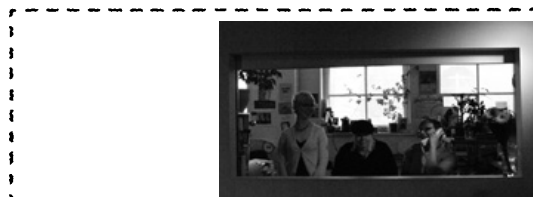
The emotional thrust of the soundtrack happens in one achingly contained moment: twenty seconds of soaring operatic melody, barely enough to create a brief hopeful reprieve from the screen's ominous glow. Though the

Left: Collin Zipp, *Archive*, detail, video still.

Courtesy of the artist.

Right: Heidi Phillips, *Revival*, detail, video still.

Courtesy of the artist.





projections are not time based, the moment can be felt as epic, a climax of the spiritual ecstasy longed for when experiencing a dark night of the soul. It is of existential significance perhaps, that Phillips' helicopter never lands, and that the hands continue to wave, as if in trance, seemingly forever.

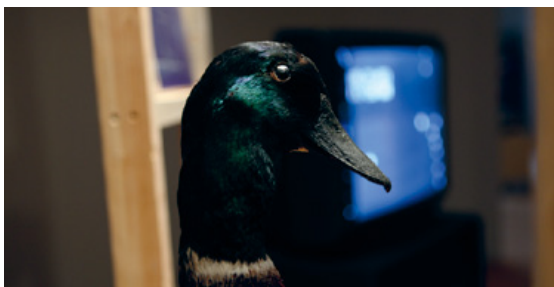
Move from the soul to the realm of science, where Collin Zipp's work *archive* resembles a sort of cryptic museum collection, at once an homage to the beauty of the natural world and a testimony of its slow demise. The collection consists of 12 movable elements, rearranged by the artist throughout the duration of the show. The collection's stacked bee hives are totemic, yet as each layer is swathed in plastic they, along with the sealed mason jars of honey and wax, have a suffocated, hushed feel. Indeed, all the objects in Zipp's collection resonate quietly, especially the three vestigial harpoons wrapped in twine and burlap, reminding of both Beuys and Christo. The objects' stillness is emphasized by their placement next to the movement on the video terminals, one depicting a frenzy of bees and the other slowly lurking shapes at the bottom of an ocean. Most the the objects in *archive* are mounted on wooden



scaffolding and appear to be randomly placed, as though taken posthumously from the basement storage of some obscure naturalist and given a good dusting. A wall sized grid of bird photographs is incomplete, its empty spaces indicating a failed or extinct species. But the most effective elements in the collection are those that are the most subtle. A black and white photograph of a hooded figure lilt-ing across a barren landscape could be a man in the garb of beekeeper or an astronaut on a distant planet. A faded blueprint of the dotted lines of a boat's sonar, the undulating line of a sepia tinged seismic graph, and the sparse dots that are the animated migration patterns of birds are all beautifully, minimally graphic. The viewer may



Heidi Phillips, *Revival*.
Photos: Scott Stephens



not know the exact meaning or purpose of what they are seeing in these documents yet a careful, alternative understanding can still be achieved. There is poetry in science, in the precision and delicacy of our measuring instruments and tracking technologies. And yet, Zipp's work is not a one-off statement. It is more like a conversation between two parties, with humankind's appetite and appreciation for beauty and technology on one side and the negative effects of this hunger on the other. It is the dialogue too, between the nearly reliquary pieces in the collection and the more modern technologies that saves the work from becoming a heavy handed environmentalist lecture. This nuanced language is especially important in a culture

already saturated with 'green' planet friendly vernacular. A table of obsessively rendered wire sculptures encapsulates the dialogue perfectly. These small twisting shapes, like black calligraphic doodles come to three dimensional life, resemble cell phone towers but are arranged like a herd of animals on a field. When crouched at eye level, it is possible to see in the sculpture an exquisitely austere, apocalyptic landscape. This is why in the objects Zipp has archived there is both lament and intrigue.

Archive, comprised of mostly found objects, is somewhat of a departure for Zipp, who has gained some notoriety for his video based work. It is interesting to note that in the trajectory of his, as well as Phillips' art, there is a new leaning towards experimentation with non-video media and heightened tactility. And both artists' latest offerings are laced through with a dark and beautiful doom.

Collin Zipp, *Archive*.
Photos: Scott Stephens



SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

ACEARTINC. FEASTS AND EMBROIDERY

AN EXPLANATION FROM
THE PROGRAMMER

OCTOBER 2008 – PRESENT



aceartinc. likes to keep up with old friends and make new ones.

The aceartinc. Embroidery arose from the aceartinc. Feasts. Food and conversation are lynchpins of a community; these things allow us to get to know one another and thus the places in which we live.

On a fairly regular basis ace hosts a dinner party for up to fifteen people in the gallery. The guests all stem from the first meal. The people who ended up with the invitation could bring a guest, the only stipulation being that it was not a colleague in the arts community, we wanted to encourage some new faces to enjoy aceartinc. Between each course everyone swapped places, taking their name card with them, thus ensuring a variety of conversation flourished. The next dinner saw the guests of the original invitees return who in turn brought a guest; at the next dinner we will host the guests of the guests and their guests... and so it will continue, people arriving as strangers, leaving as friends.

After each dinner, between a generous helping of spills and stains documenting what was consumed (or not), diners





sign the cloth. These signatures and stains are then embroidered. This is actually something my mum, Ericca, has done for years and I owe her thanks for the idea (actually she only does the signatures, Talia Syrie suggested we do the stains after I issued an extended lament over the dangers of laundering this precious artefact). The embroidery takes place at two different events and provides the opportunity for conversations between diners to continue and also have a more open social activity- anyone is welcome to come along. Our friends at MAWA have a stitch and bitch we like to go to which takes place from noon til 4 on the first Saturday of the month (the cloth usually arrives at 2pm)—tea and cake and chat guaranteed. We were also regulars at one of our neighbours' events, the Duke of Kent Royal Canadian Legion Club's Thursday live jazz night, where we sit around and drink beer and pop whilst chain stitching in time to old time bluegrass. We've just started stitching at the Lo Pub—check aceart.org for dates. Anyone who embroiders the cloth is also invited to sign it.

The aims of the Feasts and Embroidery are to bring new people into ace via elaborate word of mouth methods. It

is hoped that by breaking bread within and outside of the gallery the guests and stitchers will regard ace as a friend community hub in which they can share. The meals and embroidery events provide opportunities for cultural exchange, debate and linking disparate networks, in other words conversation, thus strengthening community ties.

When the meals are concluded (end of this year?) and the stitching completed, ace will host a party to which all the diners and embroiderers will be invited and also, of course, bring a guest, and the embroidered tablecloth will be displayed.

Everyone/anyone is welcome to join us at the embroidery events. Don't worry if you have never embroidered before, someone will be happy to show you. Even if you don't fancy stitching come along for a chat and a drink, we'd love to see you.



ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

A GRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY USA

Curated by the Center for the Study
of Political Graphics

Organised by Heather Haynes and Izida Zorde

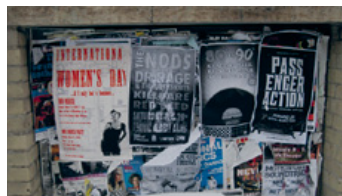
JANUARY 23 – FEBRUARY 28, 2009

A collection of Black Panther Party posters, newspaper graphics and broadsheets archived at the Center for the Study of Political Graphics in Los Angeles, California. Special attention was paid to both the output of Emory Douglas as well as the broad array of action and solidarity work that the Black Panther Party participated in.



BLACK PANTHER POSTER PROJECT

Ace funded grassroots community activists screen printed posters to enhance the communication within/outside their respective communities. Members of The Bike Dump and International Women's Day organisers and queer youth went along to our friends at the Manitoba Printmakers on Martha Street and got skilled up.



Left: Emory Douglas, *The ideas that can and will sustain*, screenprint on newsprint. Courtesy of the Center for the Study of Political Graphics.

Above right: Photo: Sarah K Granke

Below right: Photo: hannah_g

STITCHED AND DRAWN

RICHARD BOULET

Curated by Wayne Baerwaldt

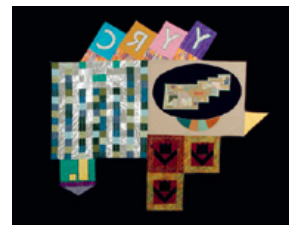
A touring exhibition organized by
The Illingworth Kerr Gallery in Calgary

MAY 5 – JUNE 13, 2009

This touring exhibition organized by the Illingworth Kerr Gallery at the Alberta College of Art + Design, Calgary, includes more than thirty recent works by Edmonton artist Richard Boulet. The artist addresses issues of an eventual spirituality through the cultivation of mental health. His practice is a multifaceted one that includes mixed media drawings and fibre sculptures incorporating quilting and cross-stitching techniques.

Boulet's work has probed subjects including his personal history of schizophrenia and references homelessness, psychosis, crisis intervention, family issues, medication, and coping strategies. It is important to Boulet to mention the word schizophrenia as a point of departure in a complete list of mental health topics addressed in his work. By providing this context, there is as much consideration paid to recovery as to pre-diagnosis hardships.

The artist's latest body of fibre work is decidedly reflexive in nature, confronting past behaviours and decisions that have impacted negatively on his mental state. Boulet's time-intensive working process provides the artist an opportunity to contemplate the past and, stitch by careful



stitch, to put things right. As he explains, "To use quilting and cross-stitching in a body of work that alludes to the psychological dilemmas of redressing regrets seems appropriate, in that there is a strong sense of comfort and self care in these two fibre techniques. Things can't be so bad, so confused, so basically wrong, if the resulting product produced instills a sense of a home well tended, eventually." Commenting on the contrast between two aspects of his practice, drawing and quilting/cross-stitching, Boulet explains that drawing provides him an outlet for another sort of expression: "My drawings have a much different job to accomplish. This is when I mentally let loose. I let my mind slide into the energy of the atavistic psychological experience. I jump into the psyche with abandon and see what I can pull out by the seat of my pants. Drawing can be a testing ground to see if I have finally managed to recover to the point that there is no hidden danger lurking in my mind. Yes, the schizophrenia is always present at a certain level, but rules for maintaining mental health do exist, in part; drawing rules that were learnt in university and on my own. It is the sublime training of experience applied to the task at hand that eventually allows the fears and joys of the past to be investigated and given light."

Richard Boulet has worked and lived in Edmonton for the past twelve years. He has a BFA from the University of Manitoba School of Art, Winnipeg, and an MFA from the University of Alberta, Edmonton. Boulet has exhibited at Plug In ICA, Winnipeg, the 2007 Alberta Biennale, Creative Growth, Oakland (in association with Paul Butler's Collage Party and Matthew Higgs) and Keyano College Art Gallery, Fort McMurray, Alberta.

© The Illingworth Kerr Gallery

Left: Richard Boulet, *epiphany*, 2005, fabric appliqué and cross stitch.

Right: *CRY*, 2006, quilting and cross stitch.



PARTNERSHIPS

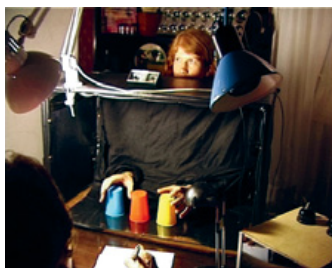
URBAN SHAMAN
CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL ART

media arts centre
VIDEO POOL

((send + receive)))

manitobacraftscouncil

arts
council
of Northern Ireland



ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND INTERNATIONAL RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Susan MacWilliam

July 21 – August 21, 2008

Susan MacWilliam was selected by the Northern Ireland Arts Council to participate on their competitive and esteemed International Residency program. During her residency she researched the *Thomas Glendenning Hamilton Spirit Photograph Collection* housed at the University of Manitoba Archives and created *F-L-A-M-M-A-R-I-O-N*, now part of the *Remote Viewing* video installation. MacWilliam was chosen to represent Northern Ireland at the 53rd Venice Biennale where she will be presenting this work. She will bring this exhibition to Winnipeg October 15th – November 12th, 2009 thanks to funding from the Canada Councils Visiting Foreign Artist program.



Left: Susan MacWilliam, *Dermo Optics*, 2006,
video still. Courtesy of the artist.

(IN) VISIBLE CITIES

A PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL

September 12 – 21, 2008

aceartinc., in conjunction with **Urban Shaman**, **VideoPool**, and independent curator **Joanne Bristol**, presented *(in) visible cities*—a ten day performance art festival for Winnipeg's Exchange District. The central intention of *(in) visible cities* was to present a range of live performance works by local, national and international artists that engaged audiences in unique ways in the Exchange District.

Nhan Duc Ngyen (Vietnam/Vancouver, British Columbia); Finger in the Dyke Productions: Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan (Winnipeg, Manitoba; aceartinc.) Cheryl L'Hirondelle (Vancouver, British Columbia); Jean Randolph (Winnipeg, Manitoba); Jessica Thompson (Toronto, Ontario; Videopool); Fastwurms (Toronto/Creemore, Ontario; Plug-In ICA)

SEND + RECEIVE

A FESTIVAL OF SOUND

dearraindrop

October 18, 2008

THE 8TH WENDY WERSCH MEMORIAL LECTURE

Lucy Lippard

October 26, 2008

University of Winnipeg Women's Studies, Plug In Inc., MAWA, WAG, University of Manitoba Faculty of Architecture and the School of Art, Video Pool and the Wendy Wersch Memorial Fund.

THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

A COLLECTION OF SINGLE CHANNEL AND INTERACTIVE, KINETIC VIDEO WORKS

Christopher Flower

November 14 – December 12, 2008

Video Pool Media Arts Centre

Co-sponsored screenings of

HANDMADE NATION

FILM SCREENING AND CRAFT SALE

Faythe Levine

June 19, 2009

The Manitoba Crafts Council, Manitoba Crafts Museum and Library, Art from the Heart, MAWA, and the Winnipeg DIY Festival

Handmade Nation documents a movement of artists, crafters and designers that recognize a marriage between historical techniques, punk and DIY ethos while being influenced by traditional handiwork, modern aesthetics, politics, feminism and art. Fueled by the common thread of creating, *Handmade Nation* explores a burgeoning art community that is based on creativity, determination and networking.

In 2006, first-time director Faythe Levine traveled to 15 cities, interviewing 80 individuals. Levine captured the virtually tight-knit community that exists through websites, blogs and online stores and connects to the greater public through independent boutiques, galleries and craft fairs. Interviews were also conducted in artists' studios and homes of the featured makers. (2009 release, 65 minutes)



MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES



WINTER WARMER ANNUAL MEMBERS' SHOW NOVEMBER 29 – DECEMBER 12, 2008



The Cedar Tavern Singers serenaded us all during The Winter Warmer.

Q: Are we not men? A: We are the Cedar Tavern Singers AKA Les Phonoréalistes!

But are the Cedar Tavern Singers AKA Les Phonoréalistes, consisting of Daniel Wong and Mary-Anne McTrowe, a folk rock band or a tongue-in-cheek art project? We are both! Set to catchy tunes and sensibilities, we wryly convey the artistic condition, soulfully deliver art history education, and from time to time belt out a well-loved standard—all this, yet at the same time we produce an absurd play from the slippages of understanding and knowledge. We are a blend of the naïve awkwardness of one's first basement rock band and the sardonic façade of the overeducated.





MYSTERY MEAT

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA SCHOOL
OF ART ANNUAL JURIED SHOW

APRIL 17 – 30, 2009



WORLD PINHOLE PHOTOGRAPHY DAY

APRIL 26, 2009

ARRIVALS PROJECT

APRIL 22 – 27, 2009

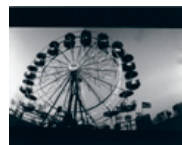
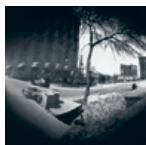
The **Arrivals Project** Cross-Canada Workshop Series is for writers, actors, poets and storytellers (oral, written or visual) working from diverse media and traditions who wish to connect in new ways to their authentic historic bodies, as a powerful source for artistic expression.

urban ink Artistic Director, Diane Roberts guided local artists & cultural producers in an embodied exploration of their own histories of (dis)place(ment). Participants discover & work with a 'Personal Legacy Voice' of an ancestor at least three generations removed. The in-studio work involves ensemble and individual physical & vocal exercises designed to awaken ancestral histories stored in our blood and bones. Roberts' methodology is a combination of 'Afrisporic' influenced performance traditions that open gateways for the emergence of historic truths from critically anchored personal places.

www.urbanink.ca

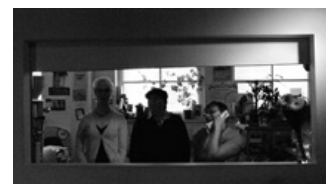
To celebrate this international extravaganza of DIY, photography, **aceartinc.** and **PLATFORM: centre for photographic + digital arts** are joined forces and resources to impart the skill of experimental pinhole photography to a few of our respective members. The workshop was run by local photographer, Sarah Crawley.

The Pinhole Art Collective was formed out of this workshop and will be sharing their work in April 2010 at ace and Platform.



Top, left: **Heather Komus**. Courtesy of the artist.

Right side, clockwise from top: **Sandra Campbell**, **Liz Garlicki**, **Jaquelyn Hebert**, **Marian Butler**, **Paul Robles**, **Dana Kletke**.



BRINGING HOME THE BACON

CURATED BY
THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG
ART HISTORY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
MAY 1 – 30, 2009

Bringing Home the Bacon commemorates the 90th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike by exploring relationships between art and labour throughout Manitoba's history. The curated exhibition uses the inspiration of a historic local event to connect with current labour discussions by drawing attention to the working environment, the working individual, and the work of art itself.



I KNOW ONE OTHER PERSON IN THIS TOWN

CONWAY + YOUNG
MAY 1 – JUNE 30, 2009 (WASHROOM)

Conway + Young permitted aceartinc. to paste one of their projects, 'I Know One Other Person In This Town' in the right hand washroom. Visitors to the gallery were cordially invited to participate by writing on the walls...



PRESSURE COOKER

MEMBERS' PERFORMANCE SHOW

MAY 8, 2009



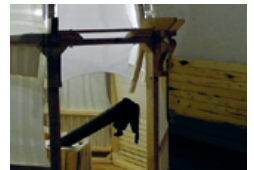
PROJECT ROOM

ROBERT TAITE

SETH WOODYARD



Robert Taite. Courtesy of the artist.



Seth Woodyard. Courtesy of the artist.



DIY / DIT

DO-IT-YOURSELF / DO-IT-TOGETHER



Background image:
Source: Irene Bindi, *acqua e servizio*.

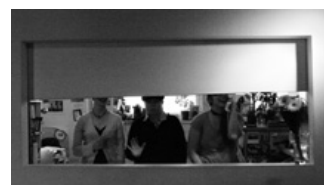
INSTIGATOR! AMATEUR! COLLABORATOR! LET'S DO-IT-TOGETHER



AMY SPENCER

Do-it-yourself culture is about using anything that you can get your hands on to shape your own cultural product and your own version of whatever you think is missing from wider mainstream culture. You can publish your own writing, set up your own art gallery, start a band, record an album, curate an exhibition, build a website or distribute your art. You can become an artist, a writer, a poet, a crafter, a curator or a publisher. The list of possibilities is endless.

DIY is nothing new. It is not limited to one particular country or one specific period. Although its focus shifts and changes depending on location and time, the motivation to create and connect with others is essentially the same. It takes many forms. It can be creative or political. It can be about self documentation and self representation or about forging a physical or virtual sense of community. The enduring appeal of this movement is that anyone can get involved and make it their own. DIY is about taking part and celebrating the experience and process of creation rather than the finished product. Its independent ethos is crucial and the amateur approach is respected. It values



handmade over professionalism and amateur over expert. Its aesthetic is often experimental and rule breaking and it draws on influences from Dada, Fluxus and Situationism to Punk and beyond.

DIY has always been about collaboration and participation. Audiences are encouraged to take part rather than passively take the position of consumer. The potentials of new technologies have been embraced as ways to work together, experiment collectively and distribute widely. Now, new media opportunities, a growing understanding of participatory culture and a history of open source collaborative working practices, mean that a new understanding of DIY is emerging. It is no longer enough to just do-it-yourself—we can now do-it-together.

The history of DIY culture is rich with experimental individuals and communities who have used an independent means of production as an intrinsic part of their work and their means of distributing it to others. Many visual artists working in the 20th century experimented with a DIY approach as a form of cultural resistance by deciding to distribute their own work in the search for their own audience. During the first half of the 20th century, technological developments in the print industry meant that artists had new opportunity to distribute their work for themselves rather than rely on traditional networks. The Dada and later Fluxus and Situationist movements borrowed many ideas from the self distribution successes of the independent small presses. Members of these art movements realised that they could cheaply and easily reproduce their work and so interact with a wider audience and find opportunities for mass collaboration. For them, individuality lay in the creative process rather than in passive consumption and so many turned away from what they saw to be the elite world of traditional art practices. Dada, Fluxus and Situationist artists played with mass-producing images and, in doing so, they constantly reinvented the medium

within which they were working. They experimented with the mass distribution of images, the concept of fly posting (where an image would be distributed as street art) and the production of rubber stamps that could be used to produce multiple images. Such methods were designed to change the widely held perception of art as elitist and instead establish the idea that it could be universal and accessible. Artists within these movements began to realise that they did not need to operate within the mainstream art world but could co-exist just outside, developing new networks through which to distribute their art.

Although it is often difficult to identify a contemporary cultural product as having a DIY approach, there are often certain reoccurring aesthetics. Many of these have developed within DIY art communities and connect DIY print and art traditions. One enduring visual style is cut and paste, which was pioneered by Situationists and later adopted by punk zine writers in the 1970s. Cut and paste involves the cutting up of text (often produced on a typewriter) and images and gluing them onto the page. This rough copy is then copied as the finished product. Handwritten text is often used, written in felt pen and complete with crossings out and miss spellings. This is a personal approach and the maker or writer can be seen as clearly evident in the finished product. This is a visual way of celebrating the anti-professional stance and illustrates a sense of freedom of expression and a sort of 'who cares what you think' attitude. There is a sense of immediacy and a feeling that this could have been produced just a minute ago and traces of its creator still remain.

DIY champions the amateur approach and the idea that anyone can become a musician, artist, curator, writer, publisher or crafter using whatever resources they have available. The approach is often experimental and plays with the concepts of creation and production. There is an emphasis on the experience of creation being valued above the finished product. What you create doesn't have



to be perfect or polished or be seen as a stepping stone on the way to professionalism or fame and fortune. It is an alternative and one that is just as valid. Art doesn't need to be displayed in an art gallery to be seen as art. Music doesn't need to be played in major music venues. Writing doesn't need to be published in a book and sold in chain book stores. It can be, but the experience of independence and the process of creation is what is most important. It is this sense of independence that makes it so accessible. A DIY product can be a call for others to take part. There is often less emphasis on striving for technical perfection and more on experimentation and participation.

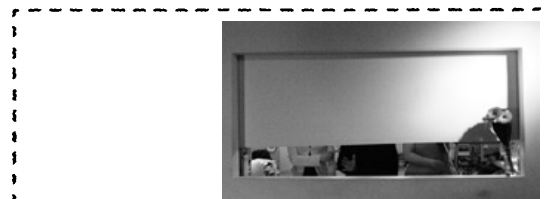
Technology has played its part in the rise of DIY culture in all its forms. During its history, each wave of creative and cultural output was at the time of a new and affordable development in technology, which opened up possibilities for reproduction. The mimeograph, the printing press, the photocopier and the internet have all played their part. Having access to the means of production and distribution has always empowered individuals to create. The emergence of new technology also forces old technology to be put to different, often artistic purposes. For example, the development of off-set printing in the 1950s left stocks of letterpress equipment for sale very cheaply. Artists, as well as publishers, were able to experiment with this form and take control of the production of their work. Having control of the means of production and distribution can be a liberating experience and one which is at the heart of DIY culture.

Opportunities for amateur cultural production have always existed as those driven by a fiercely independent ethos seek representation in ways that mainstream culture does not usually allow. However, in recent years, the rise of new media has expanded opportunities. Just as in the past new developments in technology have meant increased DIY activity, the internet has allowed more people to create and distribute their own media and their own art. Just as

it has transformed so many ways of interacting in contemporary life in the early twenty-first century, the internet offers new opportunities to DIY culture. Amateur media production now runs along entirely new avenues and individuals are able to share their work and themselves with a potentially huge, though often unseen, audience. New technology allows a more immediate form of production and distribution. There is the potential to instantly find an audience for your work and receive feedback. Throughout the history of DIY culture there has been an urgency to create and distribute something now and new media is making that more possible than ever before.

Building networks and communities has always been a part of DIY culture. There have always been people desperate to make connections with others—from a kid documenting their own experiences through writing zines and distributing them throughout their music scene to an artist creating street art in their town. New media has infinitely expanded the potential for developing connections between people. Communities no longer need to be limited by geography—they can be global. There is now more opportunity for collaboration, using practices developed through the open source movement. Individuals are embracing these new opportunities and working together to realise their possibilities. Do-it-yourself culture is evolving and there are now new and exciting ways to do-it-together.

Amy Spencer is the author of DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture (2005, 2008) and The Crafter Culture Handbook (2007). She is a PhD student at the Centre for Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, London. Her research explores the shifting positions of the author and reader in digital literature. She is also Programme Coordinator for art + power, a Bristol arts organisation that aims to promote social inclusion through participation in the arts, and she runs creative writing workshops.



THE VINDICATION OF THE BUREAUCRAT



ANDREW KEAR

DIY AND THE “BUREAUCRATIC TENDENCY”

In “The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat,” AA Bronson provides a commentary on the emergence of Canadian artist-run centres in the late-1960s and 1970s. He writes of artists who sought independence from the “gallery system’s” cloying morass of uninspired institutional bureaucracy, and community with like-minded “dreamers.” He writes of these artist-dreamers awakening one day to discover that they together embodied a new breed of organization, one that survived because it manifest a higher (that is, more useful) version of the older art institution’s “bureaucratic tendency.” While Bronson and his generation were initially humiliated that it could have been the outcome of their dreaming, he acknowledges that bureaucratization remains vital to the story of contemporary DIY-inspired art practice in this country.¹

Bronson’s tale is one of transition from humiliation to vindication, and a tale with potentially broader historical application. We might think of the activities of the late-1960s and 1970s as a kind of historical re-enactment, and of DIY as a phase within an eternal dance between artist-



dreamers and art institutions, as the visionary preamble to the formation of new, meaningful, and useful bureaucracies for artists. To witness an earlier script of the interface between DIY and bureaucratization we can do no better than turn our attention to the story of visual art in Winnipeg at the turn of the 20th century.

WINNIPEG

What was, in the early 1870s, a slapdash settlement built around a couple rivers, farming, and a fur trading post became, a decade later, a city of 17,000. Cut swiftly through by a transcontinental railway in the 1880s, Winnipeg saw, in the lines and scars of its youth, economic progress. Through the turn of the century the city beckoned the world with this visage through maps, posters, and pamphlets.² However, even among those who made boosterism their main prerogative, there lay a Victorian fear that unchecked industrial development exacted a collateral damage by eviscerating the conditions necessary for human flourishing. A civic culture, grounded in a vibrant artistic community, was seen as the antidote. There wasn't much of an art scene in Winnipeg prior to the 1880s. Itinerants like Henri Julien and Sydney Prior Hall sketched for eastern periodicals such as *The Canadian Illustrated News* in the wake of the Red River uprising, and others like Dr. Richard B. Nevitt and Hamilton A. Jukes recorded topography and settlement life as part of Mountie and surveying contingents. Those artists that did stay in the new province, including W. Frank Lynn and D. Macdonald, often homesteaded or held down related jobs, such as sign painting, in addition to maintaining an art practice.³

While few pubic venues for exhibition existed at this point, there were a few hopeful indicators. Beginning in 1871 work by amateur artists was displayed at the irregularly mounted Provincial Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, alongside farm machinery and produce at the Old



Exhibition Grounds at Dufferin and Sinclair. In 1886, the city's first collective of artists, the short-lived Winnipeg Art Society, formed; under an executive committee composed largely of amateur artists, a sign painter, and an art dealer, it hosted drawing and painting classes and began supporting exhibitions by its membership, which nonetheless dwindled after only a year.⁴

The tempo of artistic endeavour greatly increased after 1890, when Manitoba entered a period of sustained immigration and economic prosperity. Beginning in 1891, after an exhibition committee led by Lauchlan A. Hamilton (commissioner for the Canadian Pacific Railway and an amateur artist) was instituted, the stature and quality of

Cyril H. Barraud. *The Industrial Bureau Doorway*, 1914. Etching on paper, 5/50. 30.3 x 22.7 cm. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery; Gift of Mrs. R. Fraser and Mrs. H. Barbour in memory of their father, Mr. George Wilson. G-73-153. Photographed by Ernest Mayer.



art at the Industrial Exhibition rose.⁵ Commercial collectors and art dealers were also emerging across the city; George W. Cranston on Portage Avenue became one of the most established, exhibiting local painters like Lynn and Macdonald, as well as china painting by artists like Hester Bird. Members of the professional and commercial classes who were themselves amateur artists or art collectors or simply had a vested economic interest in seeing art succeed, such as Edgar J. Ransom of the Ransom Engraving Company and W.J. Bulman of the Bulman Brothers lithography firm, started taking a more active interest in advocating for institutions that could help sustain and draw more artists to the city. Art criticism and exhibition reviews began appearing in such periodicals as the *Manitoba Free Press* and a weekly arts/culture/gossip magazine, *Town Topics*. Articulate voices began to surface, including those of architect Walter Chesterton,⁶ early woman's rights activist Ella Cora Hind, artist Alexander Keszthelyi, who established an important early private art school in the city in 1908, and the painter and architectural draughtsman, Claude W. Gray. Under the *nom de plume* Van Dyke Brown, Gray especially made a concerted effort to link the "aesthetic needs of Manitoba" and the formation of civic art institutions, specifically an art gallery and art school.⁷

For many Winnipeg artists at the turn of the 20th century, increasing public access to art education was regarded as key to the survival of a sustainable artistic community. The addition of art to the provincial school curriculum after 1900 was an important milestone. It also pointed to a concern for public education generally, something voiced often by women with ties to the arts community. For instance, the painter Isabel McArthur was actively involved in organizing the Free Kindergarten movement.⁸ Another artist, Mary Ewart, established the Free Art School in 1911, which she intended as a "stepping stone to the establishment of an art institute."⁹

Mary Ewart, who arrived in Winnipeg from Philadelphia in 1907, embodied the Edwardian drive for bureaucratic effectiveness. She was the first president of the Western Art Association (WAA), elected to the post in 1910.¹⁰ Often convening in a rented room at the Royal Alexandra Hotel at Higgins and Main (demolished in 1971), the WAA organized lectures, life drawing classes, and one or more exhibitions for members annually. The WAA also helped to raise the profile of certain craft traditions. They staged exhibitions that often included embroidery and pottery by First Nations, Scandinavian, and Ukrainian craftspeople, Doukhobor drawn work, and French Canadian furniture and textiles.

In 1903 the WAA was joined in its cause lobbying for civic art institutions by the Manitoba Society of Artists, which expanded its membership to embrace "workers in all arts and crafts" in 1911.¹¹ This effort was partially realized when, in 1912, The Winnipeg Art Gallery was established. The gallery's first curator, Donald MacQuarrie, was also an artist. One year after its inception, the gallery was twined with the Winnipeg School of Art. Both institutions were initially housed in the Industrial Bureau at Main and Water. Underwritten and accountable to the Bureau, a proto-Chamber of Commerce, the gallery and art school would not be made truly civic, public institutions until 1923. Nonetheless, their formation represented the crescendo of a thirty year push to organize, bureaucratize, and consolidate Winnipeg's early artistic activity.¹²

RECURRING REVISIONS

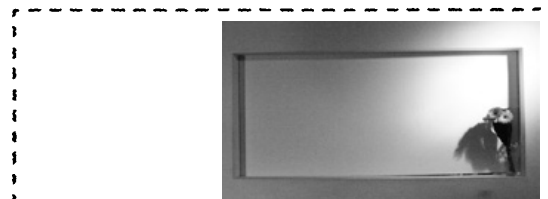
Despite the Winnipeg artist Alexander Keszthelyi declaring in 1909 that an "incalculable amount of work remains to be done by future generations of artists," we can see among Winnipeg's early artists an effort to forge community, to create opportunity where none existed, and to consolidate and cement the resources required for art



to flourish.¹³ There are obvious differences, of course, between Bronson's account of the emergence of artist-run centres and the history of art in Winnipeg unfolded above. Artistic mobilization in late-Victorian Winnipeg was stimulated by a lack of bureaucratic art institutions, not from an overabundance of alienating ones. And the lasting institutions of that era—the WAG and the School of Art (reconfigured today at the University of Manitoba)—are precisely the sort of complexes that Bronson's artist-dreamers of the late-1960s and 1970s strove to re-claim by making their bureaucratic structure useful to artists themselves. Nonetheless, at both points in history DIY projects and the push to bureaucratize appear as indelibly entwined phases of activity. The bureaucratization by artists of their own creative initiatives serves to articulate and realize their artistic dreams. Today's art bureaucracies—from the Canada Council and CARFAC, to *aceartinc.*—continue to work toward the realization of these dreams, just as Winnipeg's earliest exhibitions, clubs, art schools, and galleries did. Of course, even realized dreams cannot make for static affairs; they both reflect and are moved by a community's place in history and, as such, are prone to future DIY revision.

NOTES

1. AA Bronson, "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat: Artist-Run Centres as Museums by Artists," *Museums by Artists*, edited by AA Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 29-37.
2. See Dan Ring, "The Urban Prairie 1880-1960," *The Urban Prairie* (Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery and Fifth House, 1993), 11-108.
3. See, for example, "The Aims of Art," *Manitoba Free Press* (22 July 1896).
4. Virginia G. Berry, *Taming the Frontier: Art and Women in the Canadian West 1880-1920* (Winnipeg: Bayeux and The Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2005), 13.
5. *Ibid.*, 12.
6. Walter Chesterton was also the uncle of the famous English writer, G.K. Chesterton.
7. Virginia G. Berry, *Vistas of Promise: Manitoba, 1874-1919* (Winnipeg: The Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1987), 53.
8. Angela E. Davis, "Laying the Ground: The Establishment of an Artistic Milieu in Winnipeg, 1890-1913," *Manitoba History* (4, 1982), online at http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/04/earlyart.shtml
9. Berry, *Taming the Frontier*, 90.
10. The WAA had formed around 1909 as an independent break-away contingent of the Women's Art Association of Canada (WAAC), which was established in Toronto in 1890 and had a Winnipeg branch in 1894. The WAAC was closely tied to the National Council of Women of Canada, which counted among its concerns public education, health, and working conditions of women and children. The WAA retained the WAAC's mandate to encourage "the spread of interest in original art in Canada and the advancement of mutual help and cooperation among women artists and art lovers" (Berry, *Vistas of Promise*, 32).
11. Berry, *Taming the Frontier*, 88-90.
12. Marilyn Baker, *The Winnipeg School of Art: The Early Years* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba), 21-26.
13. Alexander Keszthelyi, "Value of Art to the Community," *Town Topics*, (19 June 1909).



REGULAR PROGRAMMING

Regular Programming is created through submissions that seek the support of **aceartinc.**'s facilities and services for public presentation. **aceartinc.** is dedicated to cultural diversity in its programming and to this end encourages applications from contemporary artists and curators identifying as members of GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered), Aboriginal (status, non-status, Inuit and Métis) and all other culturally diverse communities. Encourages proposals from individuals, groups and collectives in all visual arts media. Regular Programming submissions are solicited through a general annual national call with a deadline of August 1st. The Selection Committee reviews submissions within the context of **aceartinc.**'s mandate and goals. [The Selection Committee is comprised of the Programming Coordinator, 1-2 Board Members, and 2 Community Members.]



ANNUAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE

AUGUST 1ST OF EVERY YEAR

REGULAR PROGRAMMING PROPOSALS GUIDELINES

When preparing your proposal, please keep in mind that each jury member receives and reviews a photo-copy of your written materials before they view your visual support material. It is to your advantage to provide written materials that are easily readable after being photocopied. Submissions that do not follow the guidelines will be edited as such for jury to review (ie. CVs going over 2 pages). We also advise for those who do not know our establishment, to get a sense of what we've done, visit our web archives.

Include

- an artist and or curatorial statement (no more than 1 page)
 - a project proposal (no more than 2 pages)
 - schedule of activities (if applicable)
 - a current CV with current contact info including phone number and email address (no more than 2 pages)
 - an equipment list or itemization of special technical needs if applicable
 - Self-Addressed Sufficiently-Stamped Envelope (S.A.S.E.):
Due to excessive costs for the gallery, your submission will not be returned without one. Slides/working CD-Rs will be returned only.
 - Support materials: up to 20 images (inc. total of 20 for group submissions)/ or working CD-Roms (MAC)
 - an image list (no more than 1 page)
- * CD-R images must be as jpegs 72dpi, 1024 x 768 pixel, 500k (.5 MB) RGB or SRGB only. NO POWER POINT PLEASE!
 - * video NTSC compatible or DVD max 5 minutes long and cued up
 - * audio cassette or cd
 - * no more than 2 pages of printed matter (may include essays, reviews, non-original documents of artworks that cannot otherwise be described in slide or video format. NO BOOKS PLEASE)
 - * NO laser-copied images, thumbnails, or original artwork.
 - * NO binders, folders or staples. (Paper clips only please)
 - * At this time we are unable to accept applications over the internet (NO URL's) or by Fax

NOTE

If your project is in development, please present support about the development as well as related past work.



CONSEIL DES ARTS DE WINNIPEG
WINNIPEG ARTS COUNCIL



MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DU MANITOBA
YEARS/ANS



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada

GALLERY INFORMATION

aceartinc.

2nd floor, 290 McDermot Ave. Winnipeg MB R3B 0T2

204.944.9763 | gallery@aceart.org | www.aceart.org

MEMBERSHIP

**aceartinc. invites you to become a member
...AND GET ON OUR MAILING LIST!**

Your support assists in the research, development, presentation, dissemination and interpretation of contemporary art in Canada. Members receive information regarding upcoming events and programs, notices of calls for submissions and other opportunities, invitations to events, access to our resources and facilities including the woodshop and a subscription to PaperWait.

Membership Fees range in price to suit your life...

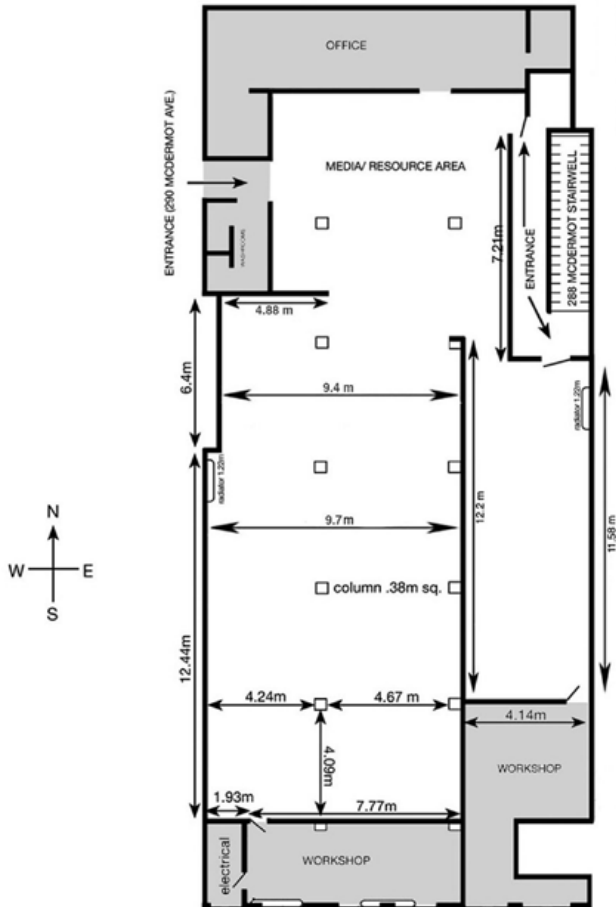
\$25.00 Regular

\$10-\$25 Low Income/Student/artist

\$25+donor (regular + donation)

or enquire about volunteering

to receive a free membership.

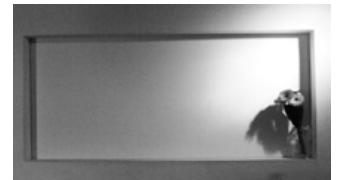


■ : indicates unusable space

Gallery specifications:
Walls - plywood backed drywall
Floor - varathane hardwood
Lighting - track (halogen)
Columns - 11' 8" h x 15" w x 15" d

ceilings: 3.7 m to beams
4.01m to ceiling

The End





ARTIST PAGES

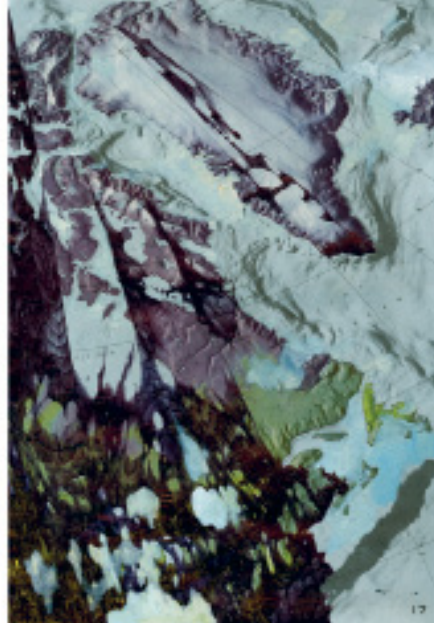


FLIPBOOK

Photo
KEVIN REPPEL
FOR HALF PINTS BREWERY

Background image:
Source: Suzie Smith, *fly*

B.Y.



AARON BOISSONAUT
Drill

Aaron Boissonneault is a half anglo-western french Canadian Catholic (where he gets his arrogance, sense of moral superiority, and constant guilt), and a half orphaned diasporic Slavy (from where he gets his cynicism and paranoia).

Aaron Boissonneault cut his teeth as a DIY artist and instructor with an exacto knife volunteering and working at Art City since 2007. He also participated in the Youth Outreach Program at Martha Street Studio, mostly just playing with plates and printing inc. It wasn't until he was working among children that Aaron was able to find his long lost creative side, and now works to encourage others to find theirs.

Aaron just wants to continue to make it perfectly clear that he is a healthy, growing, sane, and sound-minded adult individual, and shall continue to be treated and respected as an equal among the human population just as anybody else...

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ALEXIS DIRKS
Landed Encroachment

Alexis Dirks received her Bachelor of Fine Art Degree from the University of Manitoba in 2006. She has recently completed a Masters in Fine Art from the Glasgow School of Art in June of 2009.

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IRENE BINDI
acquozzo servizio

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KAREN SPENCER
Yugoslavia

karen elaine spencer is a montréal-based dreamer who promises not to bore you by going on and on about her dream last night. in addition to dreaming, karen is an accomplished metro rider, orange peeler and rambler. she also likes to loiter.

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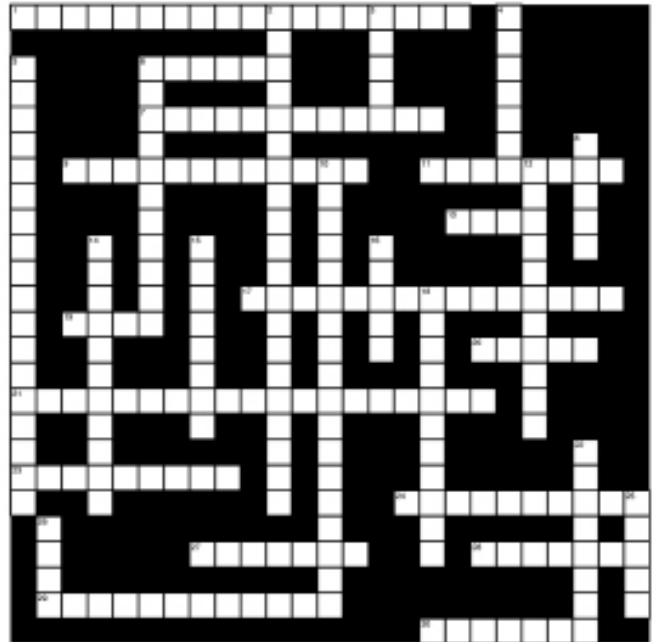
DIY WINNIPEG A Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

- 1 The hosting venue of General Idea's *Miss General Idea Pageant Rehearsal* from October 19-22 in 1977.
- 6 The type of tree made into a helicopter by Mike Olito in 1993.
- 7 Local self taught artist who started to collaborate with bees in the early nineties.
- 9 The building in which Aceartinc was first located in room twenty-four.
- 11 On the 14th of this month Plug In opened.
- 13 The furniture showroom that also serves as a commercial gallery for local contemporary art.
- 17 MAWA's original name.
- 19 A performance installation by Jennifer Stillwell, in which she "un-did" it herself, as she took apart a living room.
- 20 Acronym for a cultural centre that leaves one feeling peckish.
- 21 The name that Plug In went by for a short period in the late 1970's.
- 23 Artist run centre started by a group of UoM School of Art students in the early 1980's.
- 24 A journal put out by MAWA starting in 1990.
- 27 A gallery and studio started as an alternative art space in 2007.
- 28 Primary name of A Depression Café, opened and operated in 1984 by Walter Lewy and Jeff Funnel.
- 29 2002 installation collaboration at aceartinc providing a service to the community.
- 30 In 2001, the Lesbian _____ were seen in parks throughout Manitoba.

DOWN

- 2 Collective of artists executing underground performances in the early 1990s.
- 3 Name of one of aceartinc's mascot cats.
- 4 A reoccurring party where the mash-ups are on paper and not on the turntables.
- 5 Name of early Plug In fundraiser event involving edible artwork.
- 6 An organization that presented performance art regularly throughout the 1980's.
- 8 A biological substance used in a performance by Sharon Alward entitled Totentanz.
- 10 The approximate year of founding for many artist run centres in the city.
- 12 A performance art band comprised active in the late 1970's.
- 14 A gallery inspired by the notion of artist-as-shaman.
- 15 Gallery that has been located on Higgins since 1999.
- 16 A program ran through Plug In involving composers, musicians, audio artists and other media-based artists and arts organizations.
- 18 Outworks Gallery's group show organized around Winnipeg Fringe Fest 2008.
- 22 A band of merry pre-fabbers.
- 25 A gallery started in a narrow passage in 2006.
- 26 Name of one of aceartinc's mascot cats.



FOR ANSWER KEY PLEASE SEE INSIDE BACK COVER



AEOLIAN KITE INSTRUMENT

keywords: DIY, recycled materials, fiddling, tinkering, crafting, I'm a maker, fun

Several years ago, I started making and flying kites as a way to re-introduce 'play' into my work process. At first this seemed like a simple exercise but actually as each fact leads to another in my research I find myself getting deeper into the rich history and craft of kite culture.

Pictured here is my discovery and refinement of an instrument based on an Aeolian harp. The kite's towline is looped through an eyebolt mounted on the body of the guitar. The guitar body amplifies the wind induced vibrations of the towline and resonates harmonically. A large one stringed guitar played by the wind.

To listen to this; Kite Song 1 @ cheapmeat.net/adiotracks.html

RESOURCES www.windmusic.com

KEN GREGORY www.cheapmeat.net www.cheapmeat.net/hazmat.htm

KEN GREGORY
Aeolian Kite Instrument

Winnipeg artist Ken Gregory has been working with DIY hardware hacking, computer software, audio, video, electronics, performance and installation for over 17 years. His work has shown publicly in Winnipeg, other parts of Canada and many international venues. www.cheapmeat.net for more information.



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KERRI-LYNN REEVES
DIY Winnipeg: A Crossword Puzzle

Kerri-Lynn Reeves, an interdisciplinary Canadian artist, explores her relationships with her family, peers, and communities through immediate collaborative works and contemplative personal works. Along with creating textile, video, and installation works, she has orchestrated large and small group community projects, locally, nationally, and internationally



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KRISTIN NELSON
Parking / No Parking

Born in Ajax Ontario, Kristin Nelson received her BFA from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver. She is an inter-media artists whose bodies of work focus on valourizing communities who are often made invisible. This includes an ambitious trading card project documenting 119 drag kings from around the world. Nelson has exhibited work at Centre A and Gallery Gachet (Vancouver, BC), the Lydon Center (Austin, TX) and the Winnipeg Art Gallery (Winnipeg MB).

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LAUREN HORTIE
Missy Elliot and Virginia Woolf from
My Second Lesbian Colouring book

Lauren Hortie is an artist from Toronto, Ontario. She makes 'zines and posters, throws queer parties and teaches at an arts and social justice high school for at-risk youth.

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JESSICA MacCORMACK
Red Thread / Jugendknast

Jessica MacCormack’s art combines various elements of interactivity, performance, intervention, installation and video. Over the past eight years she has played an active part in artist-run culture, performance collectives and in collaborations with other artists. Jessica MacCormack has also been working on art projects with women and youth who are dealing with issues of criminalization. In 2008, she completed an MFA through the Public Art and New Artistic Strategies program at Bauhaus University in Weimar (Germany).

The *Jugendknast Memorial* and the *Red Thread* projects (2008) were part of a campaign to raise awareness of human rights violations at the local youth prison in Weimar, Germany. A public discussion was also organized to take place in front of the memorial with local social workers, politicians, students and former prisoners. The blog www.jugendknast.blogspot.com contains images of the prison, quotes from the *The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* report, art projects, as well as links to various sites and articles concerned with these issues.

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RYAN McKENNA
Arriving

Ryan McKenna is a Winnipeg based independent filmmaker. The “Arriving” posters, made at L’Atelier National du Manitoba’s Chinatown Opium Den, echo the trademarks of McKenna’s cinema, boiled down aesthetic mixed with deadpan social commentary. McKenna was the 2008 recipient of the Manitoba Emerging Filmmaker Award for his short film “Bon Voyage.”

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SUZIE SMITH
fly

Suzie Smith is a Winnipeg based interdisciplinary artist. In her work she uses a variety of different media, including silkscreen, textiles, drawing and collage. In September 2008 she had her first solo exhibition at Open Studio in Toronto entitled *Second-Hand*.

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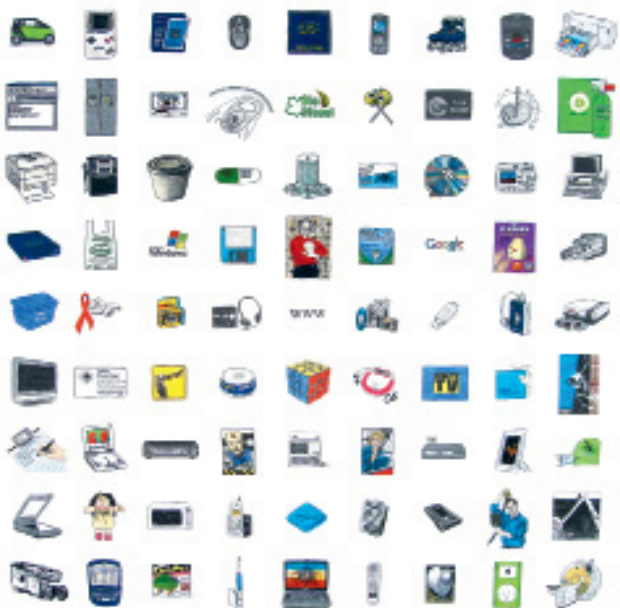
TONI LATOUR
Since 1975

Toni Latour is a multidisciplinary artist based in Vancouver, Canada. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally since 1994 and has been awarded numerous grants and awards in support of her practice. Latour teaches Media Art at Capilano University in British Columbia.

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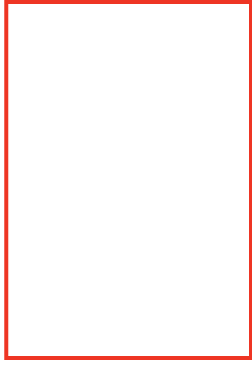
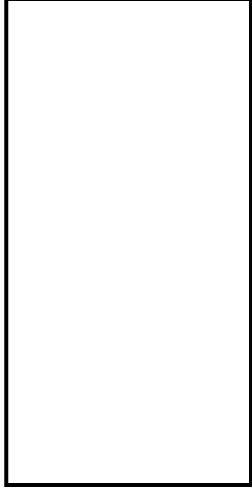
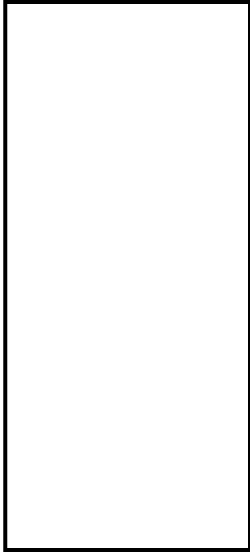
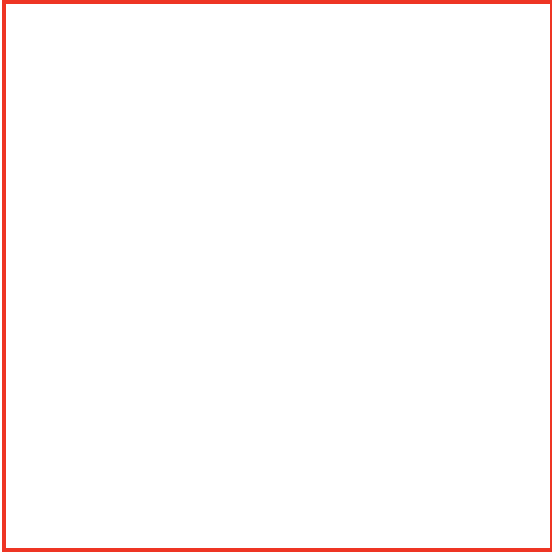
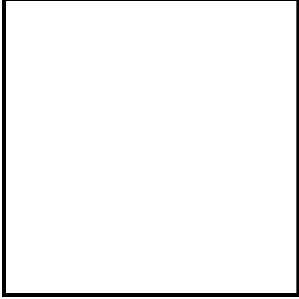
DIY POSTCARD



DIY POSTCARD



THIS IS A PAGE OF STICKERS. PUT SOMETHING ON THEM AND STICK THEM SOMEPLACE. SOMEPLACE LEGAL, NATCH.





DIY WINNIPEG A Crossword Puzzle

ANSWER KEY

ACROSS

1 The Winnipeg Art Gallery was the site of General Idea's *Miss General Idea Pageant Rehearsal* from October 19-22 in 1977.

"It was spectacular: airplane search lights outside, the whole bit, and the auditorium was packed. General Idea videotaped the performance as part of their *Miss General Idea Pavilion* series of activities. It included an appearance by the first official punk rock band to hit Winnipeg, The Dishes. There was a fashion show complete with catwalk, and a presentation about Miss GI and the pavilion by AA, Felix and Jorge. It was interactive in so far as the audience was asked to applaud, laugh, stand, and boo on cue during the proceedings, and these bits were cut into the final videotape and used for other media"

- *Gerry Kisil as published in Live in the Centre*, an incomplete and anecdotal history of Winnipeg performance art.

6 Mike Orito constructed a **spruce helicopter** in 1993 in protest of proposed government spending on military helicopters. This project included the Olio Aircraft Development Corporation set up with stockholders and a regular newsletter, *Under the Rotar*.

7 Aganetha Dyck is a local self-taught artist who started to collaborate with bees in the early nineties.

9 acartinc, was first located in the **Bate Building** in room twenty-four.

11 Plug In opened on **November 14th, 1971**.

13 Elan Furniture is the site of Gallery 803, an alternative commercial gallery focusing on local contemporary art.

17 Mentoring Artists for Women's Art (MAWA) was known as the **Women's Committee** when it was started under Plug In's umbrella.

"I often get asked about how and why MAWA got started. It was 1977 and I had just moved to Winnipeg from Edmonton. I was teaching as a sessional instructor at the School of Art at the University of Manitoba. Almost immediately I was on the board of Plug In; in 1979 I was appointed president. At that time there was a great deal of discussion on the board, in the community and amongst the art school sessional (who were mainly women) about the lack of opportunities for women artists. There was a perception that Plug In was inaccessible to local women artists. And it seemed virtually impossible for women to secure tenured faculty positions at the School of Art. There were more women than men graduating for the art school, but somehow the women just disappeared from the scene after graduation. The situation prompted the question: is this as good as it gets (for women)?"

...I started thinking about the possibility of developing some sort of mentor program here in Winnipeg, through Plug In. Looking back, I would say that when we formed Plug In's "women's committee" (as it was called back then), we certainly had no idea that it would turn into the kind of organization that it is today."

- *Diane Whitehouse - Excerpts of essay published in MAWA: Culture of Community.*

19 Bale, a performance installation completed Jennifer Stillwell at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 2002, in which she took apart a living room and rolled it up into a bale formation.

20 The St. Norbert Arts and Cultural Centre, otherwise known as **SNACC**, was founded by Erika MacPherson, Shane Stewart and Louise Loewen in 1992.

21 Plug In was known as **Arthur Street Gallery**, a reflection of the location at the time, in the late 1970's.

23 acartinc is an artist run centre that a group of UofM School of Art students whom graduated in 1981 started for their collective *Ace Art Manufacturing*.

24 Inversions, a journal published by MAWA, first came out in Spring 1990.

27 crebery: a gallery and studio started as an alternative art space in 2007.

"In May 2007, Jordan Miller and Shawn Beard began a new chapter in their careers as artists with the launch of **crebery** gallery and studios following six months of renovations to 8,800 square feet of warehouse space. They recognized that additional space was needed for artists to create and exhibit artwork. Classes would employ artists while teaching new skills to the creatively curious. Available marketing support would assist in the promotion, development, and delivery of art exhibitions with in house support to manage the studios and 'paperwork'."

The idea of 'creative space for creative people' was inspired by the amazing talent that resides in Winnipeg but isn't always exhibited or known to the public. They wanted to create a space that supports all work by all artists who wish to present themselves to the public.

"DIY" exhibitions, with **crebery's** assistance, became the focus of our main rental gallery and immediately set them apart from other rental galleries in the city. Since then crebery has hosted well over 40 successful exhibitions. We have witnessed first hand the happiness and pride that artists experience on their opening night or their first sale of art. "

- *Jordan Miller (www.crebery.com)*

28 Lithium: A Depression Café, opened in 1984 and initially operated by Walter Lewy and Jeff Funnell, and later by Walter and Megan Latouché. This café served food ordered from other restaurants for its first year of operation, as well as serving as a performance venue.

29 Grocery store was a 2002 collaboration of Dempsey, Millan, Moore, and Zab exhibited at *acartinc*.

"Many of us artists were involved with the fight to save the Eaton's building and prevent a private sports facility being built at largely public expenses. Well we all know how that ended... But in the process, many of us became concerned about the City's priorities for development. It seemed then, and continues to be as if car culture and suburbanization are "givens" in Winnipeg. Nothing real is being done towards density and improving services necessary to make the downtown livable. Four of us (Jake Moore, Zab, Lorri Millan and I) opened a grocery store in ace art for three weeks in 2002 to illustrate what is possible/necessary. We sold "artist multiples", i.e. relabeled foodstuffs. Little did we anticipate, the site became a place where people came together to talk about urban issues: garment workers, artists, office types, downtown residents..."

- *Shawna Dempsey*

30 In 2001, Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan perform as **Lesbian Rangers** in parks throughout Manitoba with **Lesbian National Parks and Services**.

DOWN

2 The Student Bolsheviks were a collective of artists executing underground performances in the late 1980s and early 90s. This group included Terri-Lee Calder, Doug Harvey, Michael Waterman, John White, and Michael Jacobson.

3 Named after one of its founding members, Larry Glawson, **Larry** the cat was one of *acartinc's* resident cats.

4 Paul Butler's **Collage Party** started in 1997 when he had a studio party well stocked with art supplies.

"In 1997, I hosted a party in my old Princess studio. 87 princess I think... it's condo now. XXXO played down the hall and there were DJ's. There were tons of people. For fun I thought I'd leave all my magazines and see what happened. I thought people might collage like they would play darts or pool at a pub, but everyone took it to like fish to water and the party totally erupted into what became the **Collage Party**."

- *Paul Butler*

5 All the art you can eat was the name of an early Plug In fundraiser event where edible artwork was served to the guests.

"One of my favorite Winnipeg DIY art events were two early "fund-raising" events that Plug-In staged at it's former location in the Todd Hall Toys space. This was when Suzanne Gilles and Doug Sigurdson were the directors. It was held two years in a row and was called "**All the Art You Can Eat**". There were at least 40 dishes presented. A couple of my favourites were "Bambi Pie" by Ted Howarth - a meat pie made from deer meat and

cranberries with a cute picture of Bambi painted on the crust - nobody wanted to eat it, the pink female nude made of tinted mashed potatoes with grated beet pubic hair by Sheila Butler and a roast hanging from a meat hook with a knife stabbing it - made by an angry woman artist who had just separated from her philandering artist husband. Everyone shied away from these items. Many of the others were beautiful, interesting and very appealing. Problem was they always ran out of food before everyone got to the buffet - not a good idea when you are charging the guests \$20 a piece.

But it was fun while it lasted."

- *Elvira Finnigan*

6 Shared Stage began as an umbrella organization of Agassiz Theatre and the Winnipeg Film Group in 1981, and became an independent organization in 1982. With Grant Guy as director, it presented performance art bi-weekly, first at Cardigan Milne Gallery and later at the Royal Albert Arm's Hotel.

8 Semen and blood were used in Totentanz, a performance by Sharon Alward, at Plug In in 1990.

"Totentanz was done twice, although most people don't remember that. The first part went well. Lots of people (350), over six hours, as I cleaned up the spilled blood and **semen**. By the end of the evening there were people trying to help. The second performance had no audience. Putting on the bloody dress a second time was difficult and there was no one to witness the act. The novelty was gone. I was by myself. As soon as I began, the blood went immediately down the column and to the shop below. The next thing I knew there was a dozen media people with cameras and micro-phones. As long as the performance, and by metaphorical extension the disease (AIDS), was contained within the art community the public was indifferent. But as soon as it encroached on the straight world of business and commerce there was a powerful reaction. My sexuality and credibility as a professor were challenged. I was called a slut. The Mayor of Winnipeg, Bill Norrie, publicly stated that I was trash and he wouldn't cross the street to see my work'."

- *Sharon Alward as published in Live in the Centre*; an incomplete and anecdotal history of Winnipeg performance art.

10 1983 (nineteneightythree) was the approximate year of founding for many artist run centres in the city.

"Around **1983** artists in Winnipeg were infected with a "should do" bug that generated enough energy to cause the explosion of activity that brought about the birth of *acartinc*, Midcontinental Magazine, MAWA, Video Pot, Floating Gallery, Manitoba Printmakers studios, Artspace, and Main/Access.

The ecology of the art community was very different then. Thomas Gallery and Melychenko Gallery existed as two viable commercial galleries that showcased serious work by Winnipeg artists. These and other commercial galleries, along with the Winnipeg Art Gallery and Plug In, were not able to satisfy the needs of emerging artists at the time. The artists who wanted something more said "we want to show our work, we have no gallery, let's make it." At the same time money was becoming available from the Manitoba Arts Council and Canada Council, while employment programs paid a better dollar. So those were conditions that contributed to the establishment of *acartinc*, and other new artist run organizations - along with blood, sweat, and tears."

- *Donna Jones as published in "2002-2003 Paperwait; acartinc. 20th anniversary issue"*.

12 Mondo Trasho was a performance art band composed of Suzanne Gilles, Al Poruchnik, Jonny Mondo (a.k.a. Jon Tupper), Lesely Veitch, Dough Sigurdson, Donny Colieux, Walter Lewy, and an unidentified citizen. They were active in the late 1970's.

14 Urban Shaman Gallery's creation was inspired by the notion of artist-as-shaman.

"Inspired by Norval Morrisseau's idea of artist-as-shaman, (Louis Ogema (Anishinaabe)) too thought that the Aboriginal arts could be utilised as healing tools for First Peoples, while educating the mainstream about our own unique art forms and artistic practices.

After an internship with Ace Art Inc. in Winnipeg in the Fall of 1996, he wanted to share this vision with other Aboriginal artists and friends. Ogema approached John Schneider (Dakota), Leah Fontaine (Anishinaabe/Dakota) and Liz Barron about his visual-

sation for a gallery centre. In January 1996, the group joined together to found the **Urban Shaman** Gallery.

Since the opening of **Urban Shaman**, many exhibitions and programs have been implemented to meet the visual, educational, and community needs of Aboriginal artists on a local, national, and now international level."

- *Urban Shaman website (http://www.urbanshaman.org/aboutUS.html)*

15 The Graffiti Gallery was founded by 1999 by Steve Wilson in an attempt to drive a **graffiti** on canvas movement.

16 The Plug In Music Program was founded by Jeff Gillman and Jon Tupper in 1985. Its mandate to "initiate interdisciplinary discourse and collaboration between composers, musicians, audio artists and other media-based artists and arts organizations" serves it well until it ends in the early 1990s.

18 On The Fringe: Outworks Gallery's group show organized around Winnipeg Fringe Fest 2008.

"Last year Outworks organized a group show around the Fringe. We called it "**On The Fringe**" and had artists working en-plein air and distributing invitations to passer byers. It was a blast and Susan (Birdwise) provided these lovely little letters each day about what happened. I unfortunately missed this event but am organizing this years "On The Fringe II?" and intend on being there throughout."

- *Karen Wardle of Outworks Gallery*

22 Toosicks, or 26, is a collective of artists whose primary collaborative activity is creating and installing Pre-Fabs.

"The **Too-Sicks** art club was founded in the year 2000 while most of its members were studying together at the University of Manitoba. The working method of the individual members is very diverse. **Too-Sicks** is made up of painters, a photographer, and a found object manipulator. While they make their own bodies of work in their chosen fields, none of the members felt locked in to a particular mode of working, and they will frequently experiment and collaborate with each other. One activity that they all take part in is the production and installation of Pre-Fabs."

- *Excerpt from the 26 Bio provided by Melanie Rocan*

25 Semai Gallery was started in 2006.

"Yes, Winnipeg is a very affordable city in many ways. If you have a good idea and are wishing if someone has made it available for you as a tangible form, stop wishing and Do It Yourself. That's the mentality with which I started Semai Gallery.

In 2005 and 2006 I was working for Cream Gallery, owned and directed by Leala Katz, which was located where Semai is now, though the space of Cream was larger than **Semai**; Cream had a large gallery space and had the corridor space as an extra gallery space. As Cream Gallery closed and moved out in 2006, Keepsakes Gallery moved into the same space. Even after the owner of the business changed, I somehow kept working in the same space, employed by Keepsakes. Keepsakes didn't find the needs of the corridor space for their business, so the manager Joyce Winter-Schmidt generously let me use the space during my employment, and rent after my term of employment is over for a very reasonable amount. With the help of Keepsakes Gallery's volunteers, artists, and everyone else in the community, **Semai** has been running well for about three years.

Semai Gallery officially opened its door on July 28, 2006."

- *Takashi Iwasaki*

26 Named after one of its founding members, Doug Melyny, **Doug** the cat was one of *acartinc's* resident cats.

DIY WINNIPEG: A Crossword organized by Kerri-Lynn Reeves: Stories, facts, and support generously provided by: "MAWA: culture of community", "2002-2003 Paperwait. acartinc. 20th anniversary issue", Live in the Centre, an incomplete and anecdotal history of Winnipeg performance art", "Plug In Redux", Cliff Eydland, Shawna Dempsey, Karen Wardle, Elvira Finnigan, Paul Butler, Liz Garlicki, Takashi Iwasaki, Melanie Rocan, Jordan Miller, Collin Zipp, tamara ae riebrich, Ricardo Lopez & others.

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