

English Reports

Volume 44, numéro 176, automne 1999

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/53117ac>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

La Société La Vie des Arts

ISSN

0042-5435 (imprimé)

1923-3183 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce document

(1999). English Reports. *Vie des arts*, 44(176), 77–85.

MONTREAL

CLIVE SMITH:
PAINTERLY DIALOGUE

Montreal, Galerie de Bellefeuille



Held In, Clive Smith, 1999
oil on canvas, 140 x 109 cm

Unusual and unsettling, the paintings by British artist Clive Smith in this North American premiere of his work at Galerie Bellefeuille express no optimism, offer no easy formula for the painterly agenda. Instead they seem to follow traditional canons of painting, almost self-consciously, yet it is in the details and overall effect that this young painter's emotions seem to literally shine through.

The subjects in these paintings appear to be contained as much by their bodies as by the spaces they inhabit. In a *naturally controlled place* (1998) a young man has his back turned to us. He is surrounded on three sides by zen-like rows of topiary plants whose leaves have been trimmed into a universal and repeating round shape. The side walls and facing wall emit a kind of unreal light that contains and builds the sense of artificial space. There is nothing textural or immediate to ground us in this painting. Natural elements – the plants and painter's model – look unnatural, controlled.

Clive Smith provokes spiritual and humanistic concerns through his manipulation of the painted subject. The conception is abstract while their subjects are representational. This concerns over how we define and describe reality as a state of mind are intimated in the titling of the works just as much as in Clive Smith's approach to painting. *one + one without one* present a young woman and young man next to each other in cubicles. They are unaware of each other's existence. They may have a desire to communicate but the structures themselves make it practically impossible. The stool in the next empty cubicle has a stronger persona than the people. These structures are not labyrinthine nor even formidable.

They're flimsy formica-like representations of the degree of distance between individuals. What an irony and a postModern one at that, for these people contained in cubicles that are likewise contained within the larger space of the room, seem desensitized to their environment. The same applies to the man who kneels barefoot within a smaller cubicle, one of four, in *without words*, but this scene is more close-up. Clive Smith inculcates his paintings with an intensity that hinges on the use of light and texture. The slight exaggeration of perspective in these paintings furthers a dialogue on closed and open space.

Clive Smith achieves a subtle psychological tension through the use of light and the elimination of extraneous elements. His interest is less in the painted subject than the spirit of painting. While Romanticism once furthered the dualistic schism between humanity and nature by creating synthetic recreations of idealized (natural) subjects, the individuals who we see sitting in cubicles in two of the paintings in this show, either *one + one without one* (1998) or *without words* (1998) are a logical extension of this artificial way of reconstructing a scene. While Clive Smith follows the classical canons of painting, his work ultimately deals with issues of control and freedom. The spaces and environments he builds into these works are euclidean passageways, places of transition. The diffused light effects make these uncomfortably poised portrait subjects seem all the more contained, caught up in the parentheses of their own thoughts and state of mind, just like the cubicles, (seats, stools) they sit in. These painterly parables of illusion and delusion mask a deeper truth that raises questions about the very nature of appearance and reality.

John K. Grande

COMPULSION

Liane & Danny Taran Gallery,
Centre des arts
Saidye Bronfman

June 17 to August 29, 1999

Peace and love and the '60s with a post-Mod fling, a timid nihilism and self-conscious reflection pervade the works in *compulsion*. While the title of this show suggests some uncontrollable urge, the works chosen by Toronto-based curator John Massier for this show look more obsessive than compulsive. *fashion or self-gratification* may have been more honest titles, for these contemporary works are eulogies to excess in a world of excess. While they reflect the state of contemporary culture, no

remedy is offered for the postModern malaise....

Susan Kealey's stream of consciousness post-Mod poetic of catchy phrases installed around the gallery, even on other artists' work in *Bandwidth* are instantly alluring. They almost sound like catchy add phrases. One reads: Peel, Orange 9 mm, Special Agent Utah. Another has Van Gogh's Radio, Optic Yellow, Sick FM. Kealey's word assemblages are actually the names of Music Groups clipped at random from the entertainment listings and as such are less poetic more robotic appropriations than they appear at first sight. Ron Giii's hybrid sexy portraits from the fringe are contextualized photography (1972-1982) from the 1970s that have an experimental flair yet now look dated, almost archival. Some works overlap onto other ones. Valerie Lamontagne's truly beautiful arrangement of butterfly stickers titled FLUTTER (1998) oozes a Lolita-like sensuality and conjures up images of some post-Modern Whistler. A few of them flutter across the gallery onto Kevin Rogers' anomalous wallpaper piece titled *Kevin + the Girl at Kinkos = Love* (1999). This wall installation looks like a fragment of a building in the process of renovation or deterioration. All it needs is a fly on its wall to complete the piece.

If this show looks like 1990's art à la mode, it is, and the main message here seems to be there is no point to artmaking other than some sort of self-gratification. You will not find any social commentary or vision of art changing the world here, unless it is in Marie-Claude Pratte's naive and witty portraits. Pratte's large acrylic on wood *FANTOME 2000* (1995), is an anguished self-expression, cartoon-like but equally laden with fear. Next to this Pratte's *Portraits de Société* (1998-99) are a series of painted close-up portraits that deal with social prejudices and stereotypes, but in a witty and engaging way. These are tiny textural clichés that gets their point across as much by assembling them all together as an ensemble. Workers, citizens, dilettantes, autodidactes, policemen, chomeurs. This collectivity of social stereotypes is as caricatured and literalist as the quebécois TV programme *La petite vie*.



Fantomes 2000, Marie-Claude Pratte, 1999
oil on canvas, 91 x 122 cm

Kevin Ei-Ichi deForest's laser printed horizontal wall drawing *Trans-Love Energy* (1998) has a snake-like form that weaves its way sinuously around the paper, but this one doesn't bite, it just bursts and breaks apart. Here is sexual energy emboldened in a Robert Crumb-style psychedelic San Francisco cartoon genre. Toronto-based Carlo Cesta's installation of Italianate balcony wrought iron is well versed in the tenets of contemporary art aesthetic. These balcony fragments are welded together one within another, each successively higher and more narrow than the preceding one. Cesta's work has a superb sense of space but yet is so self-conscious of the history and tenets of modernism as to be almost a kitschy take off on the Russian sculptor Vladimir Tatlin's model for the *Monument to the Third International* (1919) carried through the streets of Leningrad on May day 1926. New York-based David Kramer takes nihilism for its penultimate walk into the world of compulsion in *HI LIFE* (1999). Beer, wine and whiskey bottles of various colours are placed together around fluorescent light fixtures set in this forest of bottles. Though we cannot immediately read the words, the lights spell HI LIFE. Patrick Coutu's *La Moderne* (1999) construction is undoubtedly one of the best pieces in this show. Coutu's approach to the installation genre assembled out of scraps of construction material and ephemera recalls Ilya Kabakov's *The Man Who Flew to Space from his Apartment* (1981-1998) now on view in Montreal at the Musée des Beaux-arts' *Cosmos* show. Looking in through a window of Coutu's hermetically sealed cabin, one discovers a home made replica of a satellite made of wood and painted mat black. Notes, pieces of partially cut wood, sketches, orange DayGlo spray-painted numbers, a kitschy relief folk carving, a half-moon of blue lights, even an amateur painting of a planet, all of this seems a wry comment on modernism, technology and real modern life. It all stands tentatively on a pile of wooden 2 by 4 inch scrap wood pieces but its really a concept-mobile. As with Carlo Cesta's piece one is never sure if Coutu is mocking 20th century modernism or is in love with it. If any social consciousness exists in these works it expresses itself in a benign cynicism that suffers from a bulimia that is part of any addiction. Curator John Massier's juxtaposition of this ensemble of artworks together may be the real work of art here.

John K. Grande

TORONTO

JOE PLASKETT:
THE MISSING LINK

Exclusive Interview with John
K. Grande July 1999



Joe Plaskett, 1999
photo courtesy Bau-xi Gallery,
Vancouver

JG: *The emotional quality you infuse the objects and environment strikes one first, along with the extreme capacity to use colour as a kind of living matter on the canvas. You recently commented that you have come full circle as a painter and have removed depth and shadow, to achieve a flatness that causes the subjects to almost bover in space. The spatial tensions and relations have a succinct dynamism that recalls Giacometti's*

interiors while the colours are reminiscent of Henri Matisse.

JP: Let me comment on "coming full circle". An artist's life is a trajectory. It may fly low, aim high, be slow and steady, or fitful. It may go off into outer space and get lost. It may be stationary and seem to get nowhere, or simply by being stationary, get everywhere. It may, after youthful brilliance, be in for a slow decline, or it may peak late, or go on peaking. I think I reached a peak in the 50s, when I was in my thirties, and had various kinds of peaks in subsequent decades, but I wonder how much momentum I was gaining. I think my self portrait shows in 1984 and my *White Table* series (Klinkhoff Gallery) in 1986 were genuine peaks, but in other ways I felt I was running out of steam. I could no longer be inspired by places to turn out an inexhaustible continuation of pastel records. Many of my oils now seem insubstantial. I was always being enthusiastic about new subject matter, but it became harder to find. I needed another kind of stimulation, one that came from the pictorial rather than the natural world. I found it first in 1988 when I made a discovery about new ways of composing in pastel - my "painting by addition" - my highest peak yet. After 1995 I became increasingly dissatisfied with my oil painting. Perhaps I became bored relying on the acci-

dents of inspiration from nature, which worked for me at times. I came to realize that I had to draw as much upon inspiration from art, its surfaces and materials. A colleague, Paul Resika, reminded me of Hans Hofmann's insistence we paint flat and that we let pure colour sensation dictate the ends. This made the full circle - the return to Hofmann and abstraction and I moved into new territory. My paintings were not abstracting, they were concretizing. The objects I painted just as realistically as ever were now more real than before. As Resika pointed out "solidity comes from flatness". Playing with colour and composition now allow me a freedom of invention and so I feel I am becoming more, not less realistic. I find myself forced to confront Greenberg's dogma of flatness that I have long rejected. If depth and shadow seem removed, they may merely having a holiday. Spatial depth is what painting is all about, and shadows are part of visual reality.

JG: *Do you see the act of painting as a kind of instantaneous form of autobiography? The back and forth play with the subject you are painting. A dialogue is established between the viewer and the private worlds you inhabit - the dense urban Parisian interiors and the somewhat light driven English landscape and interior still lifes.*

JP: I hadn't thought of painting as an instantaneous form of autobiography, but I see it is. My paintings tell the story of my life just as *A Speaking Likeness* (Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, 1999), the book of my writings that will be coming out this fall, is far less about my daily personal life than it is about the story of the paintings I do. That is far more revealing and exciting than what happens to me outside my work. The back and forth play with the subject in painting is as exacting and suspenseful a game as tennis. It keeps you in the edge of your seat. A single lapse and you are out. There is a dialogue between the viewer and the work. The painter paints to communicate his life experience, so my intensely private world is not guarded as a private secret, but blazoned on the limelight of exposure.

JG: *There is a mesmerizing quality to the interiors, the still lifes, as if you were reflecting back on the objects, and vice versa. There is a process of de-materialization in*

these representations that is theatrical. Everything feels like a stage prop, but these are props that build a meaning within the scene, that is your interior thoughts and feelings, those things that cannot necessarily be put into words. The same goes for the landscapes ... I think of John Singer Sargent's superb landscape paintings of the Rockies at Lake O'Hara, for instance, or Italy. These too superseded the reality they depicted in such a pure painterly way.

JP: Yes, the room is a stage set. I live with mirrors, often inside them. I refer to the chapter *Mirrors and Shadows* from my upcoming book *A Speaking Likeness*: "The glass wall might be compared either to a net which separates opposing players, the gesticulations as formalized and repetitious as in a tennis match, or to the proscenium in a theatre which separates the spectator from the play. What is enacted is a mirror of what the audience is feeling. But which side of the curtain is more real? The actor's is for the moment, but he doesn't exist without a passive audience."

BIOGRAPHY

Born in New Westminster, B. C. in 1918, after teaching at the Vancouver School of Art in the early 1950s, Joe Plaskett has exhibited extensively throughout his career, most notably at Douglas Duncan's Picture Loan Society in Toronto, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery, Centre Culturel Canadien - Paris & Brussels and Canada House Gallery in London, England. His recent catalogued show *Joe Plaskett: Reflections and Shadows* organized by Roger Boulet for the Art Gallery of the South Okanagan in 1994 has since travelled to Beaverbrook Art Gallery (1996), Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (1996) and Kamloops Art Gallery (1998).

Timed to take place in conjunction with the release of his autobiography *A Speaking Likeness* (Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, Autumn 1999), Joe Plaskett will be exhibiting at the Bau-Xi Gallery in Toronto (opening September 15th) Wallack Art Gallery in Ottawa (opening September 23rd). Book launches for *A Speaking Likeness* take place at: Gallery 78, Fredericton (September 19th), Bau-Xi Vancouver (October 2nd), Winchester Gallery, Victoria (October 10th) and Galerie Walter Klinkhoff, Montreal October 16, and where new works by Joe Plaskett will also be on view.

JOE PLASKETT
EXHIBITION OF NEW WORKS
SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 12, 1999



The artist in his garden, Suffolk, 1999

Sherril Wallack

wallack galleries

203 BANK STREET
OTTAWA, ONTARIO K2P 1W7
(613) 235-4339



Still life with Radishes and
Chair, Joseph Plaskett, 1999
oil on canvas, 81 x 37 cm



Arôme des deux soeurs
Encaustic
99 x 180 cm

**JACQUES PAYETTE:
BETWEEN NOT YET AND
NO LONGER**

October 23 - November 11

The Dabrinky-Friedland Gallery
122 Scollard St. Toronto

Jacques Payette's most recent paintings are more than a new representation of reality; they propose an authentic transfiguration of the everyday, in all its enigmatic ordinariness, at the confluence of a search for lost time bathed in an atmosphere of diffuse melancholy and a serene affirmation of the existence of things. Mystery of time, inscribing traces of disappearances, dissolutions, rediscoveries. Chinese porcelain, period clothing and furniture resurface in an undetermined present, in an oddly outmoded, yet timeless, universe amid fragile signs of life (a steaming teapot, just vacated seats, ruffled water...). A world in waiting, suspended between two decisive moments, a

peaceful and nostalgic meditation upon passages and mobility, upon the flight of past centuries, centuries whose still murmuring remains tell us, the eager spectators, that we too are

passing, advancing slightly each day, but backwards, as it were, towards the mystery from which we came. But there is no anguish in these painting-questions (when? where? why? how?...). Rather, these *still* lives breathe a profound serenity, as if a confident commitment to the real informed the searching gaze.

The very distinctive technique that Jacques Payette uses is responsible in no small measure for the appeal of these large panels of marouflaged canvas. Encaustic painting dates back to the Graeco-Roman period; obviously, this is a very *rapid* technique, which requires an extraordinary mastery and sureness of hand.

Memory and its meanderings carry the spectator beyond the painted surface, into the dream state of the arrested instant, into the fragile and uncertain equilibrium between that which is "not yet" and that which is "no longer". These are paintings which leave one pensive, which invite memory and imagination into a slow drift between the unsaid and that which is merely suggested,

between implicit meditation and what the image explicitly evokes, between the visible *scry*, and what can be read into it (and constantly reformulated) on many levels.

Jean-Pierre Duquette

**RECALLING SOCIAL
REALISM**

**STEPHEN LACK: LANDSCAPES,
DRAWINGS & DRAMAS**

Gallery One

Sept 23 - Oct 13, 1999

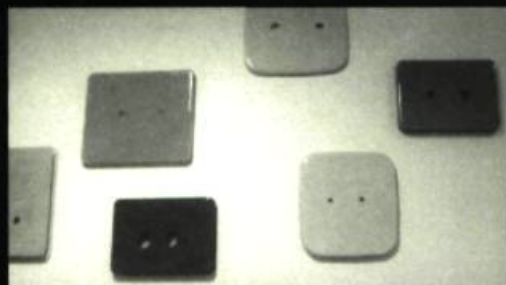
Stephen Lack, who began his career exhibiting at venues like Véhicule Art in Montreal, made his name amid the chaotic confusion of the East Village scene in New York, exhibiting at Gracie Mansion in the 1970s. As his *Edge of Anxiety* show comprising 47 oils and acrylics held at the Lyman-Allyn Art Museum in Connecticut last year proved, this painter has staying power. Stephen Lack is one of a very few painters of his generation still working in the Pop genre who addresses contemporary issues: the pervasive power of the media, the abstract nature of violence in society, and mass destruction. The latest landscapes and drawings are evocative, have a superb sense of colour and tonality. In Stephen Lack's own words, they are "a marriage between nostalgia, colour printing and fine art painting".



The Wedding Party, Steven Lack, 1996
oil on linen, 50.8 cm X 61 cm

The Wedding Party recalls the American social realist Ashcan School painters William Glackens and John Sloan. Lack's mastery of colour tonalities in these works are even suggestive of Bonnard's *fin-de-siècle* scenes or the languorous landscapes and still lifes of American Milton Avery. The scenes are commonplace. These paintings are as much depictions of a psychic state of mind, of the closing of the American mind, as they are realist representations of filmic scenarios, a clandestine caricature of the underbelly of the American Dream. In an interview with New York-based writer and editor Carlo McCormick, Stephen Lack recently commented: "I like to look at things the second time around, like walking back through the forest the way you came before, you see it in reverse and pick up what you missed. I like simple isolated things in a field of blankness (...) I also like things as in motion, blurred, with the details sapped from it. I like the radioactive aspect of television, with the orange line around things." The Gallery One show also includes a stunning series of new black-and-white conté drawings.

John K. Grande



Euan Macdonald

September

Sydney Drum

October



Richard Storms

November

Robert Birch Gallery

241 King Street East

Toronto, Canada M5A 1J9

Telephone: (416) 955-9410

Fax: (416) 955-9409

10th ANNIVERSARY

**EXPLORING
THE AMERICAN
STEREOTYPE**

CINDY SHERMAN

Art Gallery of Ontario

October 1, 1999 - January 2, 2000



Untitled N°211, Cindy Sherman, 1989
Chromogenic colour print
ed. 3/6, 94 cm x 79 cm

American super artist Cindy Sherman made her name early in her career with her *Untitled Film Stills* (1977-80), a series of 69 black and white provocatively staged photographs featuring the artist herself in the role of "B movie" female characters and magazine centrefolds. Playing on the ambiguity of audience perception and artistic presentation, Sherman displayed a penchant for soap opera drama. Her *Rear Screen Projections* (1980-81), a group of large-format colour photographs, extended the typology of female characters Sherman was developing by including projected images as backgrounds for each photo. The actual presentational character of these works may be more challenging than their visual content. Mixed messages about violence, perversion and the inner workings of the American mind surfaced in *Fairy Tales* (1985) and *Disasters* (1986-89) with their images of body transformation, dislocation, death and decay. One began to wonder if Sherman was seeking redemption, absolution or if, more probably, she was just playing around. Sherman proves girls can have fun and has since made a film titled *Office Killer*. America's largely unexamined leisure culture pursuit of the *perfect image*, becomes a *horror show* in a lot of this work and overt sexual guises, masks and manikin-like add-ons present mixed messages about the nature of identity. This is what the hall of mirrors might

be, if American pop culture had its way all the way.

Cindy Sherman has emerged as a major artist precisely because her work explores stereotypes, sometimes painfully, other times with a wit and candor that is atypical of our era. It is as if Sherman were voyeur and participant, engaging in bizarre reflection and exploration of the inner workings of the American mind. Sherman's more recent portrayals of the body are unsettling, for they manipulate the viewer as much as they manipulate their content. Using the photographic medium, Sherman draws and defines her imagery from the plethora of available material that is American Pop gizmo culture. This mid-career retrospective of approximately 150 works includes examples from all her major series, from her early images of provocatively ambiguous portraits to the later works. For the fascination with horror, humour, pornography, surrealism and the grotesque Sherman's work reveals, she may be the art world's answer to Gothic horror genre writing... Organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, this retrospective makes its final and only Canadian stop at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

John K. Grande

**DISPOSABLE
CONSCIOUSNESS**

**MAKING IT NEW!
(THE BIG SIXTIES SHOW)**

Art Gallery of Windsor

July 24-October 10, 1999

Comprising some 90 works by 25 artists and artists' collectives from the 1960s *Making It New! (The Big Sixties show)* bills itself as the first exhibition of its kind to present the work of artists from coast to coast in Canada. To an extent this show achieves its goal, presenting an array of 60s works including a surprising sculpture by Richard Lacroix, Michael Snow, Vancouver's Michael Morris, N.E. Thing Company, Charles Gagnon, Bill Vazan, John Boyle, Gilles Boisvert, Diane Askevold, COZIC and Greg Curnoe. Internationally renowned artist Les Levine will present a re-enactment of his performance *Cornflakes* (first presented in Edmonton in 1969) at Great Western Park in Windsor on July 22. The work involves the spreading the contents of 250 jumbo-sized boxes of Kellogg's Cornflakes. Les Levine comments about the original event: "In 1969 pre-oil Alberta's image was grain and corn. When I did *Cornflakes*, I was thinking about putting something

back in the ground that had been taken out, something biodegradable, or food for the birds. It was a public artwork to generate public consciousness about the earth's fragility and the process of nature and man's interaction. This was a truly disposable state of consciousness."

Likewise much of the art in the show reflects a disposable consciousness and like Quebec's own 1960s *déclics: art et société* show, fares less well in museum/gallery settings than it did when created by the many now renowned artists at the time. London-based artist Greg Curnoe's *Hurdle for Art Lovers* (1962) sums up the spirit of the era by presenting a hurdle with knives and domestic knitting needles atop it. Trashy and accessible, Curnoe's obstruction does not prevent us from overcoming implied social barriers, yet makes us aware



Monochrome, Rae Davis, 1969
re-enactment of performance
Glenbow Museum, 1999
photo documentation (produced 1999)
courtesy of the artist and Glenbow Museum

they exist. The same holds true for COZIC's *Jongle-Nouailles* (1970) which creates its social (read object-based) barrier with a forest of red, blue and silver tubing. Bill Vazan's *Cross-Canada Line* (1969-70) was a highly site specific yet conceptually biased artwork that involved marking site locations simultaneously at various Canadian cities simultaneously. Gilles Boisvert's works embody the Pop art spirit as well as any in this show. Joyce Wieland's multi-media Pop assemblage *Young Woman Blues* (1964) includes a heart with woman's face behind it, and a toy airplane. This early feminist Pop work is like a parody of a portable cosmetic case. Win Hedore (Ted Godwin, Ken Lochhead and Ronald Bloore) created a Vaillancourt-like assemblage out of cast-away metal that looks like a primitive African sculpture. *Making it New!* neatly compliments Quebec's own *déclics: art et société* show held at Montreal's Musée d'art contemporain and the Musée de la civilisation in Quebec. For its insights into 1960's Canadian art *Making it New!* (until October 10th) is well worth seeing.

John K. Grande

du 11 septembre au 2 octobre	HAR-PRAKASH KHALSA	— "The Hole Project"
	photographie	
du 30 septembre au 4 octobre	ART FORUM BERLIN	— "Le Jeu" Booth #110
du 9 au 30 octobre	MARC SÉGUIN	— "Solutions Nocturnes"
	nouvelle peinture	
du 6 au 27 novembre	ENZO CUCCHI	— "Décennies"
	mixte média	
ART CORE		
33 hazelton avenue, toronto, 416. 920.3820 gallery hours: tuesday to saturday 11 - 5 e-mail: artcore@the-wire.com www.the-wire.com/artcore		

CALGARY

JOANE CARDINAL-SCHUBERT
FROM MARGIN TO MAINSTREAM

Respect for all things is Joane Cardinal-Schubert's value system as an outspoken activist. She describes her sharp, but still sensitive, contemporary art as *in-your-face* and that's exactly what she means.

When Canada's social fabric was ripped apart in the turbulent 1960s, Cardinal-Schubert unavoidably became aware of systemic racism. Raised in a supportive family, her attendance at university to study art forced her unwillingly to acknowledge that she was somehow *different* from her classmates. Respect is the essence of the moral principles in which she was raised and applying respect was how she learned to understand the world she lives in. Stereotype is not a word in her vocabulary; systemic discrimination was imposed on her from without.

Cardinal-Schubert questions the mainstream that decides what is native art and what is art. "The centre has moved", she laughs, "and the margins are enlarging."

Cardinal-Schubert has good reason to be happy when, in September, Master's Gallery celebrates a twenty-year retrospective of paintings and drawings that is part of the validation of her perceptive art and determined efforts. This artist is redefining the present, moving contemporary aboriginal art from being stereotyped as *ethnological artifacts* at the anthropological Museum of Man to being viewed as *fine art* in the National Gallery in Ottawa. She is unceasingly active as an artist, curator, lecturer, writer, editor and now Director of Video and Native Theatre in Calgary.

Cardinal-Schubert is not alone. She is no longer disenfranchised because of her race, but now stands beside an increasing number of eminent First Nation's artists: Bob Boyer, Robert Houle, Alex Janvier, George Littlechild, James Luna, Norval Morrisseau, Daphe Odjig, Jane Ash Poitras, Bill Reid, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun and Edward Poitras who was honoured as Canada's solo representative at the Venice Biennale in 1995. And many more artists-as-transformers, too many to list.

There are many more contemporary First Nation's artists redefining their culture according to their own self-determination, certainly more today than thirty years ago when Cardinal-Schubert first studied



Buffalo Night Quilt, 1998
Oil on paper, 56 x 76 cm
Courtesy Master's Gallery

art. Canada's attitude toward contemporary First Nation's art being viewed as art instead of anthropology is slowly but deliberately being re-examined. In *Native American Art in the Twentieth Century: Makers, Meanings, Histories* edited by W. Jackson Rushing III (1999, Routledge), the transformations are focusing on what has been done, what is happening and perhaps what needs to be done. Marginalization sets up a question: why is there so little awareness of the merit at the margins?

Honouring the circle motif, Cardinal-Schubert adheres to her perspective that the world is a continuum and one person can make a difference. She is a powerful advocate.

JANE ASH POITRAS
FROM PARIS TO CALGARY

"Art is a powerful thing", says Jane Ash Poitras, one of Canada's most vocal contemporary artists. Her paintings are a conduit for First Nation's historical truths, blazingly-coloured mixed media exude energy with collaged, ripped old black-and-white photographs, newspapers and drawings, to get the message across.

Riel to Peltier, a large canvas exhibited in Paris at the Canadian Cultural Centre this autumn, seizes the viewer with its bold startling white names stencilled across the canvas labelling images of Big Bear, Riel, Poundmaker and Crowfoot. Familiar names but courageous legends known only to a few until now. This is not the history that Poitras learned in her school textbooks, but her own sons, Josh and Eli, understand the subtleties of mis-information.

Poitras' extended research and comprehension of it is helping to reshape history so others can read and understand forge a link between past and present. First Nations emerging in response to experiences of past



Woman Creates so Man can Survive, 1998, 61 cm x 51 cm
Courtesy Collectors Gallery

alienation from the dominant culture. A vanishing race that has suffered from over a hundred years of general public neglect and discrimination, is recovering and redefining, through self-determination, who they are.

"My art is for everyone to see." Poitras speaks openly, truthfully and with authority from her own historical and cultural experience as a native Canadian. On at Collectors Gallery.

"I'm not afraid of the truth. I want my messages to sing."
Anne Severson

MARGARETHA BOOTSMA:
CONTEMPORARY
ARCHAEOLOGY



The Land Speaks II
Steel photograph, acrylic, plaster
192 x 89 cm
Courtesy Newzones Gallery

The refined material landscapes of Margaretha Bootsma are metaphors. *Endless Passing* is an environmental statement involving humanity's compliance with nature's transformations over time. She blends photographs with alternative materials such as earth, sand, or discarded oxidized metal. Likened to "Arte Povera", the matter-paintings link metaphorical statements about nature and culture.

These collaged photographs take the viewer into forests or along a river walk. In layers she creates narratives. With our eyes revealing the transparent coverings of time, it is easy to be drawn into the frame and become involved with her fieldwork research of thoughts and feelings. This type of contemporary archaeology is Bootsma's search for basic principles of humanity through interaction of life forms through time and place.

Nature and its chaos are considered in *The Land Speaks II*. Humans provide order in symbols and rituals that bridge the physical and metaphysical. These primary signs, like the circle, triangle, and rectangle, are found in nature and are symbolically universal in meaning. These symbols communicate that which is inexpressible.

In *Relic*, "Time passes, says Bootsma, and things develop and change. We need to participate and to care more about what happens."

BEV TOSH
FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING

Bev Tosh's tall, calligraphed figures are still, silent, charged with emotion that informs.

"They are thoughts made manifest. I am drawing from the inside out," says Tosh.

She has always used figures to express her thoughts and emotions. "The figure is everything to me. I relate so strongly to the way I feel as a person." There is a quiet space where thought develops, an internal space, a vessel: supportive, positive and embracing."

Thoughts and emotions evolve meditatively, almost unconsciously, through the brush on paper until finally the calligraphic, elongated frames emerge. These figures are "edited to an essence with the structured economy of brush stroke."

During studies with a master brush painter while living in Singapore, Tosh says, "I came to love the feel, the way I hold the brush, the way the stroke was informed by something inside. It's a different way of touching the surface. It allowed me to know the figures so well that I could work from inside myself."

This minimalism means that each ink stroke is loaded with meaning as it is laid down in space. All her marks are integral to the image. There is no misleading peripheral information. "All my works are about silence, but these are also about communication", says Tosh concerning her latest body of work on exhibition at Virginia Christopher Gallery until October 30. "My concern is for personal space that individuals maintain between themselves and others."

Three figures merge as one, as division of self rather than separate people, in *Matrubhka*. Referencing the painted wooden Russian stacking dolls traditionally stacked hierarchically one inside the other, Tosh has altered them democratically. In the world that Tosh lives in, this group acts as one, fitting together, supporting and balancing one another.

The autobiographical, off-balance stance in *Blueprint for Wings* may resemble Tosh, but "the way its read is up to the perception of each individual. They are as honest as I can make them", says Tosh.

Anne Severson



Blueprint for Wings, 1999
Courtesy Virginia Christopher

VANCOUVER VISIONS

ATTILA RICHARD LUKACS, ARBOR VITAE



A.B. IX, Attila Richard Lukacs, 1999, oil on canvas, 228.5 x 183 cm

With his black trees painted entirely in tar on canvas, Attila Lukacs makes a surprising departure from mural-size oil paintings of skin-head youth and homoerotic subjects at *Diane Farris Gallery* this October. In several canvasses a massive tilting trunk veers into exploding black foliage on human-height trees both nocturnal and vertiginous. Lukacs claims a breakthrough after fifteen years of experimentation with the difficult tar medium. He manipulates rich blacks from impasto to fluid stain with ease and simplicity, together with a surface stability sure to appeal to his. Residing in New York after several years in

Berlin, Lukacs has developed what he describes as a Zen-like process in a series of about 50 black paintings of various subjects begun earlier this year.

JOHN MACDONALD, is a young British Columbia painter whose work is attracting favorable reception as it matures. Originally from Prince George, his recent paintings are impressionistic landscapes worked in an intuitive and painterly manner in a studio located in his Kitsalano garden. At the Douglas Udell Gallery, October 13 to 30, Macdonald presents a landscape series that is a continuation of earlier swamphore subjects with reduced means and imagery. Relinquishing for the time being experiments with encaustic and other media, he applies pure oil paint to blown-up details of plants and water reflections. A 1998 exhibition of landscapes at Udell's Edmonton gallery. Macdonald also returns



Spawn, Northern Lake Series no. 39, John Macdonald, 1998, oil on canvas, 156 x 199.5 cm

to the figure with the theme of a solitary woman in a wilderness setting. This personification of a mysterious zone between city and wilderness serves as exploration of the uncertain margin of urban life inhabited by nomads and fugitives.

BRATSO BONIFACHO, AL CAMPO SANTO



Synthetic Symbiosis #1, Bratsa Bonifacho, 1998, oil on canvas, 58.5 x 58.5 cm

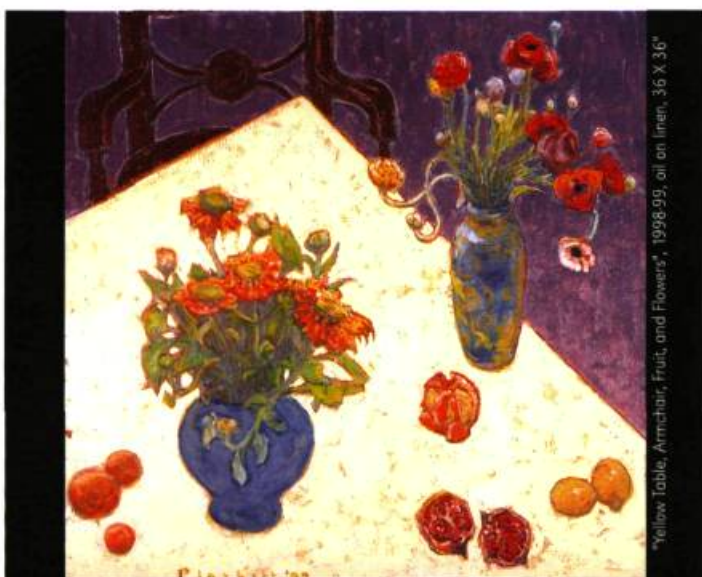
Bonifacho's vivid, vigorously constructed abstract oil paintings embody a highly subjective response to landscape and natural phenomena at Bau-Xi Gallery, October 21 to November 8. These new works reprise his earlier "Scotland Series" and "Fire and Earth Series" in smaller scale canvases. The exhibition title recalls Italian cemeteries, in particular the famous Camposanto of Pisa which received victims of the European Black Death epidemic five hundred years ago.

Bonifacho continues to wrestle with contending notions of landscape as site of global disaster and a nostalgia for landscape as sanctified refuge. The Romanticism of this senior Serb-Canadian painter, and his projection of emotion on landscape subjects to achieve effects of the heroic sublime, may result in beautiful paintings but compromise his response to political and environmental issues.

EVE LEADER, FLESH AND BLOOD

On the fringe of Vancouver's Granville Row art walk, the Third Avenue Gallery makes emerging artists its mandate. Eve Leader shows new figure paintings with precise drawing anchoring expressionistic colour and gesture from November 4 to 27, 1999. She explores the figure as compassionate metaphor for human experience in suspended, ambiguous beings painted in oil on mylar influenced by Betty Goodwin, whose work they resemble in subject and medium. In other recent exhibitions Mandy Williams *Flesh and Blood*, paintings capture the essence that typifies the energy of this gallery. *Anne Grant: 5.6 at an 1/8 of a second north*, a dichotomy between grit and romantic photography gives the subject an aura of wonderment.

Joan Richardson



"Yellow Table, Armchair, Fruit, and Flowers", 1998-99, oil on linen, 36 x 36"

JOSEPH PLASKETT

TORONTO: SEPT 15 - OCT 2, 1999
"STILL LIFE IN INTERIOR SPACE"

VANCOUVER: OCT 2 - OCT 19, 1999
"LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACKWARD"

BAU-XI GALLERY

TORONTO: 340 DUNDAS STREET. W., TEL: (416) 977-0600
VANCOUVER: 3045 GRANVILLE STREET. TEL: (604) 733-7011



Attila Richard Lukacs
Arbor Vitae

October 1 - 30 1999

Exhibitions on-line:
art@dianefarrisgallery.com
email us for exhibition notices & bulletins

DIANE FARRIS GALLERY

1565 W. 7th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V6J 1S1
Tel. (604) 737-2629
Fax (604) 737-2675
<http://www.dianefarrisgallery.com>
e-mail: art@dianefarrisgallery.com

Hours: Tuesday-Friday 10-5:30, Saturday 10-5 and by appointment.

Arbor Vitae # 1, 1999, oil & tar on canvas 84" x 60"



VICTORIA

OPEN SPACE: SPACED OPEN

The history of Open Space gallery is as varied as the artists who have exhibited during its twenty-seven years as a gallery thriving on that is experimental, alternative, and multidisciplinary. The two-story brick heritage structure on the edge of Victoria's harbour, was purchased in 1975 by "The Greater Victoria Theatrebox Society" a.k.a. Open Space Arts Society, from entrepreneur Geoffrey Sheffield. Renovations to the original structure, (former warehouse/carriage house/stables) completed in 1988 include floors, installation of theatre lighting, roof repairs, and an outdoor ceramic mural at the entrance by Richard Finch.

Past directors are: Gene Miller, Bill Bartlett, Jeanne Shoemaker, Linda Gorrie, Michael MacLennan, and Sue Donaldson. Current director Todd Davis was appointed in the summer of 1998. Open Space is a non-profit artist-run centre and relies on financial support from The Canada Council, the B.C. Arts Council, the Greater Victoria Intermunicipal Committee and the City of Victoria.

BEGINNINGS TO NOW

Incorporated as a society in 1972, the early years reflect the exuberant energies of Gene Miller. Miller's original vision was for a space where more was better, outrageous activity was encouraged and chaos was the order of the day. "Happenings" included gatherings, forums, meetings with an artistic/cultural content, (Christmas Craft Fairs in a flea market atmosphere), and an established theatre presence, hence "Theatrebox Society". The tempo was fast, the mood irreverent, and the structure very loose.

Change of directorship often facilitates structural change. Bill Bartlett's focused on the visual arts and was committed to experimental work, especially that which incorporated new media. From 1974 - 1978 Bartlett organized a successful series of "Collaboratories." Artists participated in six-week residencies exploring sound, movement, photography, and video. Bartlett's vision reflected a move away from regionalism, embracing multidisciplinary, and recognition of the technological explosion affecting artistic practice. The model for this kind of thinking was Vancouver's Intermedia Society, Canada's first artist-run centre.

To Remain at a Distance, (view of Inner Harbour, Don Gill, 1998
Courtesy Open Space

The Eighties further established the cultural links between Open Space and the community in more issue-oriented, politicized ways. Jeanne Shoemaker's Outdoor Projects introduced public art and site-specific installations to a nervous Victoria, in an effort to increase public and media awareness and initiated "Monday Nights at Open Space" including a public forum on street prostitution, outreach programs, Artlink and Gallery on Wheels.

The challenge of the Nineties required restructuring and redefinition. Sue Donaldson and Michael MacLennan (Interim) threw their energies into creating policies and rewriting bylaws, establishing a protected framework in which to function. Administrative and grant-writing skills were honed in a climate of funding cutbacks and government conservatism. Donaldson's directorship highlighted "Creating in Context" a colloquium for visual artists involving the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Xchanges Gallery, the University of Victoria, Camosun College, the Royal B.C. Museum, and the Community Arts Council. She also re-established the publication of exhibition catalogues as sites for critical discourse.

In 1992, "The October Project," a twenty-year anniversary group exhibition was testimony to the outstanding community commitment of the con-

tributing artists and organizers to Open Space, the kind of support that keeps it alive and vital today. The shifting concerns of the post-modern condition mimic those of all artist-run centres struggling to serve the needs of their artistic communities, funding bodies, and larger communities. The policies of reciprocity, transparency, sponsorship, and support realized by Open Space over twenty-seven years are important and deserve celebration.

Linda Giles

(Research Source: The October Project catalogue, published by Open Space, 1992)

PAINTING, PAINTING...

WINCHESTER GALLERIES

1545 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C.
1010 Broad Street, Victoria, B.C.

A preponderance of summer festivals have certainly interrupted the calm that is Victoria with their vigorous panoply of art, music, dance, performance, poetry and other exuberant offerings. Winchester Galleries, with an introspective gesture typically Canadian, propose a departure from the summer spoils. Featured here this fall are six shows about painting.

Opening the season, Paul Hutner's new abstract paintings on canvas buzz with an urban energy reminiscent of the Italian Futurists. In "Untitled #3", Hutner's repetition of high-colour shapes are carefully positioned on a monochrome grid. The aggressive interplay stimulates an intellectual response. The complexity of Hutner's abstract vocabulary also allows the viewer a certain rhythmic sensation not unlike the pleasant experience of improvised music.

Winchester Galleries presents an exhibition of new and recent works by the esteemed artists Joseph Plaskett (oils and pastels), and Molly Lamb Bobak (oils and watercolours) to Oc-

tober 27th, with both artists in attendance at the opening Sunday, October 10th. A book launch of Joseph Plaskett's memoirs, *A Speaking Likeness*, published by Ronsdale Press (Vancouver), will also be celebrated at this time.

"Plaskett's paintings...are among the most sought after of any painter in Canada. While often expressing a feeling of sombre melancholy, as if at the end of a heroic age, his work is always alive and vital, calling us to respond and create in the face of darkness. Having recently celebrated his eightieth birthday, he continues to paint vigorously, still excited about the discoveries he is making with form and colour."

George Woodcock

A November exhibition features figurative work by Brad Pasutti (Victoria). Pasutti tackles most articulately and thoughtfully the well-seasoned territory of the nude. The grand traditions of Landscape, Still Life, Abstraction, and Figuration continue to hold their place within the multifarious virtual realities of the late twentieth century. With the scattering of millennial leaves, things shift, the centre cannot hold; art transgresses, painting persists.

Linda Giles



Prescription Burn I, Jessie Homer French, 1999
oil on canvas, 46 cm x 61 cm
Courtesy Winchester Gallery

510 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1E6
voice 250.383.8833 fax 250.383.8841
openspace@ii.ca

OpenSpace

www.openspace.ca

September 1999

AntiMatter - Short Film & Video Festival of Independent Productions

October 1999

Roving Projects

George Gaudette

Lance Olsen

House without Walls

monograph with text by Roy Green, Pali Tozer and Todd Davis

November 1999

Derek Besant - Une Nuit Blanche. A Sleepless Night