Espace Sculpture

Between Line and Form

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See table of contents

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Between Line and Form

The works in the exhibition, inspired by the linear boundaries of drawing and the volumetric dimension of sculptural forms, "blur the boundaries between these disciplines." Framed as being "in-between," the works of Barbour, Stevenson and Pien offered the viewer entry into infinite spaces and balances.

Manifest in the work of four artists (Kai Chan, Ed Pien, Sarah Stevenson, and Martha Townsend) were notions of living, working and creating spaces "in-between." Innumerable potential narratives and visual points of entry were generated and offered to the viewer for contemplation. In this regard, the exhibition suspended perceptions related not only to representation and to the disciplines of drawing and sculpture, but to social and experimental states of being as well. More broadly, Between Line and Form revealed and spatialized the layers of contemporary life experience.

In Ed Pien's work, his highly-regarded animal-human hybrids hovered through overlapping ink drawings stretched across the gallery walls, as well as across a 33-foot screen-like tissue, A Mixing of Dreams. This large layered tissue that hovered above the gallery floor spanned across the entrance of the main gallery. Starting, due to its size and whiteness, but also because of the spaces of fantasy and make-believe that emerged in black and touches of red ink from the layers of translucent Chinese tissues. Morbidly fantastic, fearful allegories combine and invade Pien's prolific iconography; monsters, amphibians, and the grotesque all appear in varying mutating forms and sizes.

In Chan's Rainbow Legs strings of painted toothpicks carefully threaded together to form a pair of trousers gracefully dangle from the wall. As in so many of his delicate constructions, the criss-crossed shadows these toothpicks cast on the wall evoke inner volumes. Fleetingly, the thin lines of the rainbow-coloured toothpicks move and dance as visitors pass by. Chan's subtle and marvellous animating and ever-shifting grey pencil strokes appear to endlessly fold back onto themselves. The boundless, Between Line and Form prospers several methods of perceiving interstices "in-between." Besides expansive and volumetric forms and spaces. The exhibition explores the manifestation of infinite spaces and possibilities in intensely abstract works. Here, the interactions and intersections of line and form arrive at a point of infinity, having no limits or boundaries in space, extent, or magnitude. The compelling lines and inviting forms in the allusive works by Martha Townsend and Sarah Stevenson offered ways for our gaze to enter into these infinite spaces.

Like Nothing, Martha Townsend's fifty-two small graphite drawings on white paper, was rich with abstract and seductive shapes produced by her overlapping and almost every-shaded grey pencil strokes appear to endlessly fold back onto themselves. The bound-
Shore/lines: responding to place

DENIS LONGCHAMPS

The concept of ArtCity — a city that is encompassed by and devoted to art in a multiplicity of voices, expressions, and forms — is the vision of the MacLaren Art Centre's Director, William Moore. A city with a population of 120 thousand, one hour north of Toronto, and perceived as the gateway to the north, Barrie, Ontario, is the optimal location for this transformation.

The first major initiative under the umbrella of ArtCity is the environmental art biennial Shore/lines. From May to October 2003, the first edition of Shore/lines (plans are already underway for 2005) not only offers its participants the opportunity to explore the nature theme and its relation to culture and humankind, but also references Barrie's own historical development as part of the city's sesquicentennial celebrations.

Barrie embraces one end of Lake Simcoe, known as Kempenfelt Bay, and sits on what was the shore of the ancient Lake Algonquin. Kempenfelt Bay is the starting point of the historic Nine Mile Portage, used long before colonization by the First Nations to reach Georgian Bay, and the Bay also played an important role in the Fur Trade and the war of 1812.

On the basis of such a rich history, Shore/lines proposes to examine the real and imagined boundaries between land and water as well as their relations to each other. Following the advice of Montreal-based independent curator and writer John K. Grande, the MacLaren invited sixteen artists from across Canada, the United States, and Europe — all of them working in teams of two — to create a site within Barrie and create a response to the social and geographical terrain. This summer, fourteen such sites offer an equal number of responses. Some reference the impact of humankind on the environment, while others recreate what they envision to be idyllic, pre-industrial landscapes within the actual contemporary topography; some explore spiritual connections with nature, while others question the concept of history itself and its position toward the environment. Above all, each response stems from the premise that "nature is the art of which we are part," consciously or not, in communion, in colonization, or in rebellion.

While most of the material used by the participating artists is found in or around their chosen site, some do include man-made materials to formulate a critical contrast with the bounty of nature. In environmental art, the natural world is both the subject and the object. The ensuing installations are intended to be ephemeral in order to emphasize the changing qualities of the real and imagined boundaries between land and water, the core theme of Shore/lines.

Newfoundland artist Will Gill has constructed a structure reminiscent of the lighthouses that have guided boats for centuries on waterways around the world. Erected on Georgian College's property, his installation references these buildings with its tall and slender column covered with the required warning stripes. It has no light, however; instead, it is topped with three radar-like dishes covered with straw. Gill's work combines his personal experience of the rugged Atlantic coastline (in Halifax and St. John's) and Barrie's topographical and agricultural history. Such lighthouses are still found in the region of Simcoe County bordering Georgian Bay, the earliest of which was built in 1834 on Simcoe Island at Nine Mile Point. In his work, Will Gill strives not only to question, but also to find a healthy balance between progress and nature — if such equilibrium exists at all. To create the wooden lighthouse Gill used dead pine trees removed from the local parkland in Barrie. The final trimming was done with various electric hand tools — a chainsaw, a sander, and a grinder — leaving marks on the main body, the scars of industrialization on nature. Inspired in part by an oak tree twice as old as Barrie itself, the artist created a protection device usually situated on the physical boundaries of water and land. Traditionally a lighthouse's purpose is to warn of nature's destructive force — to protect people from danger; Gill's lighthouse is intended to do the opposite. His creation can be perceived as a warning sign to protect the old trees, a natural heritage, against industrialization, as well as suggesting a historical link connecting Simcoe County's past, its present, and its future.

Although incorporating a more spiritual approach, similar links are found in the work of Alfio Bonanno, Founder of Tickon (Tranekaer

EVENEMENTS Events

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