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In his Montreal exhibition, Nikola presents large format expressionist paintings with sculptural attachments. A mural created for the exhibition space, on six panels, is intended to immerse the viewer in the process of the work. Flights of Last Link, 1996, oil and mixed media on plywood, 244 x 732 cm, is the largest work the artist has produced to date. Should one choose to acquire and co-exist with one of his creations, Nikola is convinced that the ongoing relationship is to be a process of sen­torial evolution.

The background serves as an archaeological dig in Gravity of the First Number, buried deep beyond conscious recognition, over which numbers are superimposed, and through which a tunneling process of thought occurs. Infinite lines meander like a traversing river over which yearns in translucent mantles float, sputtering blood, in a vibration with cosmological forces. This is reinforced by the inclusion of a carved sculptural attachment positioned in a diversifying interrelationship with the painting.

Artifacts of Burning Pathos, 1997-99, 1,52 m x 2,46 m.

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Nickola rejects transparent socioeconomic manipulations in the art market in favour of creating a unique visual language. In Fanning Fingers visual information replaces language, enabling the crystallization of a message to occur. Wrapped in timeless mythology, implied by a mix of painted, found, and sculpted imagery. Nikola penetrates the memory of shadows, seeking to fix disconnected cartographies, attempting to reach a state where nothing is excluded and no one dominates. Laparoscopic travels through genetic memory is a mitigation between risk and acceptance in touch with a higher source.

Michael J. Moïter

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Artifacts of Burning Pathos, 1997-99, 1,52 m x 2,46 m.
propel her/him forward. We are conscious of the tremendous energy necessary to have stopped the trajectory, enhancing not only our curiosity, but our concern. What is absent here, or unknown, preoccupies more than what is given.

Such stark absence is perhaps nowhere more evident than in River Road, 1997. A landscape, this work is intriguing in its ordinariness. Set at the edge of a highway, it consists of a small bungalow in a rural environment, out buildings, various vehicles, edged by fields and framed by telephone poles and wires. In the foreground a truck with camper faces the road, ready to depart or recently parked. There are no figures, no movement. The place is specific, a generic home to an invisible someone, resembling that of millions. We are mindful of the fact that, somehow, this came to be as it is, and it is that becoming that arrests us. The sprinkling of snow on the lawn may be freshly fallen, or perhaps melting into Spring. We are aware of the fact that, although the specifics of this particular scene remain anonymous, there exists an ongoing time-line encompassing events, natural phenomena, and lives - the effect of which is visible, but through a presence only implied.

The sophisticated technology which the artist employs permits him to present with uncanny precision scenes from everyday life. The frequent reference to Wall’s photographic work as “the painter of modern life”, to use Raudaleiz’s expression, is most apt in the sense that his images testify to the complexity of human life in an era characterized by change, tinged with despair. Wall’s work is perhaps most powerful in the questions it unereds and honours than in the answers it provides.

Elizabeth Wood

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE
NUNSIE, Real, GINGRAS
Nicole; Jeff Wall; Duneses


ISBN 2-551-19069-X
LILIAN BROCA

Mixed media & lithographs
May 24 – June 12, 1999
Vernissage, May 25, at 6PM

VAV Gallery
1395 Rene Levesque Blvd. West
Montreal, PQ, H3B 2M5
Tel. (514) 848-4272 Fax: (514) 848-4589

Ottawa Art Gallery
May 13–November 21

IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

Capital Concerns

spring inevitably prompts us to see our surroundings with a refreshed perspective, a renewed vigour and, perhaps, even a sense of discovery. This season, as Ottawans and visitors to the Capitol region idly stroll the streets in a sun-soaked trance, they will run smack into the middle of living art; art that has escaped the confines of its traditional home, defying the constraints and definitions imposed by art gallery spaces. This art is not for passive absorption. In All the Wrong Places radically shifts what is a tenuous balance between art as object and the viewer.

Curated by the Ottawa Art Gallery's Curator of Contemporary Art, Sylvie Fortin, In All the Wrong Places features new and commissioned work by a group of 12 local, national, and international artists: Martin Bourque, Gemma L. Kolb, and Chantal Gervais (Ottawa), Mohamed Elbaz (France), Charles Goldman (New York), Diane Gougeon (Montreal), Aernout Mik (Amsterdam), Marylène Negro (Paris), Nadine Norman (Montreal), Mitch Robertson (Toronto), Susan Schuppli (Alberta), and Michael Shewanassai (Bangkok).

Fortin explains that In All the Wrong Places “seeks to present and mediate the breadth of contemporary visual and media arts productions, so as to foreground significant artistic attitudes and practices which cannot operate within the physical confines of the gallery, exploring contemporary notions and approaches to site-specificity. The project explores, in the evolving context and demands of speeding technologies, the communication role imparted, played and/or claimed by art institutions, revisiting the need for a re-articulation of the attitudes and actions of the contemporary art institution.”

While the works will all take place outside the Ottawa Art Gallery, one of the gallery spaces will be used as a "communication bureau" to which the public is invited to come physically, or virtually through the Internet, to meet attendants, and find out what's happening. The project's web site will be updated daily to include up-to-the-minute video and audio clips, interviews and feedback from the public, transcripts of artists' talks, a guest book, and discussion forums. From the newspaper, the telephone and the internet, to actions, performances and presentations at various sites, contemporary art will infiltrate and permeate Ottawa's downtown core.

IQQAIPAA: CELEBRATING INUIT ART, 1948-1970

Canadian Museum of Civilization
April 1, 1999–January 30, 2000

Robert Murray: The Factory as Studio
National Gallery of Canada
February 19–May 2

Murray's brilliantly coloured sculptures, fabricated in steel and aluminum, have been transported to Ottawa from numerous public and private collections from as far across North America as Berkeley, Washington, Victoria, New York and Saint John, N.B. Robert Murray: The Factory as Studio is the first major exhibition of Murray's work in Canada since 1985, presenting 38 masterful sculptures, maquettes, prints and drawings crossing three decades of artistic production. A strong identification with Aboriginal culture is evident in titles such as Sioux, Saganaw, and Athabasca, all featured in the exhibition.

Murray, originally from Saskatchewan and based in New York, is one of the most prominent sculptors to have arrived on the Canadian scene in the 1960's. Curated by Denise LeClerc, the catalogue Robert Murray: The Factory as Studio, 1999, 196 pp. ISBN 0-88884-693-2, with introductions by Barbara Rose and Pierre Thibege and text by Denise LeClerc accompanies the exhibition. Pierre Thibege, Director of the National Gallery of Canada, says of Murray: 'Whether making reductive sculpture in the 1960s, sumptuous, lavish, and expressive sculpture in the 1970s or by introducing a new modulating of meaning into his abstract works in the 1980s, Robert Murray can truly be regarded as one of the most significant and innovative sculptors of our time.'

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Francesca Guarowski
TO JUNE 12, features seven projects - solo, group and collaborative - dealing with current and historical sectors of underground economies.

GALLERIES PARTICIPATING IN CONTACT '99, THE ANNUAL MAY PHOTOGRAPHY FESTIVAL, TEAM UP TO HEADLINE THIS SEASON'S DIVERSE SPRING EXHIBITIONS.

THE GALLERY DISTRICT
At A Space (410 Richmond) Milkweed Patch, to April 17, is a mixed media installation by Debbie O'Rourke (silk, plywood and driftwood), offering a narrative on the human condition through the metaphor of the Monarch butterfly. The imagery, part human, part insect, crosses boundaries between art and science, theory and spirituality. The alliance between the Monarch and the milkweed plant, which may fall victim to parasites, is compared here to the waning effects of AIDS. The work will be toured by A Space to galleries along the migratory route from Canada through Guatemala. The catalogue with essays by Virginia Macdonnell and José Springer. Soundkrafl, May 1 to June 12, features seven projects - solo, group and collaborative - dealing with current and historical sectors of underground economies.

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Curated by Carol Pickering and John Marriott with catalogue essay by Steve Reinke, Blind Man's Bluff at Toronto Photographer's Workshop, 80 Spadina, uses video and photography to focus on the ambivalence towards mastery, found in much of contemporary artistic practice. To April 24, it features work by Michael Buckland and Oamian Moppett. For Buckland, a Canadian artist and curator based in Brooklyn, New York, photography functions both as document and finished work. Moppett's Office Photos resemble glossy colour product shots of half-heartedly constructed amorphous blobs. By recording gestures implying failure of consciousness, bodily functions and business ventures, both artists appear reluctant to endorse any one model of artistry or masculinity.

The brave little BUS Gallery (1237 Queen St. W.) continues to produce some of the best exhibitions in downtown Toronto. Fully utilizing a unique space, curator Katherine Mulherin presents works by Michelle Johnson and Elizabeth Fearon in April. Instamatic - part of May Contact'99 - explores alternative processes in photobased art.

At Gallery 44, 1000 WORDS; musings on the medium, part of Contact'99, is followed with photographic-based works by Rose Kalla and Normand Rajotte, to July 10. Rajotte's recent Montreal exhibition at Galerie Mistral February 17-March 27 gave Montrealers a preview to this exhibition that reveals nature in a suspended state bringing us to the essence of the photographic image.


Nils Udo at DeLeon White, April 17 to June 12, is followed by the kinetic sculptor Doug Buis, with Peter von Tiesenhausen, June 19 to September 4. The new gallery space in Yorkville at 35 Prince Arthur Street, will open with von Tiesenhausen and produce rotating shows and permanent installations.

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UPTOWN

In Yorkville, March came in like a lion this year with *Impostures* by Montreal artist Kamila Wozniakowska at Arcore where the schedule this season includes an installation by Giorgio Celiberti to April 24 and for *Contact 99* new photography "For You" by Liliana Porter in May. Collaborative paintings "From the Studio" by Dougal Graham and Sawan Yawnghwe through June.

A Hunting Hound with Two Travelling Salesmen in a Meadow. Kamila Wozniakowska, 1998, acrylic on plywood, 122 x 141.5 cm. Courtesy Arcore.

A fun and fanciful exhibition runs at the George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art (ROM) at 111 Queen's Park until May 16. Tiled Tankards, Tureens and Crawly Things the exhibit showcases tin-glazed ceramics that were used at tables and in taverns of Renaissance Europe. The new Discovery Gallery at the Royal Ontario Museum explores the ROM's collections and recherche with an eclectic range of exhibits. Gallery sections include a field camp, a collector's corner, presentation area, a virtual Iroquois archaeological site, a laboratory, and a section on the art of living.

Sundance at Night, Bob Boyer, 1996, mixed media on paper, 45.75 x 72.5 cm. Courtesy Gallery Cerek.

Gallery Géstis presents an exhibition of paintings in the realist tradition by Gerald Lazaro, April 17 to May 7. May 8 to June 4, Bob Boyer's work highlights amalgams of media and traditional symbols informed by aboriginal sensibility. Boyer, based in Saskatchewan, is featured in concurrent exhibitions at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, and at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary. Alan Wyile, renowned muralist and purveyor of the Scottish Realist tradition, exhibits new paintings at Gallery Géstis from June 5 to July 2.

Edward Day Gallery presents an exhibition of works by Dan Hughes and David Simon in April. Their art is complementary, despite the difference in mediums, establishing a dialogue between sculpture and painting. The Edward Day Gallery participates in *Contact 99* with a group show and in June profiles evocative drawings by Frank Null.

The Lonsdale Gallery (533 Lonsdale Road, Forrest Hill) *Contact 99*, Pinhole International II exhibition *Magpie Naturalis*, curated by Diane Bos, April 29 to May 29, with an opening May 13, precedes June's new work by Peter Byrne.

Jane Ash Poitras presents new paintings at the Mira Godard Gallery from April 24 to May 8. Peter Kraus's landscapes, referencing the Mediterranean, drawn from the artist's imagination, are on view May 15 to June 5, with work by J.C. Heywood's.

April 3-April 24, 1999
GIORGIO CELIBERTI — "Celiberti's Room"
installation

May 1 to May 26, 1999
LILIANA PORTER — "For You"
new photography *CONTACT 99*

May 29 to June 25, 1999
DOUGAL GRAHAM AND SAWAN YAWNGHWE — "From the Studio"
collaborative paintings

June 26-July 24, 1999
EVE LEADER, PIPPA CHERNIAVSKY AND LEEMOUR PELLI — new drawing
FIFTEEN YEARS LATER

The Journeyman, 1998, oil on linen, 90 x 72 in.

CALGARY

KEVIN SONMOR
THE JOURNEYMAN
Newzones Gallery
November - December 99

Kevin Sonmor’s heroic, post-apocalyptic paintings shown at Newzones Gallery of Contemporary Art, Calgary, November through December 1998, reference dark brooding abstract landscapes animated with tight, intensely coloured, realistically ordered still-lives. Hints of survival and the hope of the unseen people are encoded in these enigmatic altar-like settings, covered with rich royal red tapestries and sumptuous blue velvets offering sanctuary for chalices and bronze intertwined twigs with fruit and leaves will once again delight the joie de vivre.

Sonmor has abstracted the atmosphere of rugged Romanticism recalled in Nineteenth-century works such as Turner’s turbulent stormy seas and thunderous skies. This artist has tormented Friedrich’s hanging cliffs and dreary stillness of endless ocean implying the powerlessness of man in the face of mighty nature. His tragic backgrounds suggest the force of human self-destruction, but his vibrant altars imply man’s ability to survive his own malignant tendencies.

The journeyman, the signature piece of these recent works, suggests a voyage, perhaps dedicated to his search for the world we live in. Today’s troubled world there are wars continuously cropping up from Hussein in Iraq, to the religious turmoil in the Middle East and ethnic elimination in Bosnia,Croatia and Africa. The media reinforces live bombings in Baghdad with dreary testimonies about the American president. I Have So Much, You Have So Little implies a guilt devoid of the laughter and joy of life.

Sonmor has committed himself to painting in oils and his seasoned, adept handling of the medium indicates his experienced versatility. He constructs his mystical, desolate backgrounds through a laborious build-up of layers using brush and palette knife. His thick paint is rubbed, dripped, swirled, splashed and smudged. These dense textures are scraped, and re-worked until the dark resonant canvas surface is deemed ready for Sonmor’s vibrant altars. This intense dedication to oils declare, and somewhat resemble that painting is alive and flourishing.

Sonmor, a Montreal based native to Calgary, generates paintings that are clear and focused. Their deceptive simplicity increases in subtle complexity with scrutiny of details and textures. The intensity and resonance of medium and technique reveal a confusing, distressed world, where I would miss laughter, and the joie de vivre. While others consider this to be their real world and I admire his craftsmanship, I can not find enough hope to live here.

Anne Severson

BOW LAND CHINOOKS

ALBERTA PERSPECTIVE

ON THE LANDSCAPE

The land and our dependence on it are a focus at the core of differing horizontal viewpoints. As the millennium nears, it appears we are reconstructing our roots in search of a direction into the future.

The romantic turbulence from the turn-of-the-century is brought back in the Memory Series by Barry Weiss at Newzones, May 6 to 29. Created with layers of oils, his moody, dreamlike, dark prairie landscapes hover between realism of open skies and formalist abstraction.

Sonmor’s ap­parent contradictions suggest a mysterious, otherworldly character of nature for his own use? Sonmor’s ap­parent contradictions suggest a mysterious, otherworldly character of spirituality. “This is my view of reality. The tragedy of Western culture is hard to avoid”.

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Anne Severson

We Used to Make Offerings to the Holy Waters, Bob Boyer, 1995, fresco on panel, 91.4 x 229.1 cm, collection of the artist. Courtesy of Assiniboia Art Gallery, Regasa, SK. photo: Don Hall

EDMONTON

Edmonton’s Catherine Burgess assesses human relationship to the land in Measuring at Paul Kuhn Gallery, April 10 to May 20. Burgess has reclaimed steel in Edmonton’s abstract formalist tradition of welded-steel sculpture and has thoughtfully and contemplatively recycled it to produce new art.

Stylized grain elevators by Don Proch speak of a distinctive, but dying, prairie architecture. Nostalgically depicting the idyllic dialogue between the farmer and his land, the sculpture and mixed media are finely detailed in an exhibit at Douglas Udell Gallery in Edmonton, May 1 to 15.

Natural Order at the Edmonton Art Gallery with Douglas Aitkin, Geoffrey James and Mike MacDonald. April 16 to June 13, is an ironical examination of the dual impulse to both artificially construct and destroy nature. Unnaturally constructed miniature gardens, to the destruction of the land by mass-scale industry, complete this meditation on landscape.

Anne Severson
Three years ago, Mexican artist and social activist Edgar Clemente participated in a residency at the Banff Centre. Among the things he produced there was an ironic comic book chronicle of his experience. In the first panels, a beaming Edgar, who had been trying to cross the Mexican/Canadian border for years, approaches border guards with a letter, his passport to Banff. The puzzled officials ask, "What's Banff? Is it like a credit card? Is it Prozac?" Our hero replies, "No! It's like a spa, but for artists."

The Banff Centre has an international reputation as an artists' retreat. While the Rocky Mountain setting is a recreation mecca, the Centre itself is an intense art lab, a meeting place for multi-disciplinary artists from around the world. And at the heart of the visual arts side of the Centre is the Walter Phillips Gallery.

Since 1975, the 3500 square foot gallery, currently headed by Jon Tupper, has been devoted to contemporary art. It is an experimental space where artists can show work that might not be suitable for other spaces, or simply develop work for informed critical feedback. To support this research and experimentation mission, the gallery holds numerous symposia, conferences, lectures, and produces many publications on issues in current art and culture. The gallery is especially known for exhibiting art that engages wider social and cultural realities, and that employs the latest technology.

The Walter Phillips' curators acknowledge that just as art often exceeds the gallery, a gallery is more than a room. So, many works have taken place off-site on the internet, in their adjunct space in Calgary, in the surrounding wilderness, and in the Banff town site. Banff is a tourist town and many recent projects have played on this fact. A personal favorite was Shawna Dempsey and Lori Millan's Winnipeg performance, "Lesbian National Parks and Services," which had them dressing as park wardens, handing out official looking guides and holding recruiting drives among the tourists.

Though not part of the residency program, the curators do make an effort to complement that program's theme. For example, to coincide with this past spring's landscape residency, assistant curator Melanie Townsend assembled "Fire Baxter: Landscape Works" (April 9-June 6). This important exhibition, the first to bring together Baxter's explorations of landscape, included paintings, photographs, mixed-media works, light boxes, video, and book works-from one of Canada's premier conceptual artists.

Not only have numerous artists been able to debut their experiments in the Walter Phillips Gallery, so have many curators. Aside from dozens of guest curators, recent curatorial alumni include: Maron Blanchette, who is currently Head of Communication for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Montreal; Daina Augaitis, senior curator at the Vancouver Art Gallery; and Catherine Crowston, senior curator at the Edmonton Art Gallery.

The Walter Phillips Gallery has had a strong influence on artistic and curatorial directions in Canada but, like other laboratories, that impact is most felt down the line. Because of its nearly hidden location, the gallery is not as well known to the general public as it could be.

A few reasons to check out the WPG this summer: "Streaming: A Laboratory," Bruce Barber and Park Bench (Anna Sobell, Emily Harrell and Jesse Gilbert) are multidisciplinary artists who will produce a web viewing and creating space in the gallery.

"Beck and Al Hansen: Playing With Matches;" curated by Wayne Baerwaldt and Plug In Gallery (Winnipeg), features work by pop star Beck and his Flaxus inspired grandfather, Al (August 13-Oct. 5).

If you can't travel, check out their informative site: www-nmr.banffcentre.ab.ca/WPG/

David Garneau
to encourage the viewer to read the images as bodyscapes and what the artist terms “maps of our humanity.”

The three-piece installation “My Body, My Box of Pain and Pleasure” is an example of what Perunovich refers to as body containers. Three boxes are wrapped in red material, like gifts, with a bow at the back. We see a female torso suspended from wires, a pregnant box placed on a chair, and, set on the floor, a detonator. It is the same box transformed whose descent we can visually follow from the exterior to the material. The idealized untouchable body undergoes metamorphosis, becoming damaged and endangered. Though there is process here, the lining up of the objects in this way emphasizes that embodied knowledge is simultaneously ubiquitous and traumatic. The gift-wrapped box indicates the tension between exterior and internal. Our skins being that thing we can manipulate most easily, playing with appearances. Yet the interior is contained and not separate. As the detonator demonstrates, danger comes not only from without, but is potentially rooted within.

The masks used in “Long Last Kiss” reiterate this concept. Masks referencing a variety of things including protection, masquerade, concealment, and liberation. They are both playful and deadly. They can be read as hiding the faces of either warriors or lovers. The two masks are mounted on adjacent walls and connected by thin strands of red. These long hair-like threads are like sensuous and fragile blood lines. The dark masks and their dense metal meshing contrast with the delicacy of this binding element. The play is on hard shells and vulnerabilities that these conceal. The masks effectively block our gaze. The threads function as a precarious life line which originates in the interior that we have no access to.

This juxtaposition of the impermeable and the vulnerable is how Perunovich demonstrates pleasure and fulfillment even while pointing to the always accompanying danger. In “So Many Lures, So Little Time” red threads rain onto a wrought iron bed. These are decorated by glittering fishing lures and weighed down by large red drops resting on bed springs. Beds are the places of the most complex human relationships (birth, death, intimacy, dreams) and Perunovich’s place to present the duality that exists in sexuality and the desire for connection. The beautiful lures represent temptation. But where there is a promise of fulfillment there is also threat. The piece points to the inevitable double edged consequence of being and interaction.

Perunovich’s installations are careful and precise. Her focus is on creating a balance between polarities. She juxtaposes dichotomies such as to indicate that it is the sum of these that make up experience and human relations. By maintaining this tension the artist excels in engaging the viewer physically and emotionally.

Vancouver

NESSA PERUNOVICH
RED-E-SCAPES
Third Avenue Gallery, Vancouver

Vessa Perunovich’s work focuses on the multiple dimensions inherent in human relations which include desire and fear, pain and pleasure, mind and emotion. The title, “RED-E-SCAPES,” understood as “red escapes” refers to human emotion which can escape our control. Read as “ready scapes” it is intended...
First Nations custodians and were (and are still) maintained as a living heritage. The sense of a dying tradition we obtain from both Carr's images and writings seems to represent a subjective nostalgia she imposed upon her subjects.

Carroll Peter McNaughton learned in 1967 that Carr's earliest villagescapes were based upon photographs. A 1901 photograph, Blunden Harbour, by Charles F. Freake, provided the source for the now famous painting by Emily Carr in the National Gallery of Canada collection. For McNaughton, this discovery began a long term fascination with Carr's visionary foundations. Investigations into the matter yielded some interesting historical data; about twenty or thirty of Carr's early studies of B.C. coastal scenes and First Nations structures were photo-based works. These are the precursors of the on-site portrayals she later produced and became renowned for.

The apparent scenarios, dramas and tableau presented in a Regehr painting are never simple or self-evident. Hidden meanings and mysteries simmer below the painterly surfaces. Jewel-like pigments are worked into alluring textures and finishes, but one's gaze is drawn beyond. Transcending the question, "What's really going on here," the viewer is pulled into the narrative image. Hints of parable or allegory abound, with mythical muse figures (Unidentified Mistress, 1998), or occult symbolism. This visual teasing works even though one's first reaction may be one of unease, even mild fear. In the relationships portrayed, the power dynamics on view, there are hints of abuse, enthrallment, obsession or oppression. It's the same feeling the addict of fairytale might feel upon encountering an intimate and familiar dreamscape in a story. This reaction might be described as part wonder, part fascination, and part nightmare. An encounter with some mumps, transforming underscore of magic at hand. Like any threshold, it's rather scary.

In Issac With A Nice Claret, (1995) a small boy stands on a table, perched amid a tidy place setting. A half-filled bottle stands next to a glass of claret and a white rose, as if to accompany the boy (who, presumably, is Issac) as the sacrificial lunch. On the other side of Issac, a skeletal black goat's head completes the table setting.

These beautiful, yet sinister paintings focus on a persistent theme in Regehr's work. Children show up often, adding a poignant, or even tragic, aspect. Issues of trust, creativity, vulnerability and innocence seem to lie at the heart of these parables. Jesus says, "Give me the child for seven years and I will show you the man." The child in the art of Duncan Regehr is a source of beguilement and beauty, with an edge.

A recent exhibition of late work by Joff Smith at Winchester's Broad Street location and Jack Beder at the Fort Street Gallery attest to Winchester's ongoing affinity for Montreal artists.

You're Welcome