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 THE WALLS WEAR 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.

CHINESE PLANTS WHOSE LEAVES HAVE BEEN TRIMMED INTO A UNIVERSAL AND REPEATING ROUND SHAPE. THE SIDE WALLS AND THE WALLS WEAR 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.

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 INTENANTED 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 OR EVEN FORMIDABLE.

THEIR FORMS FORMICA-LIKE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DEGREE OF DISTANCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS. WHAT AN IRRONY AND A POST-MODERN ONE AT THAT, FOR THESE PEOPLE CONTAINED IN CUBICLES THAT ARE LIKEWISE CONTAINED WITHIN THE LARGER SPACE OF THE ROOM, SEEM DESIGNED TO ISOLATE THEIR ENVIRONMENTS. THE SAME APPLIES TO THE MAN WHO STANDS BAREFOOT WITHIN A SMALLER CUBICLE, ONE OF FOUR, IN *WAITING* BUT THIS SCENE IS MORE CLOSE-UP. CLIVE SMITH INOCULATION HIS PAINTINGS WITH AN INTENSITY THAT HINGES ON THE USE OF LIGHT AND TEXTURE.

THE SLEGHTY EXAGGERATION OF PERSPECTIVE IN THESE PAINTINGS FURTHERS A DIALOGUE ON CLOSED AND OPEN SPACE.


THE SPACES AND ENVIRONMENTS HE BUILDS INTO THESE WORKS ARE EUCLIDEAN PASSAGES, PLACES OF TRANSITION. THE DIFFUSED LIGHT EFFECTS MAKE THESE UNCOMFORTABLY POSITED PORTRAIT SUBJECTS SEEM ALL THE MORE CONTAINED, CAUGHT UP IN THE PARADOXES OF THEIR OWN THOUGHTS AND STATE OF MIND, JUST LIKE THE CUBICLES, SEATS, STOOLS THEY SIT IN. THESE PAINTERLY PARADOXES 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
5770 Rue Saint-Denis
June 17 to August 29, 1999

PEACE AND LOVE AND THE '60S WITH A POST-MODERNISH FLING, A TIMID NIHILISM AND SELF-CONSCIOUS REFLECTION PERVADING THE WORKS IN *COMPULSION*. WHILE THE TITLE OF THIS SHOW SUGGESTS SOME UNCONTROLLABLE URGES, THE WORKS CHOSEN BY TORONTO-BASED CURATOR JOHN MUELLER FOR THIS SHOW LOOK MORE OBSCENELY THAN COMPAUSIVE FASHION OR SELF-SATISFACTION MAY HAVE BEEN MORE HONEST TEXTILES, FOR THESE CONTEMPORARY WORKS ARE EUCLIDEAN TO EXCEED IN A WORLD OF EXCESS. WHILE THEY REFLECT THE STATE OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE, NO REMEDY IS OFFERED FOR THE POST-MODERN MALAISE....

SUSAN KEELEY’S STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS POST-MODERN POETIC OF TETCHY PHRASES IMPLODING AROUND THE GALLERY, EVEN ON OTHER ARTISTS’ WORK IN *FANDANGO* ARE INSTANTLY ALURING. THEY ALL SOUND LIKE TETCHY ADD PHRASES. SHE READS: PEEL ORANGE 9 MM, SPECIAL AGENT UTAH. ANOTHER INSPIRED VAN GOGH’S RADIO, OPTIC YELLOW, SELK FM. CLIVE SMITH’S WORD ASSEMBLAGE 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. ROM’S HYBRID SEXY PORTRAITS FROM THE FRINGE ARE CONTEXTUALIZED PHOTOGRAPHY (1972-1982) FROM THE 1970S THAT HAVE AN EXPERIMENTAL FLAIR YET NOW LOOKS DAINTY, ALMOST ARCHIVAL. SOME WORKS OVERLAP INTO OTHER ONES.

CLIVE SMITH INOCULATES HIS PAINTINGS WITH AN INTENSITY THAT HINGES ON THE USE OF LIGHT AND TEXTURE. THE SLEGHTY EXAGGERATION OF PERSPECTIVE IN THESE PAINTINGS FURTHERS A DIALOGUE ON CLOSED AND OPEN SPACE.


THE SPACES AND ENVIRONMENTS HE BUILDS INTO THESE WORKS ARE EUCLIDEAN PASSAGES, PLACES OF TRANSITION. THE DIFFUSED LIGHT EFFECTS MAKE THESE UNCOMFORTABLY POSITED PORTRAIT SUBJECTS SEEM ALL THE MORE CONTAINED, CAUGHT UP IN THE PARADOXES OF THEIR OWN THOUGHTS AND STATE OF MIND, JUST LIKE THE CUBICLES, SEATS, STOOLS THEY SIT IN. THESE PAINTERLY PARADOXES OF ILLUSION AND DELUSION MASK A DEEPER TRUTH THAT RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VERY NATURE OF APPEARANCE AND REALITY.

JOHN K. GRANDE

CLIVE SMITH: PAINTERLY DIALOGUE

Montreal, Galerie de Bellefeuille

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

The artist in his garden, Suffolk, 1999

Sherri Wallack

wallack galleries
203 BANK STREET
OTTAWA, ONTARIO K2P 1W7
(613) 235-4339
JACQUES PAYETTE:
BETWEEN NOT YET AND NO LONGER
October 23 - November 11
The Dabrinsky-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 die every presentation of reality; they propose an

The very distinctive technique that Jacques Payette uses is responsible in no small measure for the appeal of these large panels of marooned 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 say, 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

September 23 - October 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 late 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".

John K. Grande

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 evocative of Bonnaire's fin-de-siècle scenes or the languorous landscapes and still lives of American Milton Avery. The scenes are commonplace. These paintings are as much depictions of a psychic state of mind, of the seal 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 Carla 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 thing 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 conte drawings.

Richard Storms
November

Euan Macdonald
September

Sydney Drum
October
American superartist Cindy Sherman made her name early in her career with her Enraptured Films Stills (1977-80), a series of 8 black and white provocatively staged photographs featuring the artist herself in the role of “B movie” female characters and magazine centerfolds. Playing on the ambiguity of audience perception and exploratory 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 backdrops 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 innumerable 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 guano 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, it may be the art world’s answer to Gothic horror gothic 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 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 Louise 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 of the contents of 250 jumbo-sized boxes of Kellogg’s Cornflakes. Louise 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, fared less well in museum/gallery settings than it did when created by the many renowned artists at the time. London-based artist Greg Curnoe’s Hauler for Art Lovers (1952) 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 they exist. The same holds true for COZIC’s Jungle-Nosailles (1970) which creates its social (read object-based) barrier with a forest of red, blue and silver tubing. Bill Vazan’s Cross-Canada Line (1966-70) 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 multimedia 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 cassette case. Win Hedore (Ted Godwin, Ken Lohhead and Ronald Brooker) created a Vallencourt-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 16th) is well worth seeing.

John K. Grande

EXPLORING THE AMERICAN STEREOTYPE

CINDY SHERMAN
Art Gallery of Ontario
October 1, 1999 - January 2, 2000

American superartist Cindy Sherman made her name early in her career with her Enraptured Films Stills (1977-80), a series of 8 black and white provocatively staged photographs featuring the artist herself in the role of “B movie” female characters and magazine centerfolds. Playing on the ambiguity of audience perception and exploratory 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 backdrops 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 innumerable 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 guano 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, it may be the art world’s answer to Gothic horror gothic 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

DU 11 SEPTEMBRE AU 2 OCTOBRE

HAR-PRAKASH KHALSA
photographe

DU 30 SEPTEMBRE AU 4 OCTOBRE

ART FORUM BERLIN

DU 9 AU 30 OCTOBRE

MARC SÉGUIN
nouvelle peinture

DU 6 AU 27 NOVEMBRE

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VIE DES ARTS N°126 81
CALGARY
JOANNE CARDINAL-SCHUBERT
FROM MARGIN TO MAINSTREAM

Respect for all things is Joanne 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 understandably 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 word "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 Raising III (1999, Routledge), the transformations are focusing on what has been done, what it 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, brilliantly coloured mixed media collages combine with ripped old black-and-white photographs, newspapers and drawings to get the message across.

Riel to Peltier, a large canvases exhibited in Paris at the Canadian Cultural Centre this autumn, seizes the viewer with its bold and 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 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 refined material landscapes of Margaretha Bootsma are metaphors. Endless Passing is an environmental statement involving humanity's compliance with nature's transformations over time. It 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 held 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 Matronishes. 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

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Anne Severson
JOSEPH PLASKETT

TORONTO: SEP 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
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 Society, from entrepreneur Geoffrey Sheffield. Renovations to the original structure, (former warehouse/carryhouse/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 Gorse, 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 by the early years reflect the exuberant energies of Gene Miller. Miller's original vision was for a space where more was better, outgoing activity was encouraged and chaos was the order of the day. "Happenings" included gatherings, forums, meetings with an arts/cultural content, (Christmas Craft Fairs in a Beamarket atmosphere), and an established theatre presence, hence "Theatrebox Society". The tempo fast, the mood irreverent, and the structure very loose.

Change of directorship often facilitates structural change. Bill Bartlett's vision reflected that of 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 multi-disciplinarity, 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.

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 imitated "Monday Nights at Open Space" including a public forum on street prostitution, outreach programs, and a 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, Xchange 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 contributing 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

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 Hunter's new abstract paintings on canvas buzz with an urban energy reminiscent of the Italian Futurist. 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 Hunter's abstract vocabulary also allows the viewer a certain rhythmic sensation of the multifarious virtual realities of the late twentieth century. With the scattering of millennial leaves, things shift; the centre cannot hold; art trans-gresses, painting persists.

Linda Giles

Open Space

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openspace@ca

September 1999
Antimatter - Short Film & Video Festival of Independent Productions

October 1999
Roving Projects
George Gaudette
Lance Olsen
House without Walls

November 1999
Derek Besant - Une Nuit Blanche. A Sleepless Night