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James Lahey is part of a new generation of painters less interested in recording and transfiguring "reality" per se. His painterly process seeks to break the barriers of style that so entrapped earlier generations of painters. Increasingly removed from so-called "realism," modern or otherwise, the nature of Lahey's paintings is synthetic, stylistic and anachronistic. His nomadic use of style(s) is entirely justifiable as a working approach to artmaking, particularly for painters. Many people simply love looking at his paintings, the process, the style(s), are secondary to the overall effect. If these paintings are indeed self-generated illusions, they also evidence a new hybridity and relativistic approach to artmaking being seized on by emerging painters of our times.

John K. Grande
Dana Velan's style is immediately expressive, textural, makes use of bold outlining and earth-based colours. While some of these large scale depictions have a documentary look, others integrate a sense of passage, of a journey, of things we cannot see as much as what we do see in them. Velan uses fire as imagery in her artmaking practice much as the "primatives" once captured fire. Thus ritual of re-creation informs her work with a holistic sensibility. Velan's search involves building an environment that celebrates our eternal links to primordial forces. These works do not simply objectify fire, make it a subject. The act of drawing revolves around the dilemma of object/subject, creation and perception, a constant problem in modern and post-Modern art. As the post-Modern re-creates meaning, original meanings are lost, yet they are still relevant as ever.

The most arresting of images Velan has created for the McClure Gallery show is a 420 x 96" wall drawing of fire. Darkness and light, vivid colours and a sense of unending ritual are evoked in this powerful piece. Both as an environment and as a subject to look at, this expansive work evokes images of reflection, resolution, identification, of universal energy. Other studies are close-up views of fire. As if entering into a dream state we sense a volatility, a mesmerizing force that captured our ancestors imagination in ancient times. Other works display the embers, what remains after a fire has followed its course, the bodies of once living tree trunks amid an array of smokey and embers. Dark, charcoal blacks and greys create in the live fire works. Photo documents of fire have been brought together into large "books" presented on a table in the McClure Gallery. One opens them to read imagery instead of words. The imagery in these books communicates the feeling that fire is like oral language or legends, something more alive in fluid than solid form. Fire, like art-making as process, is an oracular vestige of primordial life that captures life's mercurial essence. In seeking to recognize these forms of explosive fire, regenerative fire, unending fire, an allusion to the immateriality of form and matter gradually builds up. The message is that the earth is on a journey of transformation just as we are. Notions of civilization become unconscious, conjure up associations that are as illusory and transformative as fire. Dana Velan's art has a handle on this temporal nature of life that fire transmits. Her art raises our awareness of the linkages between nature and culture, investigates the age-old ties between humanity and nature. At the heart of Velan's art is this sense of endless mercurial movement - like fire - in many directions at one and the same time.

John K. Grande

FRANCESCO CLEMENTE
Contemplative Voyager

Dominion Gallery
145B Sherbrooke W.
February 5 - 26th, 2000

In the early 1980s when the art world was buzzing with talk of neo-Expressionism, Francesco Clemente attracted a great deal of attention as one of its leading proponents. At the recent Guggenheim Museum show in New York, Clemente was attacked by critics for exhibiting a "courageous frivolity", lacking any real conviction in his delightful dalliance with artmaking. But his 14 Stations of the Cross seen at CIAC, Montreal in 1987 and a centrepiece of the Guggenheim show, is nothing less than brilliant, stunning. Clemente's sources range from Tantric symbolism, to Baroque painting, to alchemy, sex, the occult and tarot. An icon-cultural voyager who keeps a studio in India, Clemente is part classicist, part contemplative. From a hill-sized portrait of Grace Jones, to Indian miniatures, to images of death and fecundity, Francesco Clemente is a master appropriator. He has an eye for imagery and symbols, borrows from Asian and Western cultural sources at will, hybridizes these sources, and paints like a lover, not a fighter.

The hybridity and trans-cultural vision that made Clemente a leader of the Italian neo-Expressionist 'movement' involves a simultaneous break with tradition and a borrowing from diverse cultural traditions. Clemente's current show comprises a series of stunning large scale printworks pulled in Rome in edition sizes varying from 40 to 70. There is a dreamy character to these works, and an eclectic, nomadic sense that is sometimes lost, sometimes found. Spiritual and sensuous, they recall the influence of Fuseli and Blake, but always have that European sense that one cannot escape history. The vibrant colours and visual analogies display a theatrical interest in eternal themes of life, death and transcendence.

In the aquatint Unborn (1994), two figures, that of a nude and a tiger are fused together. Printed in deep umber, red and yellow colours the bones, fiery matter and dense atmosphere suggests a theocratic cosmology of life. The umbilicus is neither a monstrosity nor innocent, but instead a fiery force whose fate is inscrutable, prescribed by a pre-natural worldview. A couple embraces in a blue sea-like ocean in Conception (1987), dwarfed by the curvilinear and fan-shaped shapes of shells placed in an ad lib fashion in the foreground. The sky is a collage of toy-like warplanes. Some are blue and others pink. Friendship (1987) turns the visual phrase of a black dancer with bandage-wrapped legs, who has three white shoes in his hand into a metaphysical dream reminiscent of Giorgio de Chirico, but the style more fluid is. An almost cartoon-like, reptilian head leaps out of the left side of the composition, directing our attention again to this curious dance of sits on classical stone steps. Clemente's grip on allegory is almost feminine, introspective and whimsical.

There is this sense that all events are linked by mysterious forces in All That Remains (1990) an etching and aquatint one of the largest pieces in the show. In the lower section, a child clasps a mother whose body is stretched nearly the full length of the piece. A similar somewhat androgynous body, is linked to and clasps the mother's legs, repeating the pattern. Geometricals arranged in varying linear and cube-like configurations occupy the upper section of the piece. The structures are self-contained, the bodies are inter-dependent, and grasp their way into space. There is a sense of imminent tragedy, of unfathomable events that surround and eclipse these subjects, somehow adding to the sense of Clemente's scope on the human situation is unanswerable, escapes the bounds of contemporaneity to somehow reform it all into his own, highly eclectic cosmology. Clemente twists through life like an angel on a mission, builds a feeling that comes out of it all, endlessly reinventing the subjects he studies and is drawn to. These works are, to say the least, joyful incantations!

John K. Grande
More central to the exhibition are the photographs taken around Atlantic Canada and, in particular, those very close to his home on the Tantramar Marsh in southeast New Brunswick. These are the most moving to me. Perhaps it is because I live in the same area and am moved by the landscape as well, but Holownia has effectively captured its mood in a way that speaks to me. These series are Dykelands, Rockland Bridge, and Jollicuitre Pond which span the period from 1977 to 1997. All of these images were taken within a range of a few miles from Holownia's home in Jollicuitre, New Brunswick. One of the most striking pictures in the large group is titled Lightning Strike, Sackville, 1994. A wisp of smoke pours from a strange volcano-shape object in the middle of a hay field. What happened was that lighting struck a bale of hay and this is the image of the aftermath. It is a strange surreal image that shows us the power of nature.

Other pictures in these series may be less dramatic, but they nonetheless show the photographer's love affair with the landscape around his home. The six images, all in colour, in the Jollicuitre Pond series were taken right in his backyard and show the passing of the seasons on a pond on his property. They are hauntingly beautiful pictures which demonstrate the truism that beauty can be right under our noses if we only stop to look.

Holownia has gone further afield. The earliest series in the exhibition, from 1975 to 1977, titled Headlighting, pre-date Holownia's move to the Maritimes in the fall of 1977 and are the only group of photographs that feature people. They are photographs of people with their vehicles and shows the interesting, and often funny, relationships that have with the things that they drive. They were difficult photographs to take as they required very long exposures. Holownia was using paper negatives cut from photographic paper, film was, at that time, not being made in ban­quet camera formats. This meant that the speed or ASA/Din number of the paper was very low and exposures could be in minutes rather than fractions of a second, as is the case with modern cameras and film. The resulting photographs have the look of a picture taken at the very birth of the medium, but with the very contemporary subject matter of automobiles and trucks. There is an oddkineliness to these photographs which lend dignity to the people in these pictures even if they are bonding with their Volvos or Ford trucks.

North America has a long tradition of artists who have painted the urban spectacle from the American painter George Bellows whose paintings of New York City life anticipated the social realism of Thomas Hart Benton in the 1930s through chic Lawrence's mature and formal skyscraper paintings, or more recently Eric Fischl, Richard Estes and Leon Golub. In Canada we had Louis Muhlstock who sketched memorable images of the unemployed and poor in Montreal during the Depression. In an era when so many artists have been drawn to virtual reality and new technology, Montreal-based Mark Lang's realist paintings are something of an anomaly, for they are neither purely formal nor constructed. Instead Lang draws his inspiration from the decaying urban architecture of industrial Montreal and incorporates ordinary people in these scenes. As Lang comments: 'A few years ago I began making drawings in my sketchbook of spaces which I regularly passed through, but almost never stopped to observe. These consisted of various passageways and staircases in several Montreal buildings. By stopping long enough in these places to make drawings, I began to realize that they were infused with the presence of all those fragments of lives which had previously passed through them. Though ordinary and functional, they also possessed a significant visual dynamic. I had an intuitive sense that there was something lacking in their image which limited at larger issues, and that it might be possible to extract some of that meaning by transforming their images into works of art.'

The angles of the stairways and halls, the derelict spaces and raw fluorescent lighting in Lang's paintings are unsettling, particularly because we know these places were once full of people, thrumming hubs of industry. Two canvases that have been placed one next to the other present passages and staircases that simultaneously lead upwards and downwards. There are no people, just angular structures. These scenes are Dene­ esque and border on madness with an overwhelming sense of abandon heightened by raw colour. The suspension of the moment in many of these paintings is anticipatory. Things happened here in the past but the people, the sounds and sights, the conversations have vanished without a sight. In another painting (they are all entitled) a young man dressed formally in Edwardian clothes whom we see from the side stands in front of a doorway entrance. His back is arched upwards as he stretches and looks upwards in a moment of reflection. The hallway he stands in is plain and denuded. He looks incongruous in this place. Light resonates at the end of the hall and emerges from open doors on the side. One painting has a shadowy image of a girl, partially blurred in a photograph running in a hallway seen from the stairwell below. Her vitality and youth are at odds with the emptiness and disuse this building.

SUTTON
MARK LANG AND FRANCE-ANRÉÉ SÉVILLANO
Marks Sutton January 6 - 30, 2000

MARK LANG, entitled, 1995
38 x 113 cm, oil on canvas.
HULL - OTTAWA

CANVAS OF WAR
MASTERPIECES FROM THE CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM

Canadian Museum of Civilization
100, rue Laurier, Hull (Québec)
Until January 7, 2001

At the entrance to the Canvas of War exhibit are half-size plaster casts of The Defenders, part of the famous monument The Breaking of the Sword at Vimy Ridge commemorating the more than 60,000 Canadians who lost their lives in the legendary battle of World War I. Photos in the exhibit show the 100,000 people who attended the unveiling of the monument, a tribute to all who lost their lives in one way or another in the Great War. What is riveting is that the unveiling took place shortly before the outbreak of World War II. It is these kinds of bleak facts that shock us into remembering just how bloody-minded we are despite history's harshest lessons. A generation was lost in the First War, and with barely the time to replenish, the world was once again tragically divided.

The exhibit features paintings by A.Y. Jackson, Frederick Varley, Arthur Lismer, Molly LambBobak, Alex Colville, Lawren Harris and several others who eye-witnessed the ravages of war. The collection began with Lord Beaverbrook's initiative to establish the War Memorials Fund, which enabled prominent Canadian artists to go to Europe and record Canada's contribution to the war effort. The Canadian War Museum's collection now numbers 13,000 works of which seventy-two were chosen to form this premier exhibit which will tour Canada after January 7, 2001.

Perhaps the most important part of this exhibit is the registry book, because it is Living History. The first entry is that of an ex-RAF gentleman whose hand must have trembled as he wrote how tears could not express what he felt as he recalled both his own experiences and those of his five brothers, one of whom was 'KIA' (killed in action) August 17th in 1944. RAF BEAUV KIA — all of these acronyms of war peppered the many emotional testimonials of the survivors who visited this artistic and historical record of two of the most significant events of the 20th century.

Franceska Gnarowski

CHARLES GAGNON
OBSERVATIONS

Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography
Until May 14, 2000

This is the first major survey of Charles Gagnon's photographic works. Gagnon himself personally selected these nearly 100 photographs from his collection and assembled them according to the visual motifs they create. The artist's work as an experimental painter, photographer and filmmaker spans over forty years, so it is no wonder that in 1995 he was awarded Quebec's highest distinction in the visual arts, the Paul-Emile Borduas prize, in recognition of his unique contribution to the Quebec arts scene. During a stay in New York from 1955 to 1960, Gagnon was exposed to Expressionist painting, social documentary photography, jazz, John Cage's musique concrète, literature, and Zen Buddhism. On returning to Montreal, he developed a personal, sensitive approach situated at the confluence of most of the artistic movements that have marked the past four decades.

This exhibit provides an unprecedented opportunity to see the world as Gagnon does, capturing the here and now of the urban and natural environment. Gagnon's lens is at times unforgiving as when he focuses distantly on a couple in the artificial glow of an arcade. Yet in another he captures the wilty minimalist and surreal look of the Diet Lunch Restaurant, an unappetizing place at ever there was one. His works visually probe underlying structures, exposing strong lines and planar effects but Gagnon's aesthetic also implies a state of consciousness beyond the frame. A broader implied reality pervades these works that hints at the metaphysical lives of people, places and things. This is a world that transcends time and space. The photos are unbelievably still, almost eerie in the sense of mystery and silence they project. Gagnon's subjects are seldom shown looking at the camera, rather they are caught searching in the distance for some point of focus. The photographs offer the possibility of accessing another world through a passage of some kind, or hint at how difficult such a passage might be. The viewer is captivated in a sort of trance until he comes upon a self-portrait of the artist. Here, Charles Gagnon is captured in front of one of his paintings, his figure a white blur in motion, as though he were evading the viewer's gaze. As though the stillness lies in the world that surrounds the artist and not within.

Franceska Gnarowski
The new Mercer Union space on Lisgar rocks! Gone is the facade of a possibly commercial space. This baby screams alternative, parallel, artist run culture. Mercer can now be found amidst a line of cinder block commercial units. Tucked away on a small side street just off Queen St. West. Indeed Mercer is now steps away from many of the most exciting galleries in the city. The space itself is filled with possibilities. The front gallery boldly flaunts a large garage shipping door. How pleasant it is to see the entrance for large create works as an integral part of the presentation space. What a pleasant discourse the architecture of the space engages the viewer in. It speaks unobtrusively to the eyes as a subtext in every show, about the nomadic movement of art objects, and the artificial construct of a gallery space.

With this said it is somehow fitting that Marie-Claude Bouthillier's paintings act together to convey text obsessed allusions to religious symbols. Bouthillier really is working the fragmentations as a means of building meanings that point at understandings beyond that which language can convey. All the while she teaches us her own visual dialect as a mark making manipulator of paint and creator of shippable objects.

Greg Staats five silver prints in the back gallery directly relate to the repetitive shift and flux of impermanence. He has skillfully captured a variety of natural/unnatural hybrids that occupy the resting place they simultaneously demarcate. Each object is animated by the photographic process. We must ask the question who left it? Where will it go? And what would it say if it could talk?

The theme of temporary permanence inherent to any artist run center is further emphasized when one flips the exhibition program through to 2001. How many objects, ideas, and artists will be housed in this space? What a transient community of interest we really are!

Elizabeth Fearon

LARRY TOWELL
The Mennonites

Stephen Bulger Gallery
700 Queen St. W.
May 6 - June 3, 2000

MENNONITES FROM CANADA
TO MEXICO

The Stephen Bulger Gallery, located in the heart of Queen St. West, is a participate in the Contact 2000 Photography Festival presents Larry Towell's fascinating, compassionate, 10 year study of Mennonite communities in Canada (here since the 1870's) and in Mexico, where there are 23 different Mennonite communities to date. The Mexican communities are the result of an exodus from Canada spurred by anti-German sentiment during the First World War. It is precisely this sort of photo journalism that has placed Towell's work in Life Magazine, and in many prominent collections here and abroad. Even more significantly, Towell has been associated with Magnum since 1988, an organization of photographers who act as both key witness and interpreters of the world's events. It is in part due to image makers like Towell that tragedies like Hiroshima, child labour, and bread lines have been recorded for posterity. Through the work of such photographers who confront us with these horrors we are encouraged to learn from the past mistakes of history.

Towell's Mennonite series is more anthropological than political and certainly more spiritual and celebratory than critical. None the less it is amazing that in a Much Music, supermarket, credit card, and computer culture that people such as the Mennonites still drive horses and buggies! As they travel in this way they can hear the world our car radios obliterate.

Elizabeth Fearon

Towell Bio courtesy of the Bulger gallery

SEEING THINGS, TOO
Marcia Rafelman Fine Arts
10 Clarendon Ave
April 30 - May 21, 2000
by appointment only

May is Contact month in Toronto! Now in its 4th season, Contact month is an increasingly significant photography festival. This festival provides a unique opportunity for the public to view an incredibly wide range of contemporary and historical approaches to photographic image making in a variety of venues throughout the city. Seeing Things, Too is Marcia Rafelman Fine Arts' contribution to Contact 2000.

Marcia Rafelman Fine Arts is housed in a sleekly renovated Victorian home. Living areas and gallery blend effortlessly in this highly designed domicile to provide a clean, yet intimate viewing experience. A wide variety of gallery artists are part of Seeing Things, Too. A few of the highlights are Steven Evans and Mats Nordstrom. Evans' recent silver gelatin print series explore such sites as Hart House at The University of Toronto and the Gooderham & Worts

622 Richmond Street West, Toronto
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Marcia Rafelman Fine Arts is a member of the Association Professionnelle des Galeries d'Art du Canada

El Cuerro, Chihuahua, Mexico, 1997, black and white photography.

The Stephen Bulger Gallery, located in the heart of Queen St. West, as a participant in the Contact 2000 Photography Festival presents Larry Towell's fascinating, compassionate, 10 year study of Mennonite communities in Canada (here since the 1870's) and in Mexico, where there are 23 different Mennonite communities to date. The Mexican communities are the result of an exodus from Canada spurred by anti-German sentiment during the First World War. It is precisely this sort of photo journalism that has placed Towell's work in Life Magazine, and in many prominent collections here and abroad. Even more significantly, Towell has been associated with Magnum since 1988, an organization of photographers who act as both key witness and interpreters of the world's events. It is in part due to image makers like Towell that tragedies like Hiroshima, child labour, and bread lines have been recorded for posterity. Through the

Steven Evans, Molasses Tank, Gooderham & Worts Distillery, 1999, 7x 6 cm.
photographs by Mats Nordstrom is also interested in spaces. But his spaces, like his medium (giclée), suggest movement through boundaries. A prime example of this is his Lyons image. This view of the underside of a bridge, replete with reflection and shadow, forms an optic intersection between river and bridge structure. Nordstrom's medium is equally a cross-roads where photography, technology, and traditional notions of painting meet.

Other artists in the show include Alan Davis, Linda Rutenberg, David Cowles, Nir Bareket, Steve Eprile, Monty Levy, and Fred Langer. If the principle works don't enthrall you, Marcia Rafelman has been known to walk people through the equally elegant storage room. Such a walk reveals fascinating vintage photographs and interesting works by lesser known photographers. While you won't find anything very conceptually or politically edgy at MRFA you just may see something beautiful!

Elizabeth Fearon

**ALBERTINA MASTER**

**DRAWINGS FROM**

**MICHELANGELO TO PICASSO**

**MASTER DRAWINGS FROM**

**THE ALBERTINA, VIENNA**

Art Gallery of Ontario

317 Dundas St. W.

January 22 - March 26, 2000

Visitors to Toronto's Art Gallery of Ontario will have the rare opportunity to see some of the finest drawings and watercolours in the world until March 26th. Among the 45 works on view from Vienna's prestigious Albertina collection are Leonardo's Half-length Figure of an Apostle, Raphael's fine pen and ink Madonna and Child, Albrecht Dürer's The Rider (1498) and Madonna with Four Saints (1511) and Jacques Callot's The Fair at Santa Maria delle Naiadi near Florence. All of the above works were brought together by Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen (1758-1822), who purchased some of the greatest private collections of his time, including Emperor Rudolph II's collection of drawings and watercolours by Dürer. Indeed, Duke Albert collected some 14,000 drawings and 230,000 prints during his lifetime, with the dowry of his wife the Archduchess Marie-Christine, a member of Austria's ruling family. As Dr. Konrad Oberhuber, former Director of the Graphische Sammlung Albertina commented, the vast sum of money Duke Albert spent on art would be the equivalent of the Canadian government spending one third of its entire budget on the arts!

Duke Albert's eye for collecting the best works on paper is evidenced throughout the show in works by Rembrandt, Rubens, Poussin, Paul Sandby, Claude Lorrain and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, among others. For visitors interested in 20th century works there is a Head of a Woman in black chalk by Pablo Picasso, Chagall's Lute Player (1911) in pen, India ink wash and watercolour, Vincent van Gogh's Country Road near Arles, Austrian Gustav Klimt's Lady with a Feather Hat, a Micotaur ink and wash sketch by Alfred Kubin, and even a contemporary Arnulf Rainer pastel titled Clairvoyant. Others include Jackson Pollock, Frantisek Kupka, Eugen Schiele, Max Weber.

**TOM BURROWS**

From the Fourth Decade

2000, polymer resin, 24 x 24 inches

**ROBERT CADOTTE**

Ponds, Streams, and other Abstractions

UPPER GALLERY

MAY 6 - May 20, 2000

**BAU-XI GALLERY**

340 DUNDAS STREET, WEST, TORONTO, ONT. M5T-1G5

TUE-SAT 10:00 AM - 5:30 PM TEL (416) 977-0600
Fran Benton's installation at Regina's Neutral Ground, Reconsidering the Saint is an open work endeavoring to raise questions about faith and religion. But because it is non-committal, suspended between irony and sincerity, the exhibition is its own deconstruction, and becomes less a critique than a symptom of our times.

Perhaps some future art historian will look back on our present moment and divide it into two phases: the ironic and the post-ironic. The first wave of postmodernity was characterized by art and criticism that set the world at play. Artists critiqued traditions, institutions, hierarchies, discriminations, boundaries, binaries and metanarratives of all sorts. Many engaged in this interplay because they enjoyed the complex pleasure of creative deconstruction and some out of a sincere desire to expose unjust power relations and the hope to right historical wrongs. Even while this was going on, other artists and critics were suspicious of wholesale iconoclasm and saw that deconstruction offered nothing in place of the fallen idols/narratives, no plans for a better society. Irony became an institutionalized mode — a form of Maoist “permanent revolution,” but without a utopian vision to fuel it.

Among those suspicious of this project have been feminists such as Linda Hutcheon and African American and post-colonial theorists. They recognized that the master narratives behind institutions of power (patriarchy, racism and classism) cannot simply be theorized away because they are illogical, or ridiculed into submission by devastating acts of art. Moreover, a suspicion arose that postmodernist critiques of lesser narratives may have even been less deconstruction than dissimulation, an ideological extension of existing power relations.

The deconstructive branch of postmodernism is based on a materialist philosophy requiring a dismissal of metaphysics. As a result, it counts as absurd or opportunistic, or doesn’t even recognize the spiritual. And, if only because the spiritual, metaphysics and sincerity are currently repressed, the second phase of postmodernist culture will be driven by a post-ironic re-enchantment of art.

Artists concerned with nature and spirituality — any artist interested in being socially and personally constructive, or who wishes to be sincere, or hold a belief beyond the contingent — has felt their experience ignored by postmodernism. It is a treat, then, to see that Fran Benton is tackling not only spirituality, but its embodiment in the experience of a Roman Catholic Saint (St. Theresa of Avila), and firing clay. Also included are a monumental fiberglass hand and arm held up on a wooden truss and several sets of large eyeballs on brass bases. Inside these, speakers emit the sound of words spoken in various Romanian languages. The voices may belong to Theresa, God, Bernini or Benton.

The intent, I believe, is to create a sense of the sublime through the enlarged body parts, and to stimulate a feeling of the uncanny through relic fragments. As Linda Giles, the catalogue essayist for the exhibition points out, the viewer can almost laugh out loud. "Can a mystical experience be profoundly hilarious?" Perhaps. Looking at such a private experience in a public setting from a non-devout point of view might also do it. What makes this all seem so funny is the cheesiness of the props. If the arm was marble instead of thin plastic, or if the "eye-balls" didn’t look so obviously like altered lamps, I could have worked myself up into a state of sublime contemplation instead of laughter.

The installation is a jumble of artifacts related to Saints in general, but the visual and tactile quotes are not clear enough in their association to suggest the artist’s thesis. Is this a Freudian-inspired poke at religious ecstasy as a form of repressed sexuality or a Surrealist, anti-Catholic, series of jokes? The artist statement and Giles’ text aren’t much help here. Almost accidentally articulating the paradox, Giles suggests that perhaps Benton’s ‘interest in this depiction of devout religiosity is indicative of her own loss of faith and a reflection of society’s spiritual bankruptcy.’ Is Giles looking back to her lost faith with sorrow or irony? How can one both reject faith and deplore its loss? Giles also comments that “Benton reclaims the role of artist as the keeper of mystery, the keeper of the faith.” Which faith? Is the artist a shaman?
Mary is here says the legend printed on the walls. The explanations are as confused as the language and strategies of ironic postmodernism. The problem for viewers is that the religious experience is evoked here using the discourse of modernism. They are incompatible. Perhaps Fran Benton needed to make Reconsidering the Saint as an intermediate gesture intended to evolve a new vocabulary for our challenging times.

David Garneau

CALGARY

MARY IS HERE

ARLENE STAMP

CONNECTION TO COLLECTIONS SERIES

Glenbow Museum, Calgary

130-9th Avenue S.E.

March 25 - May 22, 2000

PERSONAL TO PUBLIC TO PERSONAL

Arleene Stamp has moved into multi-media installation as a way of exploring issues of personal identity. Mary is here says the legend printed in pencil on the 1941 black-and-white photograph. Surrounded by a group of nine men in front of a bomb, Mary is part of "the final checking crew" at the London, Ontario production site. A six-year-old child, Stamp drew an arrow to point out Mary; otherwise we might not have noticed her.

Entering the four-room installation, this wall-sized photograph provides a point of departure for Stamp's personal investigation of the changing identity of the 20th century woman through her mother Mary. The project didn't start that way. Stamp, trained as a painter, began with a set of audiotapes she made in 1995 with her 80-year-old mother. In response to the artist's request to her dying mother Mary, to tell her stories about her own mother, Stamp is moved by the way "(her) mother reveals some of her most painful memories in what ends up seeming like a cry for forgiveness." These stories have formed the basis of her work since that time.

Mary is Here is the third in the Glenbow's new on-going Connections to Collections series, curated by Kirsten Evenden and unique for a Canadian museum. It is here, Evenden says, that the artists are invited to explore Glenbow's rich collections and create work based on their exploration. This collaborative exhibition examines "history through the eyes of contemporary artists." Stamp notes that she "had the benefit of the professional expertise of the Glenbow staff" in working on this project.

Public and private stories intermingle, how representations from history influence the formation of a personal and group identity are related in Mary is Here. Mary is a creative individual who lived through the 20th century when generally women did not work outside the home. The living room installation recreates Mary's 1920s childhood environment, as does the 1930s kitchen (smells and all). As Mary moves into adulthood and Stamp is born, there is a 1941-50s bedroom and 1950/60s TV room. The rooms are, interestingly, furnished by Stamp from the Glenbow's Cultural History collections. The period is defined with public and private media such as popular music on radio, TV, movies, magazines, pocket books, photo albums and even home movies. The installation is enriched and personalized with the Glenbow's Mary Smith Collection of objects, papers, photographs and her painted portrait.

The focus for this context, this experimental way of connecting time, is the set of nine audio hand-set stenograms of Mary telling her own stories. Evenden has called it an alternative viewpoint. "They are poignant stories of triumph and sadness, the recounting of a woman's life from her own perspective, told without resentment or remorse, but with a sense of humor." To complement the show, Stamp has created an associated website project at www.glenbow.org under web site exhibit. Photographs will accompany excerpts from the Mum Tapes, available in both written and audio format, from both the Mary Smith Collection and the Glenbow Photo Archives.

An investigation of how we as a culture document the personal histories of ordinary people, of how the personal becomes public, then becomes personal again, as the individual reinterprets the exhibition for one's self. Mary is here is a look backwards, that tries to understand the context that shaped her mother, and eventually, the artist herself. It is up to you, the viewer, to decide who Mary is in the context of the 20th century woman, as well as who you are, as a director of your own future. As Stamp says, "like most artists probably, I am trying to open up a fresh space to push and pull the source materials to find the opening." Stamp's artistic process is to "stand back and observe what it is itself first, then make the choices necessary to present the work in a way that will best reveal the space that I have found."

In our rapidly changing social construct, it seems the people today can look for their own direction and make their own choices, relying less on past traditions and continually more on personal decisions. If we make judgements based on our own experience, then how can we objectively define ourselves to make these choices? Individual identity is formed by the past, and directed towards a future that encourages personal investigation of who we are. We must know who we were first. Stamp's exhibition on personal social change stimulates us to answer this question in terms of our own experience, to listen to the stories and to touch the remnants. As you the viewer step into the past, you look for messages to find answers for the future. As a curator, Evenden is attempting to examine how we as a culture have shaped these experiences. How women's lives have changed over the past 100 years, and to inject the highly personal into public record. Stamp the artist looks "to affirm my (her) own personal reality." As do we all.

Anne Severson

BANFF (ALBERTA)

COLLEEN PHILIPPI

PARALLEL PATHS

Whyte Museum, Banff

February 24 - April 18, 2000

MEASURING NATURE

COLLEEN PHILIPPI

PARALLEL PATHS

Whyte Museum, Banff

February 24 - April 18, 2000

MEASURING NATURE

Colleen Philippi examines gardens. They become a metaphor in Philippi's art for the interfacing of art and nature. Despite human attempts to choreograph nature through a controlled garden-like setting, chance and change are always present. Philippi's installation examines the nature/culture debate by juxtaposing three attempts to manage the environment through parks in different eras: the artificial 17th century French Versailles, the more subtle 18th century English Hyde Park, and seemingly unmediated 20th century Canadian National Park tradition in Banff.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Catherine and Peter Whyte painted the tourist mecca of Banff. Twenty-five of these lively landscape paintings are in the Whyte Museum art collection. The Whytes turned the rugged look of Banff park by painting idealized sketches, watercolors and oil paintings, but as Philippi's re-examination suggests, nature is a moving target and cannot always be manipulated for our pleasure. Using the Whyte's art as a starting point, Colleen Philippi examines the Banff landscape by looking at the illusion meaning of gardens.

Philipps Banff paintings are broken up into forty 2 x 2 foot modules with an overview of the famous Valley of the Ten Peaks at Moraine Lake once represented on the Canadian $20 bill and the subject of numerous tourist and travel images over the decades. This part of the installation occupies an impressive wall-space of twelve feet in height and nineteen feet in length. The grid layout reminds us of mapping and arbitrary referencing, the analytical inventory that we use when we manage and categorize wilderness regions. The vacillating pendulums in this installation suggest...
the movement of time or of timelessness — and transformations that take place beyond our efforts to control. Attempts to put a fence around this National Park, for example, have proved futile and destructive. While ostensibly seeking to leave nature "untouched", humans have subverted the mountain jewel, destroying the wilderness they tried to cage.

As a contrast to the wild hugeness of Alberta's mountain-scape, the encapsulated 18th century garden at Heidecote in England is a quaint, small-scale, English country-garden. The counterfeit baroque Versailles garden focuses some of the greatest forces used by humans to intimidate nature. The 17th century architecturally landscaped Versailles of Louis XIV contains formal broad avenues of trees with secluded groves and a mile-long canal. Nature, in this case, is controlled for pleasure. The 'measured' gardens of Versailles are painted on four 3 x 3 foot connected mirrors that reflect the mountains of Banff seen on the other side of the room, thus linking imagery of Versailles with that of Banff. Despite our efforts to dominate the unbridled forces of the environment, nature may be winning, Philippi concedes.

Uncontainable nature is a constantly moving target. What is real? How much force or power can we use to control nature's riotous anarchy? Philippi's installation suggests we can learn to respect and appreciate the here and now of nature. This show is not about absolutes, but the relativity of nature and culture as constructs. Accepting nature for what it is, we can learn from it.

Anne Severson
Malaysian immigrant Germaine Koh translates her sensitivity to identity into marginal, minimal images and processes. Koh’s Red, ongoing since 1998, is a humble but startling work. A ball of floor sweepings loosely covered by varnish grows as it gradually accumulates debris from each location in which it is exhibited. Koh is fascinated by the shifting tensions between the transient and the enduring, the discarded and the valued. Her dust ball is a truly abject object that appeals to experience on material, psychological and metaphysical levels.

Joan Richardson

RAVEN’S REPRISE
CONTEMPORARY WORKS BY FIRST NATIONS ARTISTS
Museum of Anthropology
6393 N.W. Marine Drive
March 15 - January 31, 2001

At the Museum of Anthropology, Raven’s Reprise inserts contemporary works by First Nations artists into permanent displays of Northwest coast aboriginal artifacts. The five artists, all of west coast nations, were invited by guest curator Lynn Hill, herself of the eastern Gwa’sala nation. Hill adopted the mythological Raven, an irreverent trickster who personifies creative force, as her guide for playful and subversive interventions into the museum. Two major issues that emerge in this show are that of rights to ancestral artifacts, and the vitality of indigenous culture as it seeks continuity and innovation in post-colonial urban life. A remarkable diversity of traditional and contemporary techniques interact in different ways with the museum setting, generally to eloquent effect.

Larry McNeil (Nisga’a nation) shows photo and text works from his Raven series that confront indigenous myth with that of popular culture imposed after colonization. Poetic texts employ humour and irony to locate and heal antagonisms. In contrast, Connie Sterrit (Nux-ch’al-nuth, Gitxsan) uses aesthetic, formal means to whimsically reinterpret traditional figures such as Bear and Raven. By mimicking museum objects — McNeil’s prints resemble didactic panels and Sterrit’s sculptures, artifacts — both artists blend with, and disturb, the permanent display, provoking questions and comments. They give a voice to the museum artifacts, as if they, and the past generations of people they represent, were examining us, the visitors, and our dominant museum culture.

In her “pelage” series, Mary Anne Barkhouse pictures Raven in four guises accompanied by cryptic voice to the museum artifacts, as if we, the visitors, and our dominant museum culture.

John Powell, Kwakwaka’wakw, Sanctuary, 2000, mixed media on canvas.
Collection of the artist.
Courtesy: Museum of Anthropology

VICTORIA

UNNATURAL WORLDS
CONSTRUCTING NATURE
MARGARET GLAVINA, KEVIN KELLY, ROLAND MARTIN
Open Space Victoria
March 24 - April 15, 2000

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things:
We murder to dissect
-William Wordsworth

Margaret Glavina’s Natural History installation is a thoughtfully constructed collection of habitats, a series of narrow floor-to-ceiling vitrines that enclose objects and specimens devoid of life. Some of the “coffins” contain once live animals preserved in perpetuity by the artist/taxidermist. Within the confines of these enclosures, Glavina imposes her narrative using selected objects she chooses. The implied narrative uses an approach suggestive of multiple, subjective theories of knowledge, rather than the usual “historical” models of discourse propagated by traditional institutions. As Glavina states, “I’m interested in conjuring up the grotesque, beautiful, absurd, humorous, wise, forbidden, and sad qualities connected to natural history museums and the pursuit of knowledge.”

In removing himself to the self-imposed confinement of an isolated community in Northern Ontario, Roland Martin was able to develop his interest in the great Canadian tradition of landscape. Martin’s recent installations, Garden (1997) and Enangered Species (1998), reflect this interest in nature and place. The selected elements in Martin’s Garden are: a stately wooden pier, chainsaw chains and a wooden rake. The process of drawing and cutting approximately 15,000 leaves retraces its history in the reconfigured chain/tree drawing installed on the gallery wall. The rake, an object associated with order and control, occupies a less conspicuous place in this installation which reads like a visual poem. Like a Zen gardener, Martin formalizes the relationship of each part to the whole. His careful placement of understated elements organizes subject, object and signifier into a sophisticated oneness. This brings to his art an expansive, mystical East meets West quality, yet an uncanny sense of de-natured chaos prevails.

Margaret Glavina’s Natural History installation is a thoughtfully constructed collection of habitats, a series of narrow floor-to-ceiling...
Looking at nature and landscape in a subversive way, these artists meddles with the beauteous forms of things.

Linda Giles

**TIC.TOC FESTIVAL**

International Festival of New Performance
Victoria, B.C.
February 18 - 20, 2000

**THE LANGUAGE OF SOUND**

Technology has irrevocably changed the way in which people think about, listen to, and make music. The musical vocabulary has shifted to a different level, so much so that today's New Music — a contemporary hybrid of acoustic and digital sound installations — are multi-layered in their experimental approach.

The recent Tic.Toc Festival of New Performance held in Victoria is one of the repositories of this amazing new language. Tic.Toc, the brainchild of artistic directors Clint Hutzalak, Bonnie Light, and Christopher Butterfield, has its origins in a 1996 project. Their mandate is to produce concerts of experimental music and sound-based performance, and to increase audiences awareness of these presentations. The festival featured German pianist Georg Graewe, Dutch sound poet Jaap Blonk, American pianist Kathleen Supove, and The University of Victoria's Sonic Lab Ensemble, while the second held in November 1997 was much more elaborate.

For this third incarnation, of Tic.Toc, local audiences flocked for three nights with composers and performers from Europe, Canada, and the United States. The Victoria Symphony under the conductorship of Christopher Butterfield (Victoria), with prepared piano soloist, Zdenka Dianova-Edwards (Bulgaria/Victoria), presented a varied program of works by Udo Kosemeisters (Canada), John Cage (United States), Iannis Xenakis (France) and Galina Ustvolskaya. The orchestra's interpretation of Stravinsky's Compositio No. 2 (Dies Irae) used an odd grouping of instruments: eight double basses, a wooden box played with mallets, and a piano used like a percussion instrument. Dianova-Edwards' piano technique displayed a strong, visceral physicality. The percussionist's seventy produced a psychological effect akin to violence. The tension, energetically modulated by Director Christopher Butterfield's brought the composer's images of The Last Judgement to a final, terrifying close.

Later that same evening, Jacques Dudon, a French composer from Marseilles, presented five improvised pieces for photosonic instruments. Performed in semi-darkness in the "New" Conservatory of Music, a former church, Dudon produced a web of haunting, luminous sounds. Dudon's instruments are very simple and include four types of elements: a light source; interchangeable semi-transparent discs (on which he draws opaque sound waveforms); optical filters; an amplified photosensitive solar cell. Liaison Interplanétaire was performed on two discs which transverse on an audible scale the exact chords of the revolution of the planet in our solar system. One disc produces the first six varied pitch tones; the other disc adds the last three planets in an interfering polyrhythmic pattern. The resulting music was stunning.

The second night, Tic.Toc offered a pair of contrasting concerts at Open Space. Julian Gosper (Victoria), Jefferey Allport (Vancouver), and Ryan Dworschak (Victoria), played a concert of improvised, sampled music simultaneous with video projections. "We bring into performance nothing which is predetermined or prefabricated. Beginning with an empty slate, the process evolves out of ideas (...) incorporated with incidental sounds and silence, the result is a spontaneous music," Francois Houle's Vancouver-based Electro-Acoustic Quartet took the late night spot. Houle's Aç Outre du Lievre, a French expression meaning "At the Heart of the Matter" was inspired by the ice storm that paralyzed areas of Quebec and Ontario in 1995. Houle claimed that: "This storm was a catalyzing for me to compose work that dealt with the way media transforms our perception of reality, and with the emotional detachment we sometimes experience as we witness dramatic events on television or radio from the comfort of our own homes." This work uses pre-recorded tape realizations manipulated live by the quartet through various playback units (such as samplers, CD players, tape recorders), and signal processing electronics.

Laetitia Sonnani performs electronic music using as her solo instrument, a hyper Lady's Glove wired with ultrasound detectors, motion sensors, and an accelerometer. Developed at STEIM, Amsterdam, the glove tracks the slightest motions of hand, fingers, and arm, thus enabling the performance to become a dance where the movements shape the music. Sonnani combines text, music, and "found sound" to create an intimate, spontaneous art form that transcends technology. Her performance at The University of Victoria's School of Music included three new pieces: She Came Back, Again, Why — Dreams Like a Loose Engine, and JazzTulip. Text by Melody Summer Carnahan accompanied the works. Laetitia Sonnani has performed her live electronic solo works for the past twenty years in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

The final concert of the festival was an offering of musique concrète by the Quebec's Jocelyn Robert. Robert performed work from his Le Piano Flou series designed for the Disklavier. The work uses software that spots mistakes and inaccuracies and turns them into music. Robert believes that musical work that is distant from the original score enables musical interpretation with a more "human touch" to possible. Robert blurs the boundaries between virtuosity and interpretation. He encourages a fresh taste on music that embodies a sense of fragility and a sense of humour.

The Tic.Toc Festival of New Performance, like the music it promotes and supports, is a non-linear process. It has taken a tremendous creative effort on the part of its directors, volunteers, musicians, and audiences to make this festival possible. For three nights, the city of Victoria was blessed with the sound and silence of new music. Bravo!

Linda Giles