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I used to think Canadian art could fit into neat little regional niches. Even if this was once true, it is no longer the case. Maybe it is because we live in a world of rapid communications or we have accepted the idea of post-Modernism in the art world.

Most artists, including those that live in Atlantic Canada see themselves on the world stage rather than a regional one. Much of the art in *Artists in a Floating World* would be at home in an exhibition anywhere in the world. This does not mean that these artist's works are not also grounded in Atlantic Canada. Maritime artists are spread out and some live in cities such as Halifax or St. John's, while others live in small towns such as Sackville, New Brunswick or Corner Brook, Newfoundland. Such geography favours artistic individuality as evidenced by artists like Alex Colville and Tom Forrestall.

A sense of place is as important to them as it is to the Maritime Realists. There are younger artists in this exhibition working in styles away from the mainstream. One such artist is Jeff Burns whose painting *Conversions* is a strange unnatural landscape. Perhaps it could be better termed a dreamscape. It resembles more a vision of the bottom of the sea than the great salt marsh that surrounds his Sackville, New Brunswick home.

*Artists in a Floating World* is a strange unnatural landscape. Perhaps it could be better termed a dreamscape. It resembles more a vision of the bottom of the sea than the great salt marsh that surrounds his Sackville, New Brunswick home. Montreal's Acadian community is well represented in the exhibition. The humour in the works by Yvon Gallant, Nancy Moran and Gisèle Savoie is delightful and proves that art can also be fun!

*Artists in a Floating World* is rather a hodgepodge, but I am rather fond of hodgepodge's with their mixtures of many flavours. Curator Smart has shown variety makes a good artistic stew: old artists, young artists, men and women and each with their own vision. All of the exhibited works are colour illustrated in a lavish catalogue with a rather poetic essay by curator Smart, who not only knows Maritime art and artists, but has a real love of the subject. I doubt that an exhibition such as this could have been mounted by any other gallery in Canada than the Beaverbrook with its extensive private resources. This particular exhibition is the latest in a series of exhibitions sponsored by the Marion McCain Foundation. *Artists in a Floating World* will tour Canada over the next two years. I hope that a Quebec venue will be found for the exhibition as it deserves to be seen by as many people as possible.

Virgil Hammock.
Grostern's ghost-like people move through space, or simply inhabit it. These are uncomfortable non-spaces defined by chiaroscuro effects of light and dark whose sources are undefined. In these “houses of the mind,” or on the surface of these paperworks, Grostern's illusory images of people are a superb analogy for the illusion of life itself.

The bodies of these people are like light containers, that seem to float in Euclidean non-spaces. They are arranged in tandem, positioned at oblique angles to one another, as if what they seek the most somehow escapes at the last moment, like a genie out of a bottle. Their stances and compositions run the full gamut of emotional states, from repose, inner reflection, and loving embrace to suspicion, and even jealousy. These people seem caught and trapped by the absurdist of their situation(s).

The window-like panes of glass or light refractions in Grostern's works on paper, are material allusions for light refractions in Grostern's works for canvas. Breach of Protocol (1997-2000) photo-mural composites produced by Bzik using a heat transfer technique, has seized something largely intangible and of a potentially redeeming spiritual nature. Grostern's art seems to suggest that for all the self-gratification, or alternatively self-innulation, that are the hallmark of our age, there is an ambiguity to our innermost desires that is indeed tragic, if only for a fleeting moment in time. Grostern has seized something largely intangible in these textural, light sensitive charcoal and pastel drawings — what and how we really feel!

John K. Grande

LENNOXVILLE

CEDAR PEOPLE;
ANCESTORS LIVING
AMONG US

Bishops University Art Gallery
College St., Lennoxville
November 17th, 2000

As a Vancouver-based photographer Nancy Bleck has carved out a niche of her own capturing the interwining of nature and culture in contemporary First Nations Squamish life. Collectively titled Cedar People; Ancestors Living Among Us her show at Bishops University Art Gallery will provide Que­becers with a rare first hand look at the issues of ecology, home, identity, nature and ceremony and how they continue to be alive in contemporary Coast Salish life and customs. Bleck is not just documenting the West Coast Squamish people but is likewise a witness and participant in their ceremonies and culture. Interestingly, Nancy Bleck is an outsider, who has had the freedom to expand into tribal life and participate with Hereditary Chief of the Squa­mish Nation Bill Williams' approval. It becomes a way of better understanding her own Euro-Canadian identity. Many of these photos taken in the Elaho Valley and Sims Creek areas of lower Mainland British Columbia, traditional Squamish territory, embody a basic respect for nature in the here and now.

On view are large-scale 3 x 12 ft photo-mural compositions produced by Bleck using a heat transfer process on canvas. Breath of Protocol (1997-2000) collages together two photo images that create a counterpoint subtext. One photo is of a muddy logging road that was punched through the wilderness near Sims Creek in 1995. The road scene looks like a war zone, with tree bark, mature tree logs and stumps strewn about. Paired with the landscape photo is a black and white portrait of native cultural worker William Nahanee wearing his headdress, feathers, jacket and sacred mimulux paint used for spiritual protection that comes from the roots of the cedar tree. Nahanee's face is like an enduring map, that expresses a solemnity, a silent acceptance of worldly things, and above all a basic humanity and wisdom.

Bleck's photo of a tree spray painted by a logger with the words "Have Fud" exemplifies the other extreme of wisdom, the sublime ignorance and disrespect for nature that goes with extracting primary resources for wholesale profit. Stick in My Heart is Bleck's portrait of Longhouse Speaker Eugene Harry, whose spiritual advice greatly influenced Bleck on her jour­ney of self-discovery. As Bleck states, "Stick in My Heart describes the feeling I have when I see the devastation we do to the land." Ka'kalihl Wild Cedar Woman of the Woods eating her Children presents a more explicit colour panorama of a clear cut and logged block of forest, inspired by the Squamish myth of how Ka'kalihl the wild woman of the woods steals children in her sack and tries to eat them. Despite her evil intention one child escapes to free the others. Then the group as a whole push the woman into the fire and she perishes. This exchange between cultures Bleck has brought to Bishops University Art Gallery as Cedar People: Ancestors Living Among Us is part of an ongoing global effort to teach ourselves and our children the value of understanding the perspective of the other, if only to show how important the trees and forests and rivers and streams — nature's resource — upon which all cultures depend for their sustenance really are. Understanding nature's place in our lives is one way to better understand ourselves, and thus the real meaning of community. Squamish carver Aaron Nel­son-Moody has made the trip to Lennoxville during Bleck's show to work with Bishops University stu­dents making and carving bows that will be given to Mohawks at the Khasatase reserve in Quebec in a symbolic gesture of support, heal­ing, and spiritual catharsis for their peoples.

John K. Grande
When the public does not always seek the art why not bring the art to the public? With this simple idea in mind, twenty young Quebec artists have taken a proactive approach to exhibiting their art. It can be found in ordinary mid-sized business venues in downtown Joliette for all to see.

Valérie Kalaski presents her immaterial neo-conceptual bags hanging in space at Chez Faktory 66, while André Willet has a do-it-yourself participatory piece installed at a music store filled with guitars, synthesizers, and drums. The piece consists of a stand on which an engraved image of a blindfolded man has been placed. The public is invited to make their own print from the work using readily available plain paper, by making a rubbing with a graphite pencil. At AVS Voyages Josée Farad has a series of wooden boxes with handles that look like travel bags hidden in a secluded cupboard. On request, these innocent looking valises are brought out, and you open them only to find strange trophy-like objects made of fur, and saed within. They are mysterious anomalies. Why are they there? What is their purpose? Alain Bouchard's paintings are installed in a series of blank white drawers that you open at will to create your own multi-panel composition. By pulling the drawers in the order you choose, the monochrome paintings which have images of a hat, shadows, build a fictional narrative. The images are surreal and the composition changes according to which drawers you open.

At the pharmacy Chez O'Borensis Serge Lesquer has a sound recording piece you ask the assistant to turn on. The voice you hear recounts instructions on the use of a medical chair. A beautiful hand made artist's book by Natalie Lafonture can be found among the other books at La Librairie le livre et la tortue. Delicate images of pots, glasses, containers, themselves contained within this book are rendered with a poetic sensibility. In a sex shop called La Clé du plaisir, Andrea Stallaï has installed a tiny peephole door that you look into to see a photo image of a private moment of passion between a couple. Not as risqué as you might think! Next door at Au Melting Pot, a hair salon, Yvanne Fakhir’s photo images of a mannequin give you the feeling this innate object can be brought into life and is almost human. Maybe this one should have been at the sex shop and Stallaï’s in the hair salon! At the Café Bar Interlude, a room that once served as a safety vault has been set aside for Marie-Josée Laframboise’s simply innovative installation of a bowl covered in marbles. You can slide on and glide on them just for the fun of it. Christine Bolduc’s fashion statement at the Chez Pense a toil clothes store has Polaroids photos and a head wildly decorated with colourful hair made of ribbons. The most interesting piece to my mind, is Christopher Varady-Szabo’s primitive oversized camera whose container is made of mud and supported by sticks. There is a mirror you look down into that reflects the subject supposedly being photographed which is a simple pod and burrs - elements from nature. The other end of the camera which is in fact a typical glass store counter is packed full of wool, mud and straw and has mushrooms actually growing inside! This nature camera is a sight to behold. Nature is both the subject and the object here - the very structure and materials that go to make up Varady-Szabo's camera image object!

The fun in Placards is looking for the artworks, walking from store to store to find the art, which is often disguised, hidden or placed in unusual venues amid the everyday commerce. This is an art treasure hunt with a difference! The art you find is of the experimental genre and varies from place to place. One may be a toilet, the next in a cupboard, another on a display shelf or in a drawer. Walking from store A to store B to store C you are presented with some cultural variations of the contemporary kind!

John K. Grande
De Sousa is the person who records the forgotten weather, weather we dress to enjoy or to protect ourselves from. It is at once a painting and scientific record. The results are found and confirmed by many instruments. All of this makes me feel that the weather is often an excuse for a deeper conversation. Perhaps one about paint.

Elizabeth Fearon

CUBAN PHOTOGRAPHERS EXHIBITION

Lázaro Miranda
Enrique de la Uz
Eddy Garacicoa
Mario Díaz
Raul Canibano
Cristóbal Herrera
Ricardo Elías

CURATED BY: ANDREW DANSON

Alfredo Jacobe, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery,
Hart House
University of Toronto
October 12 - November 9, 2000

Comprising 88 documentary photos by seven photographers, this show provides North American audiences with a rare glimpse into Cuban society. The majority of the black and white photographs provide slice-of-life views of Cuban society in a 11"x14" format. The images depict the lives of ordinary people doing their daily tasks in ordinary places, and for the wealth of knowledge they transmit about contemporary Cuban society the show is unusually intense.

The most striking image in the show by Eddy Garacicoa is a small unassuming untitled black and white photo. Here, Garacicoa has captured the image of a woman holding a child while suckling a small animal. Men are slouching in the background near a house, seemingly disinterested in the kind-faced woman’s activity. The central man in the background is wearing a Lobb's blue baseball cap. This odd artifact of North American culture, adds a resonance to the image, particularly as Cuba is largely cut off from the abundance and wealth this seemingly insignificant visual anecdote represents.

Elizabeth Fearon

BEING ON TIME:
AN EXHIBITION ON TIME AND THE MILLENNIUM

A PUBLIC ACCESS PROJECT

James Carl
Shawna Dempsey
Lorri Milian
John Greyson
Mike Mac Donald
Kelli Mark
Michael Snow, Lisa Steele & Kim Tomczak

Ho Tam

CURATORS: JONATHAN MARCHESAU LT

The Art Centre, Toronto
Central Technical High School
725 Bathurst St.
November 3 - December 14, 2000

Being on Time is the latest in a 14-year history of Public Access produced exhibitions. Public Access is a non-profit charitable organization with a very strong mandate: 1) To discover new places and audiences for art. 2) To experiment with new technologies to make art.

The curator of this project, Jonathan Marchessault, is a writer, video maker and director of the film and video Graduate Program at York University. His current academic research exploring the theories of Marshall McLuhan, became a curatorial point of departure for Being on Time. Specifically Marchessault wanted to explore McLuhan’s question: “Do teenagers experience time differently?”

Elizabeth Fearon
Catherine Heard

**Catherine Heard**

**VANITAS**

Angell Gallery
Sept. 7 - Sept. 30, 2000

**Catherine Heard and Ryan Barrett**

**OUR DARLING**

S.P.I.N. Gallery
Aug. 30 - Sept. 19, 2000

Catherine Heard has taken over a good chunk of Queen St. West for the bulk of September! Neighbouring street level galleries S.P.I.N. and Angell are boasting two different bodies of her work. The Angell Gallery is presenting her Vanitas paintings as a solo exhibition. While S.P.I.N. has cleverly coupled Heard's paintings as a part of a larger exhibition.

While entering into the viewer a chuckle while entering into and confronting (D) "our fear of the body's sexuality and eventual decay." Next door at S.P.I.N. Gallery Our Darling greets us with Ryan Barrett's deceptively innocent looking antique prams, stretchers, and baby carriages. At first glance the white child's transportation devices are reminiscent of white wicker chairs. On closer examination, the viewer realizes each pram is covered with set mouse trips! They will go off! They will hurt you!

Heard's contribution to Our Darling is a series titled Ennui consisting of eerie stuffed "dolls". Here materials make you want to touch them but her imagery is ghastly! This series explores the possibility of language manifesting itself in a physical form. The tie in with Barrett's work is the shared use of the child as a symbol for the vulnerable adult. Here, Heard has used her historical explores, curling through the stuffed figures exposed brains, and mouths and in the work titled Rumour, into another figures mouth, through that figures body and excreted out its anus.

The embryo-like doll forms seen in the process of forming like ideas needing the right words to be expressed or the effect language may have on you when the ideas enter you through language. Heard's dolls are constructed using antique fabric. The fabric itself is manipulated in the sewing process to highlight areas of blood, like the blood of a check or a severed limb with a red and yellow floral pattern. However, the strongest use of pattern is the artist's choice of toile de Jouy! Here the dolls are constructed with fabric which itself tells a story through pictures! This pictorial approach to fabric patterning gained popularity in the mid-1800s and is artistically implemented in Ennui.

Vanitas and Our Darling are morbid, disturbing, and heavily conceptually and historically layered. Angell Gallery and S.P.I.N. must be commended for their collaboration.

Elizabeth Fearon

**Alberta 50/50: Robin Peck and Glen MacKinnon**

Trianon Gallery
104, 5th Street South
October 14th - December 20th, 2000

**Hamish Fulton: Two River Walks**

Southern Alberta Art Gallery
October 14th - November 19th, 2000

**Clouds and Rocks**

Lethbridge's reputation as a vital art centre grows yearly. Although a small city (70,000), it supports the internationally respected Southern Alberta Art Gallery which innovative curator Joon Stobins has helped make famous for its challenging exhibitions and art publications. The University of Lethbridge has a strong Visual Arts Division and one of the largest art collections in Canada (over 12,000 works). Lethbridge is also home to international installation artists David Hollos, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. Community support for the arts in Lethbridge is abounds as evidenced by the Trianon Gallery. Located off the Galt Garden's Park, the downtown square that also holds the 5A.A.G., the Trianon's second floor space is a converted dance hall housing Savill Group Architects and the art gallery. The gallery area with its white walls and hardwood floors looks like a typical artist-run space or New York loft, circa 1970. Neither artist-run nor council funded (the art-loving architects donate the space) the Trianon survives on the Savill Group's goodwill, and local artists, curators and University Art Department support.

The Trianon's most recent exhibition is 50/50, a show of sculptures by Robin Peck and Glen MacKinnon. Aside from their ages (both are fifty this year), Peck and MacKinnon share a subtle perverseness on minimalism and sculpture and the natural world. Entering the installation is like flying down through A.Y. Jackson woods and skimming over Lawren Harris icebergs. MacKinnon's clouds are eight white and greyish lumpen things made from various cements and polystyrene. The forms are devised by roughly made spruce pedestals at slightly varying, eye-level heights. On the other side of the room, and through the clouds, are Peck's familiar sculptures of magnified gypsum crystals carved in plaster but made less familiar by being placed directly on the floor.

I have only seen Peck's sculptures on low pedestals where they looked more gem-like and precious. Here they look at once monumental and yet intimate. Behind MacKinnon's miniaturized and concretized clouds, Peck's forms appear like massive natural icebergs or mountains, or like large minimal sculptures. Up close, some have little chips and dirt marks, indicating their inherent fragility. Unprotected, these apparently hard-mades geographic shapes - which vary from 1/3 to 1/12 metres long - invite care, even sympathy. While related to the minimalistic human school of art, they are less insistent on purity and masculinity than their industrially manufactured grandfathers.

The strange twist in the exhibition is Representation of a Found Stone, an enlargement of a smooth, almost anthropomorphic rock. While its undulant curves seem antithetical to the adjacent, architectonic gypsum crystals, the organic shape reinforces the other work's cleave from minimalism. Peck has forged a language between minimalism and environmental art, conceptual art and even Pop. His sculptures have
the formal austerity of minimalism with the humour (as blow-ups of natural forms) of Pop art. And being made of the same substance as the "white cube" gallery is a conceptual issue. Representation of a Fixed Story leads the viewer past the dry-clowness to the possibility that Peck is genuinely interested in a close observation of nature, rather than simply in its use as an art world trope.

Glen MacKinnon also has his anomalous pieces. In addition to the mashed potato clouds that are both comic and sincere, like a folks artist's rendering of his beloved, MacKinnon includes two blackish-umber forms that seem less like clouds than meteors. Looking back from the meteor/thundershow to the cumulus clouds, the white piles begin to morph into seeming castles, figures, faces and landscapes. MacKinnon, too, appears to be playing on minimalism—as in what is the bare minimum that constitutes a creative act—a sculpture, an aesthetic object. These unformed forms recall elemental experiences: playing with mud and seeing representations in clouds.

I may be going too far, but these two mid-career, mid-life male artists appear to be playing with ideas about masculinity. While their (the sculptures) white, hard exteriors are tough and austere, even ascetic, they show signs of fragility. And though they appear formal and rigid, there is the possibility of softening. These concrete clouds and gigantic crystals show a balance between self-deprecating humour and more serious interests.

David Garneau

HAMISH FULTON: WALKING THE WALK

Hamish Fulton walks. The walk, he says, is his art. The photographs, the text murals, framed drawings, and anything else he puts in the gallery, is not the art. His beautiful catalogues are not the art. The photographs, prints and posters his agents sell over the web or in commercial galleries are not the art either. The art is the walk. For just over three decades, Fulton has been going on walks, ranging from a few hours to several weeks, in various locations around the globe: the Scottish Highlands, near mount Everest, and nearly a dozen in western North America. During his journeys, he takes a few photographs and writes down a few thoughts.

Magpie, Hamish Fulton: Two River Walks, the exhibition and catalogue, are traces of two long walks in Alberta, 14 days and nights along the Milk River and seven days and nights along the Red River. The Hamish Fulton of the gallery, rather than of the walks, is a conceptualist. The main gallery space consists of three huge wall text pieces, each recording an aspect of the walk (for example, "Walking and camping for seven days... returning upstream over sections of backlands/along the north flanks of the Red Deer River..."). The words are almost billboard sized, visual equivalents of what they describe. They are landscape paintings with words that occupy the space of the things they evolve. This idea is furthered by using the text over photos of the scenes they describe. One signifying system competes or collaborates with another, suggesting how hard it is to see nature or look at the land without an intervening veil of language.

The smaller gallery contains more intimate artifacts: a few photos, simple drawings (outlines of fossilized wood and a cup) and notes. The outline drawings demonstrate Fulton's desire to record but not disturb nature. His notes are the fractured descriptions of a poet/scientist with an ear for language. "Day Four / a cloudless sky/ woodpecker/grasshopper/a bright yellow bird/one small cloud in the sky/sunflowers/cactus/butterfly/a parent bird feeding its young/a deer comes out at dusk from the river/an evening breeze through the cottonwood trees/the sound of flitting wings." The words record sights, sounds, and time while the photos are iconic, symmetrical, often with a mossy boulder in the foreground and prairie or hills in the background. The only evidence of people is the occasional photograph (in the catalogue, not the show) of a tent where the rock usually is and the fact photos require a photographer.

The Hamish Fulton, again, perhaps of the gallery and catalogue rather than the walk, is a Romantic, a hiker in an edited wilderness. His images and texts avoid the telephone poles, roads, airplanes, buildings, his travelling companions, and nearly every other human trace that might get in the way of his landscape narrative. Like the Group of Seven before him, he records the West as an empty space full of possibility. He is not, like the Group, making images to encourage settlement. Quite the opposite, he appears to want to discourage the white cube of the exhibition space. The walk blocks all access to the wide rectangle of the room beyond, and compresses the gallery's usable space into a thin corridor joining the two small rooms that bracket the exhibition space on either side. On one side, the storm clouds (square black tracks, pecking from cube-shaped white boxes), a collapsible aluminum ladder, flats of empty wine and beer bottles, left over the opening (folding tables). On the other side, the gallery office, computers, filing cabinets, a couch and desk; bookshelves crammed with catalogues; a gallery volunteer in a black turndrench with his back to the door, talking animatedly on the phone.

David Garneau

VANCOUVER

DAVID CARTER MINIMALER

Or Gallery November 2000

For his Or Gallery exhibition, David Carter has built a walk that runs the length of the gallery's exhibition space. The walk blocks all access to the wide rectangle of the room beyond, and compresses the gallery's usable space into a thin corridor joining the two small rooms that bracket the exhibition space on either side. On one side, the storm clouds (square black tracks, pecking from cube-shaped white boxes), a collapsible aluminum ladder, flats of empty wine and beer bottles, left over the opening (folding tables). On the other side, the gallery office, computers, filing cabinets, a couch and desk; bookshelves crammed with catalogues; a gallery volunteer in a black turndrench with his back to the door, talking animatedly on the phone.

Carter's work is aggressively prosaic, and does nothing to call attention to itself as "art." Made of the same materials as the back wall of the exhibition space, painted the same flat white, sparsely and arbitrarily illuminated by the entrance foyer lights, Carter's walk seems as one with the rest of the gallery, part of the already existant architecture. By deliberately withholding the directional cues that would enable us to recognize his architectural intervention as "art,"—the wall label, directional lighting, interpretive handout or didactic panel—Carter's work deflects attention from itself onto the spaces that traditionally support art's presentation in the absent exhibition space. The storage closet and administrative office are awkwardly, made visible 'as environments' much like Peter Fischli and David Weiss' recent sculptural recreations of exhibition installations. At the same time that these typically invisible support mechanisms for the presentation of art are aesthetized, the relationship between them and the absent exhibition space is clarified. Visitors to the gallery perceive the space is autonomous from the bridal shop, animation studio, and slick upscale restaurant adjacent to the Or. Carter's intervention makes the exhibition space's implication within this ideological tangle. One reading of the work might be that white cube of the exhibition space has no aesthetic autonomy or reality of its own.

To be fair, Carter acknowledges his work's quotation and redeployment of preexisting conventions of the minimalism of Carl Andre, Sol LeWitt, and (more to the point) Robert Morris, whose large, geometrical shapes; simple,"basic" forms; cheap materials and "theatricality" and the architectural interventions of artists like Michael Asher and Christopher D'Arcangelo, recently repopularized by critic-historians Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Thomas Crow. His choice of exhibition title—Minimaler—suggests minimalism, as a set of conventions, is like a toolkit of conceptual strategies, ready to be opened and used. The making of large white "specific objects" is just another kind of work, equivalent to that which is involved by smaller stone mason, or plumber. In this way, Carter attempts to overcome charges of minimalist elitism by connecting his practice to the larger world of work. More troubling is his post-Modernism insinuation that a particular set of formal effects is equally available to all artists at all times. What this view ignores is that artistic forms and processes precipitate out of cultural, economic and other, suggesting how hard it is to see nature or look at the land without an intervening veil of language.

Christopher Brayshaw