CARAQUET, NB

VISUAL ACADEIA!
FESTIVAL DES ARTS VISUELS EN ATLANTIQUE
4th-7th July, 2002

With a unique and ever changing cultural mix, Caraquet maintains its persona in the gestures and sounds that embody everyday life there. The popularity of local cultural manifestations such as the Fesitval des arts visuels en Atlantique, held annually in Caraquet, New Brunswick, is not confined to the young, middle-aged or old-but involves all the community. This initiative, which began as Caraquet en couleurs in 1997 consists of a brief and intense summer celebration of Acadian culture. It includes workshops for young people, four major exhibitions, a francophone visual arts competition, an Acadian book launch, an art auction, as well as a professional arts show. There is even an on site restaurant with local cooking.

Le défi de création en direct brought together 19 professional artists Carole Bherer, Michel Robichaud, Pauline Beaud, Dorothée Croteau, Alex Thériault, Virgil Hammock, FredAvy and Marie-Thérèse Thomas from France, Jacques Lanteigne, Alexandre Robichaud, Joan Callen, Nathalie Daigle, Gilbert Leblanc, Gorges Goguen, Jocelyne Philibert, Rita Lamontagne, and Roger Vautour. Unveiled during the event, Caraquet sculptor Norbert Girodet's Brise collective (2001), a fibreglass and bronze commission depicting a maritime boat, figure and sea, is to be sited in Caraquet’s Fédération des Caisse populaires académies. Festival host Lise Robichaud's installation Écrire l'avenir, 2002, with its flood of envelopes and image of hand writing allowed to time, place and memory, past, present and future. For the open competition this year, Lise Rocher won 1st prize for her ceramic and steel sculpture Hommage à Jean-Paul Riopelle and Ingouffe. Marie Hélène Nardel's Bagage Vial won 2nd prize and honorable mention went to Gorges Goguen, Nathalie Daigle and Monique Côté. This year's Festival des arts visuels en atlantique proved to be a lively celebration of, by, and with, Acadian art, culture and identity.

John K. Grande

SACKVILLE, NB

I'D BE A FOOL
7th ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF ART
Owens Art Gallery
49 York Street, Sackville, NB
Struts Gallery
7 Lorne Street, Sackville, NB
22-26 October 2002

This year marks the 7th annual international symposium of art in Sackville. Co-sponsored by Mount Allison University's Owens Art Gallery and the Struts Gallery, this year's I'd be a Fool symposium is centered around performance art. Performance art is not new. It can certainly be dated to the Dada period during, and after, World War One and the Happenings of Allan Kaprow which date from 1959, but it is an art form that continues to be controversial and within that controversy lies its charm. The press release refers to time-based art... Doesn't all art exist in time? At least when this kind of art is bad and it is over, it disappears without a trace, unlike bad painting and sculpture which continues to haunt us. Performance art is documented, but documentation is a poor substitute for the real thing: being there is everything...

Music in performance art is often performed by non-musicians under the vague premise anyone with an artistic license is gifted. The results leave much to be desired, just like painting by actors. For the Sackville event music is being performed by Motion Ensemble under the solid stewardship of co-directors and professional musicians, Andrew Miller and D'Arcy Gray. This group has commissioned works by composers who include Atlantic Canadians James Gode, Michael Miller and Alastair MacLean, and will be giving public workshops on the work of the American composer John Cage. On October 18th, 19th and 20th, Motion Ensemble will lead off the symposium with a concert featuring works by composers associated with John Cage, including David Tudor.

Symposium events that will happen in and around Struts Gallery include the very interesting Projet Mobilière Bookmobile. The project is a bookmobile housed in a specially designed twenty-six foot vintage Airstream trailer. It features artists books, hand-made magazines and other independent publications. The trailer will be parked outside the gallery and project staff workshops on the publication of hand made books and magazines will take place. Based in Montreal and Philadelphia, Projet Mobilière tours Canada and the United States, stopping at public libraries, community, senior and youth centres. The project seeks to demystify art by letting ordinary people in on the act.

Three events during the week at Struts: DUORAMA, performed by Toronto artists Ed Johnson and Paul Collard; a performance by Ontario artist, Shary Boyle titled Honkitoonkies, and a piece by Vancouver artist Smart Bodies. These events may prove more challenging to the public than the bookmobile. DUORAMA addresses the... relationships and the social and political reaction to various aspects of gay culture. It does so by having the performers, among other things, engage the architectural surroundings. Ms Boyle's performance combines drawing with country and western karaoke and, finally Smart Bodies will work with her audience to uncover areas of public surveillance by using readily available technology.

The symposium will wrap up Friday night (October 25th) with a lecture titled Joseph Beuys Props for the Memory or Reminiscences of Doing Wrong by art writer and teacher Kristine Stiles from Duke University. Ms. Stiles is co-author, along with Peter Selz, of the reference Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Source Book of Artists Writings. Her lecture will question Beuys's Nazi past and may assert Beuys was more of a good Nazi than he led people to believe during his life. In all, the symposium I'd be a Fool promises to be a busy week full of surprises. It is to the co-sponsors credit (The Owens Art Gallery & Struts Gallery) that this event occurs annually in Sackville and at Mount Allison University. Pots do need stirring every once in a while, if only to make sure we don't get too comfortable with our ideas about art and life.

Virgil Hammock
producing works that reflected the area, I gave up on working from photographs and remembered Hartley's approach to his Memory Series. I then began to take on Hartley's process and paint the light, shapes, and lines of the New Mexican desert I had left behind. As a result, MacLeod developed a more acute eye for the qualities of local colour, the blue and purple light he had discovered while painting the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and desert mesa floor.

Scott MacLeod learned how to capture the essence of desert light the longer he painted there, but on his return to Montreal the real seeds of the Taos Memory series germinated into the celebration of the New Mexico landscape now on view at Victoria Hall in Westmount. Some of the paintings such as The Ceremony (2002) constitute narrow vertical slices of the horizon reminiscent of Japanese calligraphic works. They are likewise suffused with the vibrant complimentary desert colours. The abstraction recalls California painter Richard Diebenkorn's work but the colours are deeper with saturated hues and soft light. Others paintings based on visits to various sites in New Mexico including Abiquiu, Ghost Ranch, Pilar, and the Rancho de Taos, where remnants of the old pueblo settlements can still be found. The overall impact is of light suffusing and diffusing, and of majestic natural landforms, the ever changing atmospheres of the desert landscape.

John K. Grande

HULL

VIKINGS

NORTH ATLANTIC SAGA
Canadian Museum of Civilization
100 Laurier Street
Tel: 819-776-7000
1-800-555-5621
www.civilization.ca
May 8th—October 14th, 2002

On the shores of the Ottawa River at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Vikings have landed! More than 500 artifacts from nine countries from navigational instruments, to agricultural tools, wood and stone carvings, jewellery, armor, a whalebone ironing board, and a scale model reproduction of the Viking Gokstad ship are here until October. Interestingly, a team of fifteen curators from museums around the world helped assemble this intricate weave of objects to bring an important part of North American and European history to the public.

Apparently, when evidence was discovered proving the Vikings had been in North America 500 years before Christopher Columbus, the Italians rioted in New York! The Vikings were pirates, and the loot they captured, some on view in Hull, evidences the range of territory they covered: a 6th century Buddha, a 10th century Irish cross, Ravenna's 8th century copper and enamelled casket from Scotland, Ivory chess figures from the Isle of Lewis. Looking at the swords, with their intricate design and construction one can only be impressed by the high level of Viking blacksmith work. A carved limestone slab from 8th-9th century Gotland depicts a Viking ship carrying the dead warriors to the afterlife in Valhalla—where we can see, fighting and feasting continue to go on! A mini-section that will delight children and adults, the paintings such as The Ceremony (2002) constitute narrow vertical slices of the horizon reminiscent of Japanese calligraphic works. They are likewise suffused with the vibrant complimentary desert colours. The abstraction recalls California painter Richard Diebenkorn's work but the colours are deeper with saturated hues and soft light. Others paintings based on visits to various sites in New Mexico including Abiquiu, Ghost Ranch, Pilar, and the Rancho de Taos, where remnants of the old pueblo settlements can still be found. The overall impact is of light suffusing and diffusing, and of majestic natural landforms, the ever changing atmospheres of the desert landscape.

John K. Grande

OTTAWA

KENOJUAK PRINTS

National Gallery of Canada
380 Sussex Dr.
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9N4
Tel.: 613-990-1985
www.national.gallery.ca
April 5th—October 20th, 2002

This 40 year overview of Kenojuak's art and life is a well kept secret. While some of these images now look stereotypical, others (mosty the earlier work from the 1960s and 1970s) are animated and full of life. The 1962 work titled Birds has an incredible winged animal (even Mickey Mouse-like) better than any Disney animator could conceive of. They display Kenojuak's almost organic skill at merging line, colour and image to present an unconscious cosmology, something Saumik (James Houston) recognized and encouraged early on. Why is Kenojuak never presented as a contemporary Canadian artist?

The famous Kenojuak print The Enchanted Owl (cut by Iylaing Kajaktuat & printed by Effieuglak Pouooogok in 1960) is an icon of Canadian art... that eventually became a postage stamp! Kenojuak images have penetrated Canadian households as poster images, but not enough has been said about the aesthetic of Kenojuak's art. Maybe there has been too much Cape Doseat print production without serious critical input into the content and style (something that could help their art to evolve and grow). This mini-retrospective of Kenojuak's art does not remedy the sorry state of the art in the print co-ops and the Innu art exchanges. A lot Innu art is stereotypical and too self-conscious of what sells and what does not. Lucy Tassooor-Tutsweetok and Nick Silkuquak are two notable exceptions to the rule, and there is always new talent, but it needs to be recognized and supported!

Surprising images surface, like Kenojuak's first earlist print. Rabbit Eating Seaweed (1958), based on a design from a sealskin bag she made in the early 1950s. These early prints and the drawings in particular, are imaginative, and with a sensitive use of line and texture that highlights the inner world and cosmology of Innu culture. We would like to see more such work, but sadly, technique of
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manufacture has come to dominate the print world like it has the non-lum art world, at the expense of an aesthetic or cultural worldview (it must be there somewhere). As Kenojuak commented in conversation with Jean Boudgens in 1980... "I just take these things out of my thoughts, and out of my imagination, and I don't really give any weight to the idea of it being an image of something."

John K. Grande

TOM THOMSON

National Gallery of Canada
380 Sussex Dr.
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9N4
Tel. 613-990-1985
http://www.collection.gc.ca

June 7th - Sept. 8th, 2002

Vancouver Art Gallery
750 Hornby
Vancouver, BC V6Z 1H7
Tel. 604-662-4700
www.vancouverartgallery.bc.ca

October 5th, 2002 - January 5th, 2003

Tom Thomson is, along with Emily Carr, one of Canada’s most salient and immovable myths, when it comes to Canadian Culture. His art has been examined under the microscope and copied by thousands of Canadian Sunday painters, and art school students. Thomson’s rustic studio/cabin has been moved from the unlikely setting of Toronto to the grounds of the McMichael Collection in Kleinberg, Ontario where school busesloads of students come each year to marvel at and re-discover this myth, or play frisbee or football in the ravine.... The book that immortalized Thomson for my generation was The Silence and the Storm co-authored by David Sillcox and the Toronto artist Harold Town. The focus there wasn’t on the elaborately worked brush and palette "masterpieces" like Northern River (1914-15) or The Jack Pine (1916-17) but the brief, fleeting, light and colour capturing sketches Tom made camping or canoeing in the woods at Algonquin Park, at Dr. MacCallum’s cottage (whose walls were brought from Goulah Bay to Ottawa and are now on permanent exhibit in the National Gallery of Canada).

This fresh assessment of Tom Thomson’s life and art involved a lot of collaboration; the scholars include Charles C. Hill (NGC), Dennis Reid (AGO), Andrew Hunter, Sandra-Webster Cook, Anne Ruggles and that great popularizer of Thomson Joan Murray, among others. Looking through the show, and seeing the early Victorian-influenced dark and gloomy landscapes with your own eyes, you can’t help but think how dark those windowless prospectors and settlers’ cabins really were in the 19th century. Tom Thomson’s incredible gift as a draftsman and commercial designer shines through in the ephemera such as posters, ink studies and the like in this Tom Thomson show. (Group of Seven members likewise worked in commercial design at Grip in Toronto, others at Briggs etc.) Was it the level of abstraction, chaos and depth Thomson experienced in the Canadian wilderness forests that influenced his choice of format, line, depth, and design when painting on large canvases? The contrast between being on your knees in a canoe or ranged on benches working in a design office must have been edifying. Of course, there was the love affair that was never consummated, and Joyce Wieland’s film tribute The Far Shore, an offshoot of the days of Canada’s nationalist Waffle party and maybe CAR... and the eternal question that persists... Was he killed in his canoe or was it an accident? Tom Thomson is a show to see, particularly as Canada’s lonely and stoic cultural icons are increasingly threatened by the Hollywoodization of just about everything! Joan Murray’s compilation of Thomson’s letters in the show’s catalogue publication are a fait accompli. They shed new light on the social side of Thomson’s life. Its Thomson’s brushwork, colour and design sense. His sketches are as alive as when they were painted, before and during the Great War.

John K. Grande

TORONTO

KARILEE FUGLEM...

WATER DRAWINGS

Leo Kamen Gallery
Suite 406, 80 Spadina Avenue
Tel. 416-504-9515
r.holt-kamen@sympatico.ca

Karilee Fuglem continues to explore aspects of the ephemeral with her new Water Drawing series on view at Leo Kamen Gallery. Best known for the Breath of Air she exhibited at CMCA in 1998, Fuglem has recently experimented with the colourless medium of water, brushing it directly onto tracing paper. The first results were exhibited in a show titled Someday Soon You Will Stop Searching for Meaning at Pierre-Francois Ouellette Art Contemporain this past May along with an installation titled Secret Visibility. The installation had thousands of clear acetate disks attached in clusters on the gallery walls. Activated by fans intermittently they moved mysteriously and poetically...

More recently, the volatile nature of tracing paper has caused Fuglem to use vellum. Approximately 10 new works in varying dimensions are on view at Leo Kamen gallery. The Water Drawings involve making circles or ovals onto paper, then let the paper dry and repeat the actions again. The result is fascinating, and a purely physical response to the action of water on paper patterns. Fuglem’s physical and material interactive art recalls Andy Goldsworthy experiments placing reddish Morecambe Bay stone into large snowballs from 1992 that, when it melted onto paper made arbitrary forms of varying colour densities. Fuglem’s Water Drawings likewise mirror nature’s sensitive and often invisible, ever changing chaos.

Drawing with water and delving into the dynamics of nature, Karilee Fuglem surprises us yet again with the subtlity of her art. Letting go or controlling the brushwork determines how the work evolves. With or without your magnifying glass, whether investigating the microcosm or the macrocosm, Fuglem’s Water Drawings are a must see.

John K. Grande

SASKATOON

QU'APPELLE:

TALES OF TWO VALLEYS

The Mendel Art Gallery
950 Spadina Crescent East
P.O. Box 557
Saskatoon
S7K 3L6
Tel. (306) 975-7610

June 14th - September 2nd, 2002

Qu’Appelle Tales of Two Valleys, the Mendel’s programming centerpiece for 2002, considers Saskatchewan’s most famous valley...
from multiple historical, social, industrial, spiritual, visual, textual, even medical points of view. More than an exhibition, this multimedia event includes two art shows and a well-designed and informative website (http://quappelle.mendel.ca/exhibition/) that includes histories; school projects: recollections, comments, and filmed interviews and slide shows from writers, artists, and Piapot elder, Beatrice Lavalle; and a very cool virtual tour of the shows. The gallery has arranged on-site and outreach educational programs and a two-volume exhibition catalogue.

The historical art survey, co-curated by Robert Stacey and Dan Ring, is a collage of paintings from the 1840's to the present. There are dozens of big and little scenes and portraits, mostly hung salon-style, by C.W. Jefferys, Inglis Steddon-Williams, Nicholas de Grandmaison, Ernest Lindner, and others. Many are little known Varsho, muddly views, or bright reflections. They reveal an imported Romantic gaze that figures both the original inhabitants and "grandeur" of this modest little valley to suit the needs of recent colonizers. Pity the immigrating farmer and "grandure" of this modest little valley and many, not just two. Off the car. The whiskey was clouding his mind, so it took him a long time to realize what had happened and stop the car. He hurriedly put the car in reverse and sped backwards to find her and see if she was injured. The rear of the car bounced up and down with a terrifying scream of anguish he realized that she had done. At the trial they said that she had lost blood from the car and then had deliberately backed over her. They said that she had been too much of too much to drink and didn't know what he was doing, and that instead of sending him to jail they were recommending that he go to the hospital for a while.

Residential Girls (2002) has 62 framed photographs of Aboriginal girls lined up on a shelf that passes through a white wall. The photos were rescued from a residential school group picture. While the assembly line suggests the regulation of Indian bodies by the combined institutions of religion and school, Poitras' salvaging and separating of the individuals from the group asserts the fact that these people are individuals. Their passage through the white wall (if they conform) is a more indelible description of assimilation than any book on the subject.

Because he is Métis, Poitras is both a physical and cultural site of the mixing of the cultures that inhabit this valley. This unique interstice and amorphousness is reflected in thoughtful and witty work that tends to interrogate, underline ironies and express ambivalence rather than simply record and denounce or celebrate.

Finally, while this provocative exhibition is eager to be exhaustive, inclusive and generally fair-minded to the many views of this valley, it is puzzling that the title, Tales of Two Valleys, insists on inscribing a division between dominant culture and First Nations. There is one valley and many, not just two.

David Garneau

VICTORIA, B.C.

RON NOGANOSH

IT TAKES TIME

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
1304 Moss Street
Victoria, B.C. V8W 4P1
Tel: 250-384-4101
Fax: 250-386-3995
July 12th - Sept. 22nd, 2002

Cecilia looked at him with horror, and then, to his shock, she threw herself from the fast-moving car. The whiskey was clouding his mind, so it took him a long time to realize what had happened and