HALIFAX

THE DUPLESSIS COLLECTION

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
www.agns.gov.ns.ca
June 21st-Sept 14th, 2003

For the first time ever, the Duplessis Collection from the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec can be seen outside of Quebec. This interesting exhibition presents 64 of the 65 paintings in the Quebec museum's Duplessis Collection. These are mainly 19th century landscapes and genre paintings by European and Canadian artists including Eugene Boudin, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, Johan Barthold Jongkind, Cornelius Krieghoff, Joseph Mallard William Turner, Frederick Simpson Coburn, Allan Edson and Horatio Walker.

Most readers of Vie des Arts are well aware of the political career of Maurice Duplessis, the long term premier of Quebec, but may not know of his interest in art. This collection results from that interest and, on his death, Duplessis willed the collection to the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. The works in the collection reflect Duplessis’ conservative taste, but are, nevertheless, first class examples of these artists’ oeuvre. A cornerstone of Canadian art, landscape painting was so popular in the past, it could be said there where probably more landscape paintings than trees in this country (and we are a country with a lot of trees). The Group of Seven made its nationalistic statements with their landscape paintings, but the paintings in this exhibition generally pre-date the Group. Instead, they reflect, even in the Canadian work, European tastes. A fine example is the work by the Canadian artist Horatio Walker (1858-1938) titled Turning the Harrow. This work clearly reflects the influence of the Barizon School and Corot and these same influences were rigorously rejected by the Group of Seven.

Edie, Allen A 1846-1888
La tempête à Montréal (1877-1878)

As for Corot (1796-1875), three of his works are in the exhibition and include a very late work from 1872 or 1873 titled Une Fille de Moi. Corot was clearly the master who influenced many Canadian and European artists in the 19th and early 20th century. The Barizon School was very different both in its intent and methods from Impressionism although the two movements paralleled each other in time. History has rewarded the Impressionists and pretty much left the painters of the Barizon in its wake. It is a good time to take another look at Corot and his followers and this show provides the opportunity to do so.

Many other types of painting can be seen in this exhibition such as the Canadian Impressionist James Wilson Morrice who worked closely with Henri Matisse. To my mind, Morrice is one of the finest Canadian artists in the 20th century. There are also a number of works by the Dutch born artist Cornelius Krieghoff (1815-1872) who spend a good deal of his active career (1846-63) in Quebec. Krieghoff painted many, many pictures of rural Quebec life and there was a small army of imitators. It is hard to place Krieghoff in a particular school, as he was largely self taught and worked in isolation, but his work is an important part of Canadian art history.

This is one of the first AGNS exhibitions under the stewardship of director Jeff Spalding who, served at the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery and, most recently, as director at the Appleton Museum of Art in Ocala, Florida. A balance in the exhibitions selection at the AGNS, from its permanent collection to challenging exhibitions of contemporary art, to historical shows like the Duplessis Collection is being achieved by Jeff Spalding. As in previous years, we encourage our readers visit the East Coast Art Gallery of Nova Scotia is always worth the visit.

Virgil Hammock
What is most unusual about this Quebec-based artist's presentation, as seen in two large paintings titled *Vision nocturne* (each is 8 works on canvas, one predominantly blue, the other red) is how she juxtaposes elements within nature, presenting their textures, variations and contrasts on flat reflective surfaces, and in so doing presents a vision of a world where nature's power to transform is a powerful and abstract metaphor for infinity.

John K. Grande

LAURENT BOUCHARD

GEO-LANDSCAPE CONFIGURATIONS

Espace 200
Feb. 22nd-March 8th, 2003

Laurent Bouchard
Geo-Landscape Configuration
(Installation view)

Laurent Bouchard, an artist whose origins are in north of Quebec, has created a series of unusual landscapes that use wood sections from the landscape to depict nature views. While Bouchard has exhibited in numerous galleries including Elca London, Simon Dresdner in Toronto, and the Century Gallery in Los Angeles, he is less well known to audiences in Montreal where he actually lives. Bouchard's landscapes come in many sizes and they innovate with wood grain, making it an element in the composition. The wood being used for the art is actually recycled from ends and pieces of logs from a furniture factory.

The most imposing artwork in the Geo-Landscape exhibition actually consists of two large circular agglomerations of many of these mini-landscapes Laurent Bouchard creates. Each singular piece depicts a nature vision in microcosm. They can be of mountains, rivers, forests or a detail of nature. Out of many landscapes the artist has created an abstract object-like wallscape that is actually a conceptual work that plays with the dual aspects of object metaphor and representation.

The show includes others mixed media works by Bouchard that are more like interior self-conceived landscapes of the mind. These abstract and multi-faceted works look more formal. They could even bring to mind Russian Utopic painters and sculptures of the early 20th century in the way they play with geometry. Signs and symbols in acrylic are juxtaposed to create unusual accidental looking configurations. In some of these materials as diverse as plexiglass and aluminum, and plywood are combined. The variation in sizes and shapes of each work testifies to the artist's obvious enjoyment of playing on and with formalist language in art. One such piece has integrated two forms made from tomato plant holders. Joined together they look highly sculptural and strangely symbolic. Placed above and below a stylized oval (or kayak-like) painted form they bring a certain tension to the piece. Beyond the matter and materiality of Laurent Bouchard's Geo-Landscape representations, there is a spiritual sense of awakening to the endless transformations we experience in nature and, in this instance, art.

John K. Grande

ROBERT LE GRESLEY

Galerie d'art d'Outremont
outremont.ville.montreal.qc.ca

An inveterate collector of antique ephemera, and objects from the past, Robert Le Gresley assembles and collates all this nostalgia into some very amusing artworks. All the Duchampian tricks possible are taken out of Le Gresley's kitbag to create compositions that speak out to us, for they use objects of the everyday with wit and wisdom. It is because these assemblages collage elements once practical and part of the ordinary, that makes them so fun for we have personal associations with some of them and are curious about others.

There is the magic we find in American Joseph Cornell's tiny box assemblages in Le Gresley's art, but they are more linear, thematic, and follow a straight line of reason usually, even if they are eclectic. For instance one such work includes an
flattened by the general anomic that is the art world in 2003, the good news is: Shapeshifting, or biomorphism, by its proper name. Another way to put it is moving on: sculptors finding their way into oil paint and digital imaging, designers turning to metal wall-relief and polemics turning to portraiture. These transformations aren’t universally popular, but changing form is always a threat to the peace, and if not now, when?

Ian Lazarus is a well-known Toronto sculptor whose work combines metal, rock and earth in both interior and landscape installations. In his first painting exhibition, Ouroboros at DeLeon White Gallery, he is showing a group of eight oils and one image reproduced photographically from Photoshop. This has apparently caused consternation: should sculptors paint? For that matter, should Giacometti have written that critique of the ‘58 Studelbaker for Studio Magazine? The deed is done, and the results are surprising, even for painters.

At the same time, they juice up the perspectival model, repositioning it as a system for mapping both deep, inner and wide, outer space.

The circular motif was also present in the work of Lily Otasevic at next-door Burston Gallery a month earlier. A graphic designer as well as a sculptor, Otasevic has deployed metals in the fabrication of a number of wall-relief sculptures. She begins with an emblematic, circular shape, then complicates it through the use of texture and volumetric continuity. There’s a great rightness to this work, like the metal bricolage you see adorning Brazilian favelas or Mexican shantytowns. It also put me in mind of early modern sculpture, Gabo, Pevsner, Barbara Hepworth, in the way that the artist invests the metal with a light plasticity: sheet copper, aluminum, nails, scratches, nail-heads, wire on wooden supports. Yet the work is not nostalgic, which is a huge relief in this moody era.

At A-Space, a project by the photographers Carol Conde and Karl Beveridge is part of the annual Mayworks festival that celebrates working people. Like Lazarus, they use Photoshop as an essential part of their toolkit, but to very different ends. For the past many years they’ve produced work in collaboration with unions and community groups, here in four sequential series of photographs. Three deal with the history and present of the health care system, the fourth with globalization.

Notwithstanding the artists’ disclaimer, many of these images function autonomously, as powerful images and compositions. This is especially true of the series All Wind, whose subject is health-care workers and Calling the Shots, the piece about an anti-globalization demonstration. If these images succeed in their pedagogic ambitions, their success comes from the faces they photograph. It’s a remarkable catalogue that combines real people on the job with actors who give the scene a suitably artificial patina. This raises the question: why should psychological affinity with the viewer, on which portraiture has always rested, be more interesting than vocational affinity between subjects, the shadow of the job that resonates in their faces?

Oliver Girling

VANCOUVER

VENSSNA PERUNOVIC

WHOLE

TAG (Third Avenue Gallery)
Tel: 604-738-3500
www.tag.bc.ca
April 3–26, 2003

Yugoslavian-born Venessna Perunovich juxtaposes metaphors while fusing them together in two very different media: video and installation. Unconscious and conscious associations fly back and forth, fuse, merge, and seem to defy any reasonable explanation. Somehow, there is this combination of violence and domesticity, of the familiar and the bizarre and terrifying. This makes for a very abstract and far away kind of artistic message. These tensions could be part of your everyday experience when your life becomes shattered by war, or domestic violence. Imagery of an A-Bomb expanding into a mushroom cloud and of things being blown apart into fragments definitively cannot reassure us of much. These stunning images, (re-edited for this show) gradually shift into micro-cosmic nature patterns of grasses and the sounds likewise become subtler, softer. This imagery wall is juxtaposed next to a metaphorical house made of stretchy, sensual black elastic you can enter and exit this house at will. This house is a construct more than a reality.

The images shatter our sense of the ordinary and are as unsettling as the house is reassuring. The video images, even the violent ones, are strangely beautiful, even have a hypnotic effect. The gentler kinder close-ups of green grasses offer a note of hope, of rebirth after destruction; contrasts are intentional and graphic.
Unfortunately the mixed media paintings in this show are laden with conflicting and muddy symbolic message layers that I cannot decode. I guess they play with ambivalences of the human condition... not that effectively. A paradoxical figure with a mask becomes a series of images that effectively meet reality. "W(Hole)" is a conscious, personal meets social, ilusion meets reality. It simplifies what can be an exciting subject.

Arcady, as opposed to the real Arcadia, which is a mountainous region in the south of Greece, was a subject, painters obsessed about, and painted in the Romantic era. Arcady was an ideal, rustic paradise populated by peoples living in harmony with nature. Stephen Hutchings' "Towards Arcadia" show has scenes that are not overviews and they have partial glimpses of nature. These paintings unsettle us because there is something strangely unnatural about this nature-based world. The nature Hutchings paints looises collared, edited and cultivated with no animals or people, just isolated elements like trees and leaves, a road and flat skies. Indeed if this is nature, it is a postModern one; nature is edited down, even unnatural and with a reduced colour scale and arrangement of elements.

Is this nature a fragment of something larger? Has it been reduced? In a way nature is idealized and sterilized, yet aesthetic and beautiful at the same time. It is an image of nature most urban dwellers would like as they no longer experience unbridled nature. We could never recognize where these scenes are and they look synthetic. Indeed they could be many places, and they are infused with a misty ambiguity. The painterly quality of the images seem secondary to the graphic video images. High lighting a place where Perunovich believes the "conscious meets unconscious, personal meets social, illusion meets reality." "W(Hole)" is a very strategic and self-conscious show. It simplifies what can be an exciting subject - conflicting forces inherent to the human condition. The basic dumbing down of themes makes me, for one, suspicious. A more essential creative potential and dynamic has been reduced to stereotypes and platitudes we all know and have seen a priori - in the media.

John K. Grande

**STEPHEN HUTCHINGS**

**TOWARDS ARCADIA**

Jennifer Kostuik Gallery

www.kostuikgallery.com

Tel.: 604-737-3969

April 3–27, 2003

Arcady, as opposed to the real Arcadia, which is a mountainous region in the south of Greece, was a subject, painters obsessed about, and painted in the Romantic era. Arcady was an ideal, rustic paradise populated by peoples living in harmony with nature. Stephen Hutchings' "Towards Arcadia" show has scenes that are not overviews and they have partial glimpses of nature. These paintings unsettle us because there is something strangely unnatural about this nature-based world. The nature Hutchings paints loooses collared, edited and cultivated with no animals or people, just isolated elements like trees and leaves, a road and flat skies. Indeed if this is nature, it is a postModern one; nature is edited down, even unnatural and with a reduced colour scale and arrangement of elements.

Is this nature a fragment of something larger? Has it been reduced? In a way nature is idealized and sterilized, yet aesthetic and beautiful at the same time. It is an image of nature most urban dwellers would like as they no longer experience unbridled nature. We could never recognize where these scenes are and they look synthetic. Indeed they could be many places, and they are infused with a misty ambiguity. The painterly quality of the images seem secondary to the graphic video images. High lighting a place where Perunovich believes the "conscious meets unconscious, personal meets social, illusion meets reality." "W(Hole)" is a very strategic and self-conscious show. It simplifies what can be an exciting subject - conflicting forces inherent to the human condition. The basic dumbing down of themes makes me, for one, suspicious. A more essential creative potential and dynamic has been reduced to stereotypes and platitudes we all know and have seen a priori - in the media.

John K. Grande

**WASHINGTON DC**

**GERHARD RICHTER**

**FORTY YEARS OF PAINTING**

Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden

http://hirshhorn.si.edu

Gerhard Richter’s mercurial career as a painter is controversial and contested by many in the art world. Yet while his paintings may be said to occasionally stretch themselves too thin in terms of diversity of style and content, they likewise have great pertinence for the political and aesthetic questions they pose. Gerhard Richter’s paintings mirrors the process of denaturization our culture is now experiencing. He paints with a flair for what art and nature should look like and this is good, for these paintings depict scenes of beauty in a world transfixed on ugliness.

John K. Grande

**VENEZIA**

**ARTS**

Venez visiter notre site Internet

www.viedesarts.com
Richter's art is most interesting, to my mind, when it seizes on the effects of electronic, photo-based and screen production of imagery in contemporary culture. Parallels can be drawn between Andres Serrano's photos of victims of violence in the morgue and Gerhard Richter's paintings of the dead bodies of youthful idealists turned terrorists of the Baader-Meinhof group found in prison in Germany. Were they victims of police espionage or genuine suicides? One is still not sure, but what surfaces in Richter that is distinct from Serrano is his ability to turn back to an older medium, namely painting, yet use contemporary imagery as source for this. This effect achieves very different results depending on the subjects, whether a snapshot of Richter's Uncle Rudi in Nazi uniform, media images of Cold War fighter planes in combat, or Jacqueline Kennedy in mourning.

The Colour Charts such as Six Colors (1966) which is a Pop art version of a paint merchant's sampler and 256 Colors (1974) which has something to do with mixing paint colours are the most dubious in terms of their significance. Though these appear as "abstracts", their spirit is more Duchampian. The later works from the 1990s vary from abstraction to exercises in repainted landscapes based on photo imagery. Even more self-conscious are the memento mori with their skulls and flickering candles painted with a Baroque naturalism that reminds one of Georges de la Tour and Francisco de Zurburan. Seeing a retrospective with such a repertoire draws one to consider Richter as a philosopher, dabbling here and there with visual codes and image signifiers. The questions his art raise have a lot to do with freedom of thought in an age of mass reproduction and technological innovation. A splendid show!

John K. Grande

---

**Artistes, amateurs ou professionnels,**
trouveront chez nous une ligne complète de matériaux.

**STEVenson**
**THE COLOUR COMPANY**

Nous manufacturons huiles, acryliques et aquarelles. Nous vendons pinceaux, toiles, etc. Catalogue gratuit.

Placez votre commande par téléphone ou par télecopie et renseignez-vous sur nos rabais.

D.L. STEVENSON & SON
1420 Warden Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1R 5A3
Téléphone: (416) 755-7795 Fax: (416) 755-5895

---

**Au service des sculpteurs depuis plus de 35 ans**

**Artcast inc.**

Au premier rang des fonderies d'art au Canada

Fonte à la cire perdue de bronze, argent, aluminium, étain et acier inoxydable.

Nous offrons une gamme complète de services.

Fabrication et agrandissement de moulés.

UNE FOIS PAR MOIS
Rendez-vous à l'Hôtel Maritime
Tél (905) 877-5455

---

**GALLERY MOOS LTD.**

en permanence

Jean-Paul Riopelle

622 Richmond Street West, Toronto
Ontario M5V 1Y9
Tel.: (416) 504-5445
Fax: (416) 504-5446

Membre de l'Association Professionnelle des Galeries d'Art du Canada