N.B.
SACKVILLE
I FINALLY FOUND SOMEONE WHO REALLY CARES
THE 8TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF PERFORMANCE ART
Owens Art Gallery, Struts Art Gallery, Faucet Media Art Centre

The annual symposium of performance in Sackville has become a significant event since its modest beginnings eight years ago. It is international in scope and encapsulates a full week of activities with three different venues taking part. The lineup of this year's artists included Chris Gran, Calgary; Kirsten Forkert, Vancouver; Robyn Moody, Kingston; Rita McKeough, Halifax and Franklin Sirmans, New York.

Rita McKeough is no stranger to the Sackville area, having taught several years ago in the Department of Fine Arts at Mount Allison University. For this symposium she put together an installation at the Owens titled Outshirts. The audience was invited to interact with the exhibition and the artist throughout the week. This multimedia installation/performance looked at the relationships between the borders of rural and urban life. The title Outshirts refers to that area where city meets country. It is the collision between urdan and rural values that are the core of the work. Audience members drew their own conclusions based on their individual experiences with both the installation and McKeough's performance.

New York City based writer and curator Franklin Sirmans is the organizer of Mass Appeal: The Art Object and Hip Hop Culture, also at the Owens Art Gallery. This multi media exhibition includes the work of twelve emerging and established international visual and media artists influenced by, or engaged with, hip hop culture. The artists are Edgar Arceneaux, Davide Bertocchi, Iona Brown, Jonathan Cahn, William Dapogra, Nicola di Capriolo, Luis Gispert, Nikiki S. Lee, Adrian Piper, Keith Piper, Nadine Robinson, and Kehinde Wiley. While hip hop culture is obviously foreign if not outright exotic to Sackville audiences, it was plainly something that appealed to the mainly university aged audience of the symposium. Popular music and culture are natural subjects for performance and an installation art exhibition like Mass Appeal seems itself as a bridge between the elitist world of the art gallery and that of the street. I would question if Mass Appeal actually has mass appeal to people outside the world of art galleries and university art departments, but if those who attended such exhibitions gained some insight into a subject like hip hop culture, then so much the better.

The problem with any idea of mass appeal in the arts, particularly visual art, is that art is usually in the confines of an art gallery. In spite of many galleries' noble efforts their exhibition spaces are still a foreign place for a lot of people. With that in mind Vancouver's Kirsten Forkert took her performance work on the streets of Sackville. Street theatre has a long tradition much longer than the goth of the 60's. There was in the streets of Europe in the Middle Ages and it connected with its audience. With today's television, movies and internet, street performances have their problems. Artists like Forkert, who take their avant garde art to places where people never visit art galleries, deserve kudos. Forkert is a braver person than I.

The truth is that I am not much of a fan of performance and installation art. These annual symposiums at the Owens Art Gallery and Struts have been wearing me down to the point that I am beginning to enjoy them. The programmers and the artists/participants obviously believe strongly in what they do by introducing new media and looking for new audiences. The Owens Art Gallery and Struts I Finally Found Somebody Who Really Cares was an attempt to go beyond their walls and work with the larger community. I look forward next year's symposium.

Virgil Hammock

CARAQUET
FESTIVAL DES ARTS VISUELS EN ATLANTIQUE
July 2nd to 6th

The latest edition of this Acadian visual arts festival featured a series of sculpture events and installations, and a wide and culturally diverse range of artists. The focus of this year's event was a series of events and installations. Granby-based jean Côté curated the festival, a large scale abstract assemblage that collaged whale vertebrae, rusted iron fragments, and wood onto a maritime map. Quebec's Muriel Faille visited from Lac Brome to present her incredibly light sensitive abstract paintings. French sculptor Antoine Thomas has a large wooden boat, a landmark of last year's EMA, was pulled out of the ocean where it had been and an astonished audience discovered the newly unveiled piece had more resonance and texture from the ocean waters' wear.

For the actual competition, it was the young Acadian artist Alexandre Robichaud who won first prize for his mixed media piece La Souffle des Connaissances Humaines (2005). Moncton artist Georges Blanchette won the newly established Prix Claude Roussel. Claude Roussel's retrospective afforded locals and visitors the opportunity to become better acquainted with the painting and sculpture of this veteran of the Acadian art scene.

Outdoors near the main exhibition space, Jacques Newashish from Wemotaci in northern Quebec created a fascinating environmental interweave of natural materials and painting. Hand painted sticks arranged in groupings pointed to the heavens above. Other tree sections were intended to represent the four human races and native cultures. There were spirit catchers in various places; a collective of natural elements expressed a wish for harmony with nature. At the opening of the event, Newashish had expressed his gratitude to the Acadian organizers for inviting a Native American from Quebec stating: "Mother Earth needs us. We should think of her." André Michel presented a package sculpture using natural forms and materials—posts with rocks perched on top tied together with yellow cord. Armand Vaillancourt contributed a new work titled Le Crépuscule (Fin de Temps). The centrepiece of the assemblage/installation was a light green wooden boat that recalled the fish industry predominant in the region for centuries. Turned to the right, the boat spilled oyster shells onto the surrounding blue hillside and was in the process of emptying (like the ocean's resources). Other sculptures that referenced the industrious history of Acadia's people surrounded this piece and were illuminated at night by eight illuminated torches.

Inside the main building Edward "Ned" Albert Bear carved with butternut and horse hair masts for the public to see the process. Carlos Gomez demonstrated his drum making skills using bear grease, Red Cedar wood from British Columbia, and deer skin. Mario Cyr's hybrid and imaginative art and his bingo events (winner takes a painting home) attracted people of all ages. Michel Martin, René Cyr, Nicole Haché, Tina Rose Bastien, Marcel Boudreau, Sylvie Marc, Georges Gagnon and Bernardo Rosso each added their unique and colourful artworks (and personalities) to the events that ensued. Caraquet native Paul Ouellette's brightly painted unicorns, ships and amazing objects were a total discovery for many. Even some neighbours had never seen his highly original artworks before! Charles LeGresley's installation that was like a sanctuary made of bows and branches of evergreen and cedar. Titled L'étre éphémère (2003) LeGresley's piece, which almost resembled a dancing figure in its entirety, won the Prix du Public for the event. We look forward to next year's EMA with great anticipation!

John K. Grande
CLAUD ROUSSEL INTERVIEWED BY JOHN K. GRANDE

From Folk to Avant Garde and back again

CLAUD ROUSSEL was born in 1930 at EDMUNDSTON, NEW BRUNSWICK. He went on to study art from 1950 to 1956 at L'ÉCOLE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE MONTREAL and was awarded diplomas in Art Professorship and Sculpture. When he returned to his native city, EDMUNDSTON, he became the first artist to teach art in Francophone public schools of the Province. In 1959, he was appointed Assistant curator at The Beaverbrook Art Gallery in Fredericton. In 1961, he was awarded a Canada Council Senior Fellowship that permitted him to visit Europe and work full-time on his art work. In 1963, he became resident artist at L'UNIVERSITÉ DE MONCTON and participated in the establishment of the Visual Arts department, founded an Art Gallery, and was a professor there for 29 years.

Claude Roussel's art has always been accompanied by an intense and varied artistic production that includes permanent architectural and monumental art projects. His career has received various distinctions and medals. In 1964, the Allied Arts Medal from the Royal Garden in Seoul, Korea. In 1977, he was awarded the Claude Roussel Anniversary Medal of Canada; in 1997, the Medal; in 1998, the Art Gallery of Canada. Raymond and Maurice Raymond were very demanding and important to me. I still have quite a few drawings from the time, but all the major paintings and sculptures were kept by the school.

J.G.: Claude, I believe you acquired your basic art skills at a very early age, before any schooling. And many of your subjects came from nature.

C.R.: Horses, birds... The first thing I remember carving was an airplane. Before I did model airplanes, I could not afford to buy them at 10 years old, so I carved the airplane. And from the airplane I went on to carve birds and became more refined. Between age 14 and 16, I carved many race horses. In this mini retrospective, I have 60 years of documented works and photographs. And Dr. Laporte was quite an inspiration.

J.G.: Yes, my parents were impressed by my ability to do things. But Dr. Laporte was instrumental in encouraging me. When he came to our house in Edmundston, I was the oldest of a family of 13 so the doctor came fairly often and he saw the fish carving. Being a wood carver himself, when he saw my interest in art, he enrolled me in a correspondence course in taxidermy which led to mounting various species: fish, rabbit, grouse, deer heads, etc. It kept me close to the anatomy of things. The year after that I knew I should refine my technique in sculpture so I used illustrations of other nature artists and adapted them to carving. But of course gradually, I also felt the need for personal expression which led me to interpret historical and Indian legends.

J.G.: There is already a game going on with the compositional formats...

C.R.: Yes. I was discovering that the importance of art is to be able to create your own designs. Actually The Scalp (1947) which was early as 1947 shows an incredibly intricate capacity and technique in wood carving and this is before going to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. In 1950, I was one of the first one to do the entire decoration for the Church of our Lady of Seven Sorrows in Edmundston from 1953-56. I won a prize in Montreal with the carving Immaculée Conception in 1954, and that was a breakthrough.

J.G.: And who were your favorite teachers?

C.R.: I guess they were all important but Jacques Desmancour, Louis Archambault, Julien Hebert, Armand Filion, Sylvia Daoust and Maurice Raymond were very demanding and important to me. I still have quite a few drawings from the time, but all the major paintings and sculptures were kept by the school.

C.R.: Before doing religious work, I was interested in historical themes. Between naturalistic illustrations and Indian themes, it was mainly the picturesque habitant type of sculpture - the Bourgault style - but I always considered any theme a pretext to do something. I saw the works of the classical Greek and Renaissance sculptors in the encyclopaedia and was striving to be as good as them. I spent a whole winter creating a block of wood (Sculpt) with very small crude tools, and managed to achieve fairly good results. Anatomy always interested me a lot.

J.G.: And at the Ecole des Beaux-arts in Montreal in 1950 was a big step for someone coming from Acadia. Were there any other Acadians there at the time?

C.R.: Not at the same time, but two others came shortly after. There were a few who attended the school before me but they never had the courage to come back to Acadia. When I got there, I spent 6 years developing new techniques and practising creativity in clay modeling sculpture, painting, drawings, etc. The teaching was still fairly traditional at the time. In painting, it was more far out. Alfred Pellan had already been there. The contemporary spirit I learned there stimulated me throughout my career.

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C.R.: At the same time, religious works were the only public art in demand. I paid my studies by working during vacations doing sculpture for twelve churches. I was the first one to do the entire decoration for the whole church including a Way of the Cross and an altar painting for the Church of our Lady of Seven Sorrows in Edmundston from 1953-56. I won a prize in Montreal with the carving Immaculée Conception in 1954, and that was a breakthrough.

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Fishermen in Acadia you made,
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You experimented with new Pollock, with a controUed dripping.
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C.R.: Even if I am not active in social and political movements, because of my natural sensitivity to the human condition, social and political problems, I must react to unacceptable situations to help make people aware of them. From 1971 to 1979, I did many of these works in polyester resins and vacuum forming. This technique consist of heating and dropping serigraphed plastic sheets on a mold. The vacuum causes the form to fit the solid shapes underneath.
F.G.: You were trained with CAR (Canadian Artist’s Representation) early on, and helped improve the facilities for artists in the Moncton community.
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THE LAURENTIANS

LA LIGNE DU NORD

Contemporary Art
in the Laurentians

Ville de Mont-Tremblant,
municipalities of Labelle and St-Faustin-Lac-Carré
Mont-Tremblant and the Domaine Saint-Bernard
August 7th – 31st, 2003

La Ligne du nord saw the realization of permanent and ephemeral sculptures in the Laurentian mountains. As an initiative the project seemed visionary and is an inspiration for public and artists seeking to draw links between nature and contemporary culture. In St. Jovite Catharine Widgery created a mountain-like passage sculpture, Bill Vazan worked under the telecabin at Tremblant incising the rockface in one of the largest pito-megaliths he has ever worked on. Meanwhile Pierre LeBlanc created a steel sculptural homage to David Smith at the train station. Even more remarkable were the contributions from German sculptor Nils-Udo three kilometres into the forest at Domaine St. Bernard, a series of five rectangular caves on a hillside with boulders set in them. A haunting poetic feeling of the primordial power of nature pervades this piece. The French duo of Bruni Babarit created an environmental sketch in a sand pit using plated trees, burned trunks of tree and rocks. The piece was a superb earth sensitive integration. Likewise Roy Staab from the United States created a moebius strip with 3 overlapping circles of maple branches that hovered illusionistically over the waters of a still pond. Ingrid Koivukangas from British Columbia worked at an integration that involved applying birch bark to the exterior of over 60 trees and creating an earth sensitive directional piece. Jeanne Fabi’s forest interior work involved treefelling stretchers laden with cones. The seedlings were placed like patients in the army-like cosis, as if a reminder of the fragility of nature, in an area undergoing monocular plantening and eco-touristic development. Dominique Valade has created a boat and archway sculpture for permanent installation on the Riviere Rouge near Labelle.

What is remarkable about such an initiative is that it causes the public to reassess their relation to the Laurentian landscape in response to the artworks being created in situ. The Laurentians have never had a contemporary art event of this magnitude until this one. Co-ordinated and realized by Dominique Rolland of the Centre des Arts contemporain du Quebec à Montreal this event was a celebration of diversity—both cultural and natural—and merged nature and art in a truly contemporary way. Let’s hope there will be more in the years to come!

John K. Grande

MONTREAL

TOM HOPKINS

Galerie de Bellefeuille
1367, avenue Greene
Tel: 514-933-4406
Fax: 933-6553
art@debellefeuille.com
July 3-15, 2003

Tom Hopkins’ name carries a lot of weight in the local art circles and he has set free many a talented soul from his academic workshops. But it’s not his knack for spotting a budding artist that has made his name famous, it was, and is, his own art. Hopkins’ body of work is impressive and steady, with a predilection for heavily textured surfaces and mythological themes, and scattered amongst them, blossoming from time to time, marvellous delicate monotypes.

As fresh and powerful as Hopkins paintings were once upon a time, they seem to have lost their luster. Oddly, his new works shimmer with luminous light - one thread that weaves through his oeuvre - but it does not make up for the cumbersome rigidity of the forms and composition. The massive figures in Hopkins mythical universe are laden with layers of paint, immobilized by weighty surfaces, frozen in awkwardly foreshortened movements. Drawing his themes from ancient lore is a lofty notion that somehow does not segue easily onto canvas.

Yes, there are figures bathed in light, and cypress-like trees with elegant, elongated trunks, strange cities looming on the horizon, but it is all lost in a cacophony of colour and texture. Hopkins wields his brush with gusto, and is at his best when lost in an abstracted layering of colour patches that take shape intuitively, revealing a world of its own, making rather than conjuring the intellect. There still is a lot of the magic of Hopkins in the latest exhibition of his works at Galerie de Bellefeuille, despite their ponderous bulk. It is in fact in that magnum of paint that his greatest talent hides. Not in the contrived titles and fantastic imaginings, these are not up to Tom Hopkins’s stature. He has the ability to infuse light into the pigment and then paint. It’s a kind of alchemy that produces shimmering endless vistas that appear in many of his works.

The boat series continues, and it really shines in these canvases. The symbolic, stylized vessel hidden in the shadow of the foreground, leaves the stage for the dance of light that shapes the backdrop. This explosion of brilliance culminates on a horizon that recalls J. M. W. Turner’s burning skies that glowed into abstraction. In these paintings, Hopkins streamlines his palette, reaching for bright ochre and yellow that fuse with light into a brilliant tapestry. The only accent is the flash of crimson red of the boat’s prow as it sits quietly moored, half-hidden in darkness. While all that shine and glow seems overridden in the mythological works, in these paintings it is the theme itself.

A more contrived version of the boat symbol comprises a series of bowls whose contents reflect the alien environment that we see in so many of Hopkins’ works. Spirally trees and geometric architectural structures surround this vessel, seemingly in adoration. The sky itself pours a golden light into it as if onto an altar, transforming an otherwise solid composition into a spectacle. Tom Hopkins’ true mastery of the medium is still in full bloom in a series of Caballero paintings, featuring a distant horse and rider. Drawn from some ancient time, the image is wonderfully stylized, the giant trees and faraway walls sculpted of thick paint, giving the work the feel of a roughly textured mural. There is a wonderful fusion of all the elements that make Hopkins’ works such a creative feat. Texture and light merge and meld another, the figurative melds into the abstract and the palette is symphony of colours. No ostentatious symbolisms here, just pure art and the joy of painting.

Dorota Kosinska

Tom Hopkins
Sightline: Cantata, 2003
Huile sur lin
57” x 35”
The shock scenario is alluded to, with unusual growth forms. The future of new landscape of species. It all takes place in a background noise of human intervention and speciﬁstic elasticity.

Nature and human culture impact on these painted landscape scenes.

In Crater (1996), we see a mesh-like grid patterned substance that covers areas of this opening in the earth. The science ﬁction potential of such a scene is imaginative, comparable to Mark Tansey’s paintings, but there is more speculation and ideation in Jeffrey Burns’s subject matter. As Burns states: “It is important that I reveal evidence of past, present or future human civilizations in many of my paintings. I do not have a strong political stance. I seek to raise questions about technology as it is applied in land use and, in more recent works, medicine. I am cautiously optimistic that we are going to make progress in areas of human health and the environment, perhaps using the same technologies that have been responsible for some of the problems.”

Catalysis (1995) reveals the two tendencies that have since become more pronounced in Burns’s informational art. An early industrial building becomes the backdrop for various bizarre bioforms and two geodesic domes; a man with a stick pokes the ground. It is this push and pull, back and forth play with elements of nature and human culture, where the backdrop of transformation could suggest either disaster or potential evolution that takes place in a background noise of new landscape of species. It all takes place in the state of contemporary culture.

The proposition in the latter recent painting is more an afﬁrmation of humanity’s potential to overcome, or at least circumvent with a degree of selective intuition, situations that have arisen from our manipulation of the physical environment. Terrene, Burns’s ﬁrst touring solo show on this planet demonstrates that paintiness is next to godliness... and raises questions about the state of contemporary culture. These are ingenious painterly projections of some future or well hidden micro-cosmic earth-based scenario. Terrene will travel to the Ilnegwuch Kerr Gallery in Calgary, Harcourt House in Edmonton, the Confederation Centre Art Gallery in P.E.I. and the Owens Art Gallery in Sackville, New Brunswick.

Jeffrey Burns’s fabulistic constructed landscape and biomorphic details recall Hieronymus Bosch’s Garden of Earthly Delights, but are more phantasmic painterly constructions like Harbinger (1996-97) which depicts a nest-like appendage and myriad growths, orifices and outgrowths, we are made aware that these scenes are not real, yet they display a kind of natural diversity one might in some hidden micro-cosmic environment under sea or on land.

Twenty years after The Origin of Species ﬁrst appeared in 1859, Darwin’s theory of natural selection and evolution (transformism) had largely been accepted by the scientiﬁc community. Jeffrey Burns’s paintings are anachronistic. They play on and with natural diversity, using hybrid bioforms, and touch on themes of dystopia. In a still life painting like Untitled (1998) there are clues or cues to human civilization such as the button-like, and door knob-like objects that rest like archaeological discoveries adjacent to unusual growth forms. The future shock scenario is alluded to, with traces of the topsy-turvy effects of genetic manipulation, toxic transformation, pollution and evolution, of new landscape of species. It all takes place in a background noise of human intervention and speciﬁstic elasticity.

In this, East coast painter Jeffrey Burns’s ﬁrst curated solo exhibition, nature and culture meet head on. Burns’s fabulistic constructed landscape and biomorphic details recall Hieronymus Bosch’s Garden of Earthly Delights, but are more phantasmic painterly constructions like Harbinger (1996-97) which depicts a nest-like appendage and myriad growths, orifices and outgrowths, we are made aware that these scenes are not real, yet they display a kind of natural diversity one might in some hidden micro-cosmic environment under sea or on land.

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ILEAN SANDLER
DOUBLE STOREY
Toronto Sculpture Garden
115 King St. East
Until September 15th

Chairs are prime design objects and we spend a lot of time in them. They are less often the subject of a major artwork. Ilan Sandler’s Double Storey is super-scale design furniture in an urban landscape: a very visible summer item/object on the King St. East strip. This is not an extraordinary sculpture object, but it is so basic and elemental as to catch our attention. We are reminded of American sculptor Gaos Oldenburg’s oversized Pop art objects, or alternatively European Cesar’s huge thumb sculptures, but this Sandler piece is somehow ironic because it looks temporary, like an icon waiting to be pulled down or taken away, the way so much art in exhibitions, or promotional billboards can now be. Though it is so visual, this sculpture at least looks like a lawn chair, but like a steel and nylon skeletal one. As the diagrammatic character of Double Storey become more apparent on second glance, we see it as an object/idea/re-presentation of a chair, rather than as the actual thing.

Sandler’s chair is an enigma with no prospective promotional or practical purpose but it does conjures up memories of the chair as design object. Gerrit Rietveld and his design movement that endlessly reinvents the chair for each successive generation, even returning to earlier design prototypes at times. This is more a low-tech attempt to be high-tech, while infusing irony into the design debate while ascribing a sculptural intent to the whole effort.

The scale is humorous, but Sandler’s Double Storey chair is also a temporary phenomenon, a visual and vernacular tool/sculpture, and a physical embodiment of something designed for human comfort. This chair enables us to enter into its makeshift framework/structure. We can explore the surrounding space and view around King St. East or the garden itself. Because it is so ordinary, Ilan Sandler’s sculpture presents a somewhat tried and true challenge to our usual notions of what art is or could be. Neither practical nor purely aesthetic, this is an impure purist design statement rendered in a city that thrives on modernist design.

John K. Grande

JAMES GILLRAY
THE LAST LAUGH
Art Gallery of Ontario
317 Dundas St. W.
www.ago.net
To October 12th, 2003

Caricature is a popular art. Among the artists who caricatured the human condition with the popular medium of engraving in the early 19th century, James Gillray (1757-1815) ranked among the best. Thomas Rowlandson and George Cruikshank, likewise active at this time in England, and Henri P.-Francois Godfroy from France were all artists who sought to present court, royal and political controversy in their engravings. The elite did not really suffer as a result of this, but they did get the message. Gillray and his early 19th century caricatures now on view at the AGO have their contemporary equivalents in Polon, Topor to name a few.

This superb exhibition of James Gillray’s satirical art reveals an artist who embodied what later become known as the “golden age” of British caricature at the end of the 18th century. Approximately 30 engravings ridicule royalty and political figures with a ribald and hilarious abandon. James Gillray lampoons the foibles of Georgian society... his engravings get the last laugh, even beyond the grave!

John K. Grande

REGINA
ROB BOS
CHANGING ROOM
Art Projects Gallery
September 1st - October 17, 2003

Rob Bos has made his grief art. By having friends and strangers assume his father’s clothes, he can see and record a range of emotions in others that might rhyme with his own feelings. The photos reveal an array of reactions and performances. Most people look like they are acting a part inspired by the suit and they look very uncomfortable. These suits seems to be wearing the people, not vice versa. As an art gesture, these suits may be a metaphorical riff on “shuffling off our mortal coil.” A memento mori, the installation suggests that it’s not the clothes that make the man. Or is this a melancholy study of how clothes make the person. There is a sadness
VANCOUVER

MASTERS TO HIPSTERS

DRAWING THE WORLD

Vancouver Art Gallery

June 28-September 21, 2003

For the Record: Drawing: Contemporary Life is an ambitious show that brings together international and Canadian artists' drawings. Unfortunately this all inclusive vacuum features a widely varying range and quality of artwork. When you mix quality international artists with earnest regionals, you end up with a show that has no focus, no unity, no intensity. More interesting, Drawing the World: Masters to Hipsters presents a range of media contingent to emphasize that drawing has managed to make work about his father's death without being sentimental or even personal; he leaves these possibilities up to each viewer.

David Garneau

TOM THOMSON AND THE GROUP OF SEVEN


While many Canadian art books that attempt a survey of an era or movement suffer from an overly academic, or alternatively oversimplified overview, David Silcox's The Group of Seven and Tom Thomson gets the right balance between information and attention to the actual art. Silcox's Tom Thomson: The Silence and the Storm co-authored with Harold Town was one of the most successful Canadian art books ever published, just as this popular and enduring Canadian art book will undoubtedly be.

Art books these days usually treat the paintings as fodder for discourse and lose the reader. David Silcox has the skill to imagine an audience and turn his visual experience into words for a general public. Silcox is one of the few Canadian art specialists to achieve that balance between visual description and real in depth understanding of the history he is addressing. He is not a superficial observer of past Canadian myths and he doesn't re-invent the Great Lone Land myth of the Group. Instead Silcox brings it all to life with 123 seldom seen paintings from private collections among the 369 full colour illustrations that are in this book.

Many of these newly published paintings sought out by Silcox from collections across Canada depict humans in a landscape—urban or rural. The proof is there—that the Group of Seven were a lot more contemporary than the myth they perpetrated particularly as they came into being in a post-Cubist era. Divided into ten sections The Group of Seven and Tom Thomson covers little known subjects like Gardens, Still Lifes, and Portraits, The First World War, and Cities, Towns and Villages. Edwin Holgate's Fisherman's Houses resembles American social realist Thomas Hart Benton's paintings, and A. Y. Jackson's colour animated Herring Cove, Nova Scotia (1919) is a truly freeform advanced work of painterly realism for its era, for example. Some of the Lemozine Fitzgerald paintings look better than ever, while Fred Varley still shines.

John K. Grande