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SIGNS: PHOTOGRAPHS
BY PAUL GRIFFIN
Dalhousie Art Gallery
6101 University Ave.
13 August to 3 October 2004
Tel.: 902 494-2403

There are sixteen large borderless black and white photographs mounted on aluminum in this exhibition by Sackville artist Paul Griffin. Fourteen of the works are four by four foot and one is four by six foot while the remaining picture is eight by four foot. The first thing that struck me about this exhibition, other than the size of the works, was the starkness of the photographs. Nonetheless they are very beautiful. This is a modernist exhibition and Griffin is a self-confessed modernist in a postModern world. All the images in the works possess their blank state, they appear more like sculpture rather than a medium for advertising. As well as being a photographer, Paul is also a sculptor and has, in the past, combined his approach to the medium with little confidence in her ability to communicate with the community she lives in. As she states: “Each house represents a person and the sea is our point of origin.”

CARACUET, NEW BRUNSWICK
FESTIVAL DES ARTS VISUELS
EN ATLANTIQUE (FAVA)
June 30th to July 4th, 2004
Carrefour de la mer
Tel.: 506-727-7726

Returning to Acadia in 2004, for its 400th anniversary of settlement, one could hear accordion music outside the main exhibition building beside the harbour just before the event opened. Nearby Quebec native sculptor and artist Jacques Nevashish created an installation over the duration of the event that became an evolving performance. With a central boat form it included spirit catchers, and a forest of brightly painted poles evoking a sense of the sea and its movement.

The latest edition of FAVA in Caraquet had as its theme Blue Architecture which captured notions of the sea and habitat. A wide range of works were presented this year including installation, painting, and sculpture. This year’s invited artist was Pokemouche born Donald McGraw. His exhibition comprised a series of portraits of native Chiefs in full regalia and headdresses, in natural settings. Carole Bherer built an installation that utilized the basic shape of a habitation, and arranged a series of cut-out wood shapes that rose and fell like a wave in motion. Painted in bright whimsical colours, each “structure” in this composite sculpture had a xylophone note attached. Carole Bherer’s sculpture/installation could thus be played, interacted with by visitors to the event.

Bherer’s art has continuously presented an awareness of our place in nature, of the elements, and of the strong links between identity and the landscape with a subtle and simple confidence in her ability to communicate with the community she lives in. As she states: “Each house represents a person and the sea is our point of origin.”

Caraquet native Paul Ouellette presented an incredible range of his sculptures he has been making for a strange dignity. An example is four, the largest work in the exhibition, which is a night shot of four identical white painted blank signs in a row. They do resemble a minimalist sculpture installation – pure starkness against the night sky. I know where this photograph was taken. It was on a road into Amherst, Nova Scotia, a neighbouring town just across the border from Sackville, New Brunswick. These four signs have now received commercial messages and have gone from being majestic icons to just other boring, and intrusive, signs. Of course, to quote Marshall McLuhan: “The Medium is the Message” and the purpose of roadside signs are to sell something or, at the very least, to give information.

You could give Griffin’s pictures a postModern reading such as the failure of Capitalism to get its message across or the failure of language itself, but to do so would be to miss the artist’s intent — to create through his art something beautiful that transcends the humble origins of his subject matter. Griffin shot these photographs over a six year period, though the sixteen pictures in Signs are all dated 2004 which is the year that these pieces were printed. The images of view comprise a small part of the hundreds of pictures that Paul Griffin has taken for this project. He could take other images from the project and produce another exhibition that would be a very different reading on the idea of signs.

The photographs in this exhibition are what I call straight photographs in that they employ a purist approach to the medium with little cropping of the images and virtually no, if any, manipulation of the image during printing. Toronto photographer Robin Colliver, mentioned in the exhibition catalogue essay by Robert Bown, digitally removes texts from signs in his photographs of the urban landscape a very post Modern contrast to Paul Griffin’s approach to signs in photography. Griffin identifies with abstract expressionist and minimalist artists such as Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman neither of whom are photographers. He shares their vision but not their medium. That vision uses minimal means to achieve maximal effect. An effort is required by viewers to understand the intent of the artists. This means, in the case of Griffin’s photographs, that the viewer has to go beyond the content of the pictures and respond to the beauty of the images.

There are many strong images in this exhibition, I particularly like black triangle which is an image of the back a small triangular sign beside a highway and black and cedars which is a picture of a large blacked out sign amidst a small grove of cedars. The photographs in Signs are interesting works presented in an unusual way. They deserve to be seen outside of the Caraquet area. Hopefully this exhibition will travel to other venues in the near future.

Virgil Hammock

There are sixteen large borderless black and white photographs mounted in this exhibition by Sackville artist Paul Griffin. Fourteen of the works are four by four foot and one is four by six foot while the remaining picture is eight by four foot. The first thing that struck me about this exhibition, other than the size of the works, was the starkness of the photographs. Nonetheless they are very beautiful. This is a modernist exhibition and Griffin is a self-confessed modernist in a postModern world. All the photographs in this exhibition are of roadside signs. The signs are, for one reason or another, devoid of text, blank, mute, nude of any reason for being there. However, in their blank state, they appear more like sculpture rather than a medium for advertising. As well as being a photographer, Paul is also a sculptor and has, in the past, combined the two mediums.

The artist has photographed three kinds of signs; one is signs that have yet to receive text, two, signs where the text is covered by a wrap prior to being unveiled and, thirdly, signs where the message has been painted over or simply worn away. As well, there are a couple of images of the back side of some signs. All the images in the works possess a strange dignity. An example is four, the largest work in the exhibition, which is a night shot of four identical white painted blank signs in a row. They do resemble a minimalist sculpture installation – pure starkness against the night sky. I know where this photograph was taken. It was on a road into Amherst, Nova Scotia, a neighbouring town just across the border from Sackville, New Brunswick. These four signs have now received commercial messages and have gone from being majestic icons to just other boring, and intrusive, signs. Of course, to quote Marshall McLuhan: “The Medium is the Message” and the purpose of roadside signs are to sell something or, at the very least, to give information.

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over 5 years now; carved assemblages, drawings and multi-media paintings with objects and elements found along the shoreline near his home. Always lively, some are boats, racing cars, others people, historic or marine events. Ouellette's imagination is as large as the world and from another time. Marielle Poitier presented a heart-shaped sculpture installation in the central space of the event that included elements from the immediate region such as huge recycled timbers from a former blacksmith's shop. Michel Marin constructed a structure using blue tarpaulin, and balloons taking the theme quite literally. Jean Côté produced some unusual spontaneous multi-media assemblage paintings using found objects, and painterly abstraction. Luc Robichaud made an installation called A l'ombre des Iris with its pickets and allusions to the iris, a flower that symbolizes la francophonie, the Caraquet work continued a piece of pinks and yellows against her presence in this region and their visible faces at the bottom of some of the paintings, an emergence of features, a hint of a personality. Those are adult bodies. This makes their position and nakedness all the more symbolic. The pictorial, plastic quality of Despins, paintings is flawless, as is the complex, subtle play of colours on the stretched skin of the models. It accentuates the lifelike, tactile texture of the body, the flawless, as is the complex, subtle tactile quality of Despins, paintings is to the medium. Art is a hard taskmaster. Despins will exhibit at the Edward Day Gallery in Toronto in April 2005.

MONTREAL

Scott MacLeod: The Lachine Canal Past and Present
to November 30th
Maxwell Building Annex:
McAslan Brewery
5060 Rue St. Ambroise
Tel.: 939-3060

Scott MacLeod's show and recalls art of the 1920s and 1930s with its nostalgia for the industrial era. The buildings, bridges, cranes, doves, and boats depicted in MacLeod's art express something of how vital a part of life the Lachine canal was for Montrealers and Canadians in general.

A source of hydraulic power this industrial corridor was one of the main manufacturing production centres in Canada from the mid-19th century to Second World War, the Canal will change rapidly over the next 20 years as the City of Montreal redevelops its waterfront areas into housing, loft, and recreation areas with walking and bicycle paths and boating along its waterfront.

Industrial architecture with a past history, a living museum in the present, the canal carries all the traces and markings of its past with a quiet majesty. How often do artists document places like this these
Canal with its coal Derricks, Coleco
The paintings and sketches in this fully will engender further cultural Buildings or "Jackknife Bridge" Sugar Northern Electric and Corti-
Some subjects such as the Redpath and in another painting a boat sits in Lock No. 5 lit up by night lights. Some subjects such as the Redpath Sugar Northern Electric and Corti-
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motors alternative artists.

GEZA HERMANN:
FLOWER MEDITATIONS

Having worked for over 30 years as a landscape designer, Geza Hermann is quite familiar with nature as his medium but usually it is a three-dimensional, physical entity. There is no question that and in the landscape inspired this new series of works. The Flower Mediations comprise a lively series of ink and watercolour sketches and larger scale paintings. These works are bright, evocative, calligraphic. They provoke a sense of being in the here and now in the viewer. The fluid lines and colours capture, as a painterly process, the fleeting nature of life itself. Beauty is distilled in a very minimal way down to a few lines and bright colorations. Infused with a sense of light and colour, always in momentary transition, these paintings vary from small to very large in size. Their spirit is as ephemeral as life.

Geza Hermann's first solo in Montreal in years signals a new interest by Montreal galleries such as Clair Obscur in home grown local talent. As Hermann comments: "My experience as a landscape designer, my interest in sculpture and experiments in painting have all come together. These influences impact the subjects and materials I have chosen for my paintings over the years. The new body of work first appeared in the Spring of 2004, out of a need to simplify and to create (that which was wishing to reveal itself), without any reference to anything specific, but the act of painting beginning from a quiet mind, starting from stillness. What evolved

Chris Dyer's youth and energy hold were archetypal flower and plant-like entities on paper or canvas, growing and transforming with each daily meditation."

CHRIS DYER: METAPHYSICAL
BOARDING VISIONARY SKATE ART
Zeke's Gallery
Sept. 9th to October 10th
3956 boulevard Saint-Laurent

Zekes Gallery is an ad-
venturous space that pro-
motes alternative artists. Well removed from the heavy handed art world its energy resembles a New York gallery reminiscent of the eighties when graffiti art was at its apogee. Chris Dyer's works on skateboards (without wheels) are sheer explosions of poetic wit and psychedelic colour helped along by an attitude of willful joy and celebration. Compared with much of what is going on now in alternative art, these works are a timely kick in the pants to a scene somewhat paralyzed by an unhealthy fetish for death and negation.

Without the wheels, the skateboards appear like time capsules of the artist's personal experiences and fantasies. Some of these pieces function simply as decorative work done in explosively bright colours, but the best incorporate collage, poem and paint together in a frenzy of image and text. In Memory of Mexican Visual Chronicles has small seashells that adorn a skateboard above an ink drawing of an old man (resembling Don Juan Matus, the shaman in Carlos Castenadas novels) while beneath we can see a panoramic representation of people partying by a beach with Mexican temples in the distance. We can read "This piece in memory of the skateboard I took hitchhiking through a month in Mexico. This visual chord was stolen from a show I had at the Le Swimming so if you ever see it anywhere please let me know. Thanx", written beneath the imagery. At only 24 years old, Dyer can hardly be expected to connect with the beat movement of the 1950s, yet his reach for the stars in terms of his sheer exuberant production far exceeds most poetic excursions seen since that era, and his celebratory spirit worked together. Not that

days? Scott Macleod is one of the few who do, and his oil and graphite works capture a feeling of past industrial grandeur in the present. The paintings and sketches in this show range from a Railway Bridge to the Five Roses Flour Mill building. An old iron bridge becomes a sublime piece of sculpture while a 75 ton Floating Crane used to unload goods stands starkly against the sky. The Canadian Pacific Railway Bridge is pure beautiful engineering and in another painting a boat sits in Lock No. 5 lit up by night lights. Some subjects such as the Redpath Sugar Northern Electric and Corti-
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images as monuments serve to remind us that if we do not remain conscious and open we miss these moments. All we really have is "now"... These images intend to remember in the way that we erect monuments in the Jewish faith to those that have passed "so as not to forget."

Ilania Abileah

OTTAWA

PHIL BERGERSON

SHARDS OF AMERICA

Sept. 9th, 2004 – Jan. 9th, 2005
Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography
1 Rideau Canal
Tel.: 613-990-8257
www.cmcp.gallery.ca

Phil Bergerson’s photographs, witnessed in this retrospective, reflect, as all great photography has done, the real world. Even more than this, as great photography has done, Bergerson interprets the world. The many fragments of reality witnessed in these photographs are very much in the tradition of Lee Friedlander, or Robert Walker. The difference, or distinction between Bergerson and others, is that he delights in the fragment, the tiny detail, for and if itself. Indeed, his photography could be read as an accurate reflection of a culture built on distraction, where the parts do not add up to a complete whole, but instead are enigmatic and coincidental visual layers.

In New York, New York (2001), a window display Barbie-type doll is draped in the American flag and stands Marilyn Monroe-like in front of an American flag that is the backdrop. The quirky and sometimes chaotic contrasting of messages (an iconoclastic controversy if ever there was one) can be seen in the collaged doorway image of naughty frolicking playmates in undies, next to a more composite and serene Jesus Christ. The style of representation is not that different!

These photos capture fragments of the everyday, and are the result of a 10 year odyssey by this Canadian photographer, and Phil Bergerson does not capture reality, but reads it visually as a synchronous environment of collaging and contrasting images. A LOANS sign on a window contrasts a picture of Jesus in The Last Supper, while a Sale sticker reads $249.00. The pale blue tile, window frame and sunlight bring a real life character to it all. Reflections on a window, white underwear and the incongruous RIJOICE packaging suggest that if this is not Baptist country, God is in the product.

The often overlooked, seldom noticed, state of contemporary culture is what Phil Bergerson feeds on visually in this fun show. As he states he is "sifting through the remains of a civilization, the quirky remains of North American’s cultural legacy... the display-maker, sign-maker, or object-maker produces his presentations without knowing the ironic or ambiguous nature of what he presents." If these photos indeed record "mixed messages" they are likewise informational, the result of a search that revealed an incredible range of "metaphorical possibilities". With enthusiasm, and an honest eye, Phil Bergerson is nothing if not human.

John K. Grande
TORONTO

MODIGLIANI: BEYOND THE MYTH

Art Gallery of Ontario
October 23, 2004 – January 23, 2005
317 Dundas Street West
Toronto M5T 1G4
Tel: 416-979-6660 x403
Fax: 416-204-2713

Art Gallery of Ontario
Toronto M5T 1G4

The paintings have a quality of light and reduce colour to a few variables within a single composition. The elongated features, so characteristic of the faces Modigliani painted are appealing. Among the more memorable are Madame Pompadour, Pierre Reverdy, Paul Guillaume, Jean Cocteau and Max Jacob. The elegantly attired Leopold Zborowski with Lottus Czechowska (La femme a levant) draw out the personality while rendering them timeless, eternal.

Being a foreigner and Sephardic Jew in Paris made life difficult for Modigliani. Many of the most enjoyable works in this show, ironically are the less well preserved sketches in oil, ink or pencil on paper or cardboard. They give a sense of the bohemian way of life, of the model or patron, and the way Modigliani worked through an idea on paper, further simplifying or reducing the elements until the simple model begins to look like a universal symbol, a goddess. The stylization likewise works with the limestone busts of which there are several in the A.G.O. venue for the show.

As with Picasso or Brancusi, one senses the influence of primitive art—notably Egyptian, Cycladic, African and Early Christian—in Modigliani’s sculpture although he had studied the sculptures of Andrea del Verrocchio, Michelangelo and the 15th century Sienese artist Tino di Camaino before the legendary fourteen years in Paris.

Modigliani hybridized the influences in his remarkable Caryatids (1912-14). These sculptures of female figures recreate the notion of a sculpture being a practical support within an architecture. They are essentially vertical. In Mason Klein’s catalogue essay Modigliani Against the Grain much ink is spent explaining Modigliani’s unique Italian Sephardic Jewish background, and how culturally enriched, steeped in humanistic ideals and enlightened Jewish thinking the cosmopolitan setting of Livorno where Modigliani grew up was. Marc Chagall or other Jewish artists’ were simply looking on, the animals and peoples in Morrow’s own words a “reaction to feelings of frustration and powerlessness relating to our climate of violence. It was also born from awe, at life’s potential for incredible and beautiful physical extremes.” Influenced by Polish painter Jan Matejko’s historical canvas King Jan Sobieski’s Relief of the Siege of Vienna (1879), Large War Painting, is an apotesis of history with multiple views and cropped cinematic views, a cornucopia of personalities and figures drawn from various historical, geographical and cultural time periods. Whether Sudan wrestlers, armed chariots or World War 1 soldiers in gas masks, these humans live and fight uneasily together in the same paintings. Absurd and witty, Large War Painting witnesses athletes, an Indian chief, eagles, a rhinoceros, cobra snake, a wolf, and young alluring women. Amid assorted birds of prey, police in riot gear seek to control this allegorical and personal painted view of history. The atmosphere is infused with a sense of endless competition between people, and war permeates it all.

Through we may read of history in books, Morrow’s message is that the human condition, the people, and natural history that collectively make up history and indeed inhabit this canvas as fragments are an accumulation of absurdity, not at all pure. The smaller Detail from Unrealized War Painting works feature in a tiny mock painted format such cropped elemental images as a rider and horse, an athlete, a helmeted football player. These paintings witness a series of simultaneous perspectives not unlike the war images are cropped, edited in films these days. As Morrow comments “Through the combination of various viewpoints and the manipulation of classical perspective, seemingly impossible spatial situations are made coherent and understandable” Horizontal War Painting (2004) has a central division with two opposing “armies” of people, events on either side. The subjects in Morrow’s new paintings range from galloping jockeys to battling dinosaurs and the armies could as well be animals as humans. These people and animals are Charles Darwin’s legacy. They fight
willfully whether the sport is athletics or militaristic expansion. Many historical and media moments are brought together in a single painting. These paintings are as much about the prevalence of violence in today's media and culture, the sound bites and video clips we all know so well, as they are about the fictional character of history, and how one-sided history can be. For the way he neutralizes the colour scale, reduces it to oranges, pale yellows and monochrome, giving it that Mark Tansey-like quality, Morrow is definitely a painter to watch. Morrow's fictions are like an autobiography of the human experience. Sometimes, this leads to compositions that echo product shoots, like those in Martha Stewart's magazine: bright, colourful and pretty arrangements against blurry backgrounds. Light Lunch, for example, features a tasteful ensemble of high and low items (silverware next to a Walmart-style mug) that resonate with Stewart's sense of "good things."

The images are mostly of raw cooking, cooked and preserved foods set in familiar, rather generic, middle-class rooms and patios with few personal signs. There seems to be an effort to evoke a general sight rather than a sense of Pratt's individual experience. Sometimes, this leads to compositions that echo product shoots, like those in Martha Stewart's magazine: bright, colourful and pretty arrangements against blurry backgrounds. Light Lunch, for example, features a tasteful ensemble of high and low items (silverware next to a Walmart-style mug) that resonate with Stewart's sense of "good things."

The provocative and seemingly autobiographical edge of Pratt's earlier works is not here (unless the artist simply is intensely happy, and why not?). This show is about pleasure and pleasure. And while there are some moments of awkward painting -- a strangely floating tray in Sunday Dinner, for example, there are enough delights to warm the heart of all but the most jaded. Pomegranate and a Knife, a painting with its knife angled like a Dutch still-life painting seems to poke fun at that cliché tradition while embracing its finer points. Poppyseed Cake Glazed for Café Lyso is a gem. Some of the compositions feel mediated by the camera and advertising, while others bring us through the lens and eye to the sensibility of the artist and the objects she contemplates.

The real surprise of this exhibition is the curator's decision to show the artist's work; that is, the work that goes into making her prints. The still life B. C. Delicious is shown as line a drawing and in eleven printing states. The viewer has the chance to see the final image slowly come into being as each inked woodcut adds its nearly imperceptible contribution. We see the craft and sweat behind what appears to be a modest effort.

This educational display goes further with the display of the forty woodcuts that went into making A Cleanse of Grapes on Garnet Glass. The grid of maple panels, carved by Masato Arikushi, with their blooms of rich pigment, like abstract paintings. These panels are never made available to the public. They are normally destroyed because they are not as art as they are meant to be, but not as art in themselves. Their inclusion is like the magician revealing his tricks. Except there is no disappointment here. The craft behind the art has its own beauty. Seeing the amount of skilled work that goes into the finished prints will be a revelation for many. As Mary Pratt approaches her Seventieth year, she continues to both surprise and make us feel right at home.

David Garneau

REGINA

MARY PRATT: SIMPLE BLISS
Mackenzie Art Gallery
August 28th – December 5th
T.C. Douglas Building
3475 Albert Street
Tel: (306) 564-4250/Fax: 569-8191
mackenzie@uregina.ca

Mary Pratt, the master of domestic photo-realistic painting, is most closely associated with chilly chickens on a windowsill, luminous and sharply rendered bowls of fruit, and an affection for the sensual stretch of plastic wrap and the aggressive fragility of sinewy tinfoil. Her iconic work's bright and honey surface often hinted of darker personal narratives. Feminist critics of a quarter century ago saw an elevation of women's domestic work in these kitchen table balladettes. A few went so far as to see rape in her Eviscerated Chickens. But most of her images, as the Mackenzie's Simple Bliss textiles, do not write with political subtext but are about the pleasures of good food and a good home.

The provocative and seemingly autobiographical edge of Pratt's earlier works is not here (unless the artist simply is intensely happy, and why not?). This show is about pleasure and pleasure. And while there are some moments of awkward painting -- a strangely floating tray in Sunday Dinner, for example, there are enough delights to warm the heart of all but the most jaded. Pomegranate and a Knife, a painting with its knife angled like a Dutch still-life painting seems to poke fun at that cliché tradition while embracing its finer points. Poppyseed Cake Glazed for Café Lyso is a gem. Some of the compositions feel mediated by the camera and advertising, while others bring us through the lens and eye to the sensibility of the artist and the objects she contemplates.

The real surprise of this exhibition is the curator's decision to show the artist's work; that is, the work that goes into making her prints. The still life B. C. Delicious is shown as line a drawing and in eleven printing states. The viewer has the chance to see the final image slowly come into being as each inked woodcut adds its nearly imperceptible contribution. We see the craft and sweat behind what appears to be a modest effort.

This educational display goes further with the display of the forty woodcuts that went into making A Cleanse of Grapes on Garnet Glass. The grid of maple panels, carved by Masato Arikushi, with their blooms of rich pigment, like abstract paintings. These panels are never made available to the public. They are normally destroyed because they are not as art as they are meant to be, but not as art in themselves. Their inclusion is like the magician revealing his tricks. Except there is no disappointment here. The craft behind the art has its own beauty. Seeing the amount of skilled work that goes into the finished prints will be a revelation for many. As Mary Pratt approaches her Seventieth year, she continues to both surprise and make us feel right at home.

David Garneau

NEW YORK

Whitney Museum of American Art
ANA MENDETT: EARTH BODY, SCULPTURE AND PERFORMANCE 1972-1985
July 1 - Sept. 9th
Washington DC
HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN

A pioneer of art that identifies femininity with the earth, Ana Mendieta has finally acquired the mark of recognition that she deserves with this major retrospective by the Whitney. This show particularly establishes the links between Mendieta's sculpture and performance art. Comparisons are drawn between her art and that of many early women artists who later received recognition such as Marin, Abramovic, Carolee Schneeman, Rebecca Horn, and others were, Mendieta developed her own language that had as much to do with the female body as it did to do with Mother Earth. As witnessed in this remarkable exhibition -- identifying with the earth as both material and medium offers up an infinite and variable potential to the contemporary artist.

Prior to her untimely death Ana Mendieta, a Cuban-American exile used her body to create images in the landscape that identified with nature's procreative energies. Her early performances like Image from Yagul (1973) seem to owe some debt to Frida Kahlo but it has been said she drew on Afro-Cuban and Taino (American Indian) ritual traditions, reinterpreting them and rephrasing their original meaning to reflect her own vision. The Silueta series involved silhouettes of her own body. The forms...
MEXIQUE

DAVID SORENSEN:
HORIZON SERIES
Sept. 11 to Oct. 6th
Galería Vertice
Lerdo de Tejada 2418
Tel.: 6150078/6150742
Guanajuato, Mexico
Musée del Pueblo de Guanajuato

Light and color again become central to David Sorensen's latest series of paintings. These works are simultaneously a return to a formal geometry and compositional concern, and yet they are likewise more evolved and often work on and with a horizon line. They can be read as abstract landscapes or alternatively as abstract formal compositions. There is a play with dark linear meeting points between the colours and textures, and an emphatic use of brushwork in the sky areas. A certain density and structure in the overall composition reminds one of Nicholas de Staël but the colours are warm and southern. It also creates a sense that these are not purely static formal exercises, but that there is a broader open sense of gesture. Artists that come to mind as influences... Diebenkorn, Hoffman, and Rothko.

MONTREAL

MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES:
THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF EDWARD BURTYNSKY
Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
October 8th – January 9th, 2005.

Some words:
JG: A stunning series you have done that is likewise sculptural is your Densified Scrap Metal photos from Hamilton, Ontario. We are looking at compacted cubes of metal, but they are so varied and colorful, your photos capture the art in the everyday like abstract expressionism meets the ready-made. This is conceptual sculpture made with entropy built into it.

EB: When I first began the series it was more like a pure documentary project, but as I worked through the process, I noticed that at certain distances, the objects' usage remained apparent, an oil drum or a filter... yet it also resonated with an abstract quality that made an intriguing visual statement as well, without losing site of its origins.

JG: There is an irony to the Shipbreaking series, the Mines sites, and the Densified Scrap Metal series that is interesting for its duality. You are dealing with various aspects of a highly evolved consumer society, where economies of scale work at both ends of the spectrum — production and detritus.

EB: Definitely there is a sense of irony. I am interested in rethinking notions of the sublime in contemporary aesthetics, whereas in the history of art, the sublime used to be associated with nature.