English Reports

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See table of contents

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ANRZEJ WROBLEWSKI
Retrospective

WAR CONTINUES TO BE A FACT OF LIFE AND, FROM Goya TO BOTERO, ARTISTS CONTINUE TO DENOUNCE ITS INHUMANITY AND DEVASTATION, ITS TERRIBLE SYMBOLISM UNCHANGED.

An exhibition of a wartime Polish artist at the Muzeum Narodowe in Warsaw is a poignant reminder of how little has changed, and of the timeless, evocative power of art.

Andrzej Wroblewski (1927–1957) is an iconic figure in the history of Polish art. A romantic hero, whose premature and mysterious death before the age of 30 etched his name forever onto its pages, he remains strikingly contemporary, both in his subject matter—alas!—and style.

Before disappearing while on a solitary hike through the Tatra Mountains, Wroblewski managed to produce an astounding and diverse body of work, changing his style drastically in the process and breaking the path for a new generation of Polish artists.

His works were also greatly influenced by revolutionary Mexican art, and later on, the cinema. The Warsaw exhibition, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Wroblewski's death, features a projection of Federico Fellini's seminal film "La Strada", whose character of the strongman Zampano is portrayed in a series of colourful, modernistic gouaches.

Wroblewski's most remembered and to this day controversial images come from the series Rozstrzelania (execution by gunfire), painted when he was a 20-year-old student at the Art Academy of Cracow.

Haunting, gut-wrenching, they were a visceral response to the horror of WWII and the occupation of Poland. He wrote at the time, that he wanted to create paintings "unpleasant as the stench of a corpse". The result are terrible, moving images equal in their emotional impact to Picasso's Guernica, or Goya's paintings of the execution of Spanish patriots by Napoleon's troops, The Third of May.

Heartbreaking scenes of people dying or just about to die, broken bodies, faces frozen in pain are executed in a modern, minimalist style. With an economy of colour, Wroblewski manages to transmit the wrenching horror of these final moments; the blue of the falling body, ever so briefly suspended between life and death, is icy cold and the ashen grey of the man still standing has the texture of fear.

The faces are almost featureless, the bodies reduced at times to silhouettes, and the overwhelming tension inherent in these works lies in the merciless static composition, from which we cannot avert our eyes, in the surreal assemblage of bodies twisted upside down in the throes of death, their shadow staining the wall where they just stood.

They form a macabre pantheon, the living holding hands with the dead, the young and the old, the artist spares us nothing, offers no solace. Wroblewski's art cries out in a voice that still reverberates today, from Africa to the Middle East, where bodies of falling civilians continue to leave silent shadows on nameless walls.

His death came at a time of great changes in international contemporary art, particularly in Britain and the US with the emergence of pop-art, and one cannot help but wonder what turn his career would have taken, and where his artistic explorations may have led this fascinating artist.

Dorota Kozinska

March 9–May 6, 2007
Warsaw National Museum
Al. Jerozolimskie 3
Warsaw, Poland
www.mnw.art.pl

Andrzej Wroblewski, Rozstrzelanie Surrealistyczne
Courtesy: Warsaw National Museum

Andrzej Wroblewski, Rozstrzelanie Surrealistyczne
Courtesy: Warsaw National Museum
REGINA

CANON FODDER: LOOKING AT LANDSCAPE
AN ARTISTIC INTERVENTION
BY SEEMA GOEL

April 7—September 9, 2007
Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan

Art historians have long noted the absence of Aboriginal people in Canadian paintings from the expansionist era. Such images suggest to potential settlers that the land is uninhabited and ready for claiming and cultivation. With this in mind, I found myself looking for other signs of hovering human life. While people are absent in the paintings they are present in their making. Each painting displays a point of view, an artist before a scene. Some seem to be saying, “I am the first one here to see this as worthy of depiction.” Others seem lost before the un-picturesque vastness, recording but insecure.

Goel's audio benches are ironic reminders of the artificiality of landscapes, but by resiting us before the paintings, they also position us like the artists. So composed, I found myself empathising with their projects. Some are just knocking-off souvenirs and finding home (Britain and Ontario) out west. A few seem freed by the Praire to abandon the English lake-country picturesque formula (foreground foliage giving way to mid-ground water backed by trees or a fringe of mountains topped by clouds) and invent their own conceptions. Tanabe finds a rhyme with the flat signs of hovering human life. While Inuit prints are about living the land without people, often, like Pootagook’s Hunter’s Signal, the artists are not just making aesthetic objects but are passing along cultural knowledge.

Regina’s Mackenzie Art Gallery recently invited Seema Goel to create an artistic/curatorial work with their collection. In her foray in the vault, she noticed that Euro-Canadian artists often depict the land without people while Inuit prints. In front of these are four twelve landscape paintings by Canadian artists often depict the land without people while Inuit prints. In front of these are forty-two landscape paintings of the Mackenzie’s eight galleries. The presentation and production of these photo documents and visual games follows a diagrammatic, conceptual stream, something shared by an另行输出:...
full lifestyle finds its expression in his paintings. Bizarre compositions
and strange characters are his forte and he sets up the viewer for a
unique visual experience with an ironic wink. Mannequins and wild
dogs, desert vistas and alligators, mysterious goings on confuse
and entertain. The titles are no help but are just as much fun: The
Botanist's Dream, Still life with no Exceptions, The Elegant Syllagism.

A contemporary surrealist, David has created his own fantastical
universe where inanimate objects come alive in odd, unfamiliar
settings testing our perception of reality.

A very different frisson runs through the work of Toronto artist
James Huctwith. With echoes of another contemporary Canadian
painter of homoerotic themes, Attila Lukacs, his art is the closest
in subject matter to the title of the exhibition. Greek myths are retold
in a contemporary context and with undeniably modern players:
leather clad as well as nude young men engaged in symbolic re-enactments,
with the artist himself serving as model in several scenes.

Huctwith's compositions are theatrical and at times disconcertingly
monumental, where his powerful imagination surpasses his
technique. Borrowing from the Renaissance, the artist attempts works
on a grand scale, a dangerous proposition without adequate mastery
of the plastic demands of such tableaux. Not a Caravaggio yet,
Huctwith has enough audacity and talent to one day accomplish what
his creative soul dictates. In the meantime, his paintings provide
enough energy and visual stimulation to attract and hold our attention.

As if saving the best for last, the third room of this spacious
gallery belongs to Montreal artist Daniel Barkley, a hugely
talented and accomplished painter. Barely into his forties, he has produced
a large body of work, creating in the process a uniquely symbolic
universe.

Continually redefining and refining his personal mythology, he draws
the viewer into a monochromatic, mysterious paysage where silent
processions move imperceptibly across the horizon and solemn children sit
on enormous wooden horses.

Barclay has diluted his palette and
diffused the light, adding new players
to the now-familiar figures. There is
the old man and the youth, the
symbolic boat forever marooned or just
about to set off into the still waters.

His characters, although con-
temporary, recognizable, are cast in
symbolic roles, intriguing in their
mystery and stillness, leaving the
viewer longing for some word, a
sound, an explanation. We have to
be content instead with the visual
magic of these enigmatic sagas.

Barclay's acrylic paintings seduce with
their texture, cool and smooth like
beach pebbles, and the translucent,
etereal light that permeates them.

Dorota Kozinska

Montreal

Alan McKee & Dennis Jones
Galerie d'Este
1329 ave. Greene
Tel: 514 846-1515
www.galeriedeste.com

Alan McKee's large photographic prints on archival paper
table graphic design and playfully in-
vvent, and build illusory paradigms
in what looks like three dimen-
sional space. As visual icons they
look like strange hieroglyphics—
all done with real visual elements
documented through photography
in nature: ferns, flowers, grasses,
twigs, earth. These works are built
by the artist on his computer and

Karin Davie
In the Studio Around 1993 (photo piece)

earlier generation of American artists such as Alan Kaprow and
John Baldessari, or even NE Thing Co. from Canada. The conceptually
oriented event documents show Davie trying to work out and see
how some ideas fit as artform (and this, long after the Mothers of In-
vention went into geriatric retirement). The earlier In Out In Out
series play on and with Op art in-
enabled us to read Karin Davie's

These works visually draw one
in, and play on the duality of pattern
and accident simultaneously. The
more celebrated Chinatownblues
works are tubular sensual synconic
and take the objectness out of pop.
There's a post-snap, post-crackle
and post-Pop to Karen Davie's
Underworld show. The distortion,
extension, interlocking flow of fluid
forms, is visceral, very real. This
art exists in real space and time, as
a physical visual presence. And so
this is straight on work, not an escapist's
dream, a painting that describes, in
its own way, the language of our
hyperbolic world, a world where
images are there to be consumed,
and that we read rapidly like fast
magazines, our heels at the ready
for the next image. But it is a sexy,
attractive, colourful world too. This
abundance of the concrete painterly
tactility is a visual vernacular that
enables us to read Karin Davie's work as design, as fabric for a fu-
ture world. It's a passion play for
our times. This is the way Davie
makes it, the way Davie paints it.

John K. Grande
As process these works involve a sophisticated understanding of today's image editing procedures, digital photographic processes and basic composition. Each of McKee's artworks carries a potential universe within. The layers of meaning, are intricate, iconoclastic, and maintain a simple, yet direct approach to the world we are part of.

McKee's highly individuated mind builds intricate interweavings of nature and architectural structure out of the visual. They recombine the visible in a very textual way. The grammar of this imagery is ultimately built in the same intricate, yet logical way that ancient scripts might have been, where the response is to the physicality of the structure, and the perceptual response we might have to it, as much as the content inherent to a given text. The two go hand in hand—visual and verbal—and are one and the same thing. The medium might be in the message but the symbolism is likewise in the layering and structuring when it comes to Alan McKee's art form. Pulled from reality, the art becomes a part of some greater intuited reality. The sublime sense that accompanies the inherent beauty in these highly crafted artforms rests upon an acute sense that art is an illusionistic process—part fact, part fiction.

Accompanying Alan McKee's show is another exhibition of Dennis Jones, one of Montreal's most gifted but likewise hidden artists, who has been working consistently for decades. Galerie d'Esté should be commended for bringing his work to the public. Jones' part abstract, part figurative assemblages, collages, paintings and etchings bring together a language that stems from, and drew its inspiration in, the great abstract movements of the 1950s. But Jones is an outsider of sorts, as much influenced by Asian art as by Western abstraction. What is unusual in Jones' art is the sensitivity to coloration, texture, and an aura of light that infuses his work. So sensitive a way of working with abstraction, something seldom seen of Dennis Jones' generation. Jones' artworks are less about the gesture than involved in the total atmosphere that infuses a subject he chooses to address in such a visually tactile and expressive way. John K. Grande

Architecture, like any art form, influences and inspires other kinds of visual expression.

An exhibition of two contemporary artists at Monopole architectural gallery is a perfect example of such creative meshing.

Combining the diverse talents of Benoit Saito and Normand Hamel, it stimulates a unique spatial dialogue where colour and texture converse with silence and shadow.

Hamel's three-dimensional bas-reliefs, saturated with colour, are composed of fragments of facades and edifices, shapers of larger structures, at once narrative and painterly. His mixed-media assemblages resemble theatrical maquettes, were it not for the organic composition of the many elements that grow from the ground up, thus giving the exhibition its poetic title.

Hamel's background in art and theatre design as well as film, finds its echo in these sculptural formations, as he creates a world between architecture and stage, a three-dimensional storyboard of painterly proportions.

At the other end of the spectrum lays the quiet, shadowy realm of Benoît Saito, populated by enigmatic organic structures and transparent geometric forms. His miniature (34 x 55 cm) worlds of otherworldly proportions are brought to life with the simplest of means, graphite on paper. These are quasi-architectural structures with no clearly defined purpose or occupants. Lines and curves intersect, forming impossibly fragile spaces, at once ethereal and solid.

With delicate virtuosity in the handling of the medium, he produces graphic tableaux of particularly seductive aesthetic. From the striped, undulating Ebb to the spread wings of earthbound Canaanus and the floating translucent wedge in Souvenir, his forms are infused with light, reaching beyond their confines as if in the process of becoming. Others are oddly organic, like L'Alchemiste resembling a variegated shell leaking light, neither animal nor inanimate object, a visual enigma.

Saito's fine touch is equally spellbinding in Hotaru where a domed, translucent shape pulsates with light against an ink-black background. With echoes of Chinese lanterns, it is a work of nuanced, delicate esthetic, a tiny masterpiece to savour over and over.

Dorota Kozinski

DOROTHY GROSTERN
A TIME OF INNOCENCE
May 4-23, 2007
Beaux Arts David Astrof
Maison Thomson
3630, rue McTavish
Tel: 514 286-2476
www.artap.com

The autobiographical component is intrinsic to the arts. It sounds a particularly poignant note in Canada, a country, more than any other, composed of immigrants, people whose personal histories weigh heavily.

Whether burdened, or blessed, with memories of a childhood in another country, many Canadian artists imbue their work with fragile reminiscences, from Dina Podolsky's never-ending Moscow Diary to Yehouda Chaki's pantheon of forgotten faces in Mi Makiz.

Dorothy Grostern has spent her younger years in several cultures, finally settling in Montreal, where she has honed her creative talent. A highly narrative artist, she weaves personal stories into her compositions, charging her mixed-media works with emotions and profound reflection.

Her recent series, A Time of Innocence at Maison Thomson, is particularly close to the artist's
NATHALIE GRIMARD

VERTIGES
17 February–17 March, 2007
Galerie Trois Points
www.galerietroispoints.qc.ca

In this exhibition the artist to all intents and purposes sets out the first principles of minimalism. The casual observer will see little more than predominantly blank sheets of paper, some coloured string, several needles, and especially, numerous pinholes. Indeed the hurried gallery-goer may quickly conclude that this exhibit represents a pre-computer screen version of pixel! Moreover, the sheer starkness of this show could easily repel facile art lovers. When entering the gallery the visitor gets the sense of an empty, scrubbed up, hospital operating room, with its inimitably cold, anti-septic, sterile environment. Here the artist's works lie flat against bleached walls, like surgical instruments neatly arrayed in a steel tray before an operation. The glint of a few sharp needles that dangle from threads heightens the impression of a surgeon's scalpels and sutures on display. An incisive, if not severe aesthetic, thus pervades 'Vertiges.'

The Spartan ethos of this exposition to no small degree results from the pristine, almost virginal tenor of Grimard's art. In this vein the leitmotif of whiteness runs throughout her works so that they constitute variations on this colour. In one shade or another, white permeates these pieces to such an extent that it often comes perilously close to blanching the pinprick figures on these paperworks.

Therein resides the significance of vertigo, from which this exhibition takes its name. Grimard's tableaux create virtual whiteouts that mock the points of the compass, blur boundaries, and undermine dimensionality. Even time appears erased, so that the perforated animal and human forms in these set pieces seem to exist in a state of suspended animation.

Furthermore, the vertigo of these characters derives from an existential malaise. Their presence on paper ironically occurs through the absence of paper, namely pinholes. In effect, they owe their being to non-being. This parallels Grimard's frequent recourse in 'Vertiges' to blankness as both the negation of colour and negative space. She thereby situates her characters at the interstice of vacuity and substance. No wonder these pinprick creatures assume the guise of wreaths, aptly accentuated by their hollowness. They, animal and human, represent transitional entities that move inexorably, like all created beings, between existence and oblivion. The vertigo they experience, and the viewer vicariously through them, arises not from heights, but from the dizzying realization that by virtue of our creaturehood we constantly teeter on the brink of non-existence—and will inevitably fall into that abyss.

In essence then, Grimard employs the semblance of nothingness as a foil to articulate an existentialist aesthetic. The dippych 'Attenè I, Attenè II,' epitomizes this. Each frame features a lone, pinpoint, human profile, barely perceptible amidst a colourless, denuded seascape. In fact, both silhouettes readily fade in and out of sight so as to emphasize the liminalty of these characters. Meanwhile, the bleakness of their setting bespeaks a no-man's-land that underscores their isolation; a sentiment compounded by the solitary confinement to which Grimard condemns the two since she relegates them to separate quadrangles. The gravitas of these twin scenes prove the touchstone of 'Vertiges.'

Norman E Cornett, Ph.D.

SUTTON

DETOURS
ARTS SUTTON GALLERY
7, rue Academy
Sutton
Tel: 450 538-2563
info@artssutton.com

This is a terrific spot to visit on a summer's day. This contemporary art gallery has a welcoming, small town ambiance, and is dedicated to the presentation and development of local talent as much as to international artists. Its programming is vibrant, with more than 200 exhibitions organized since the gallery opened its doors in 1980.

In addition to art exhibits, the gallery also offers workshops and lecture series.

Because of its location and activities, Arts Sutton Gallery attracts an equally diverse public, from art student and local citizens to tourists. The gallery is located in the village of Sutton, 105 kilometers from Montreal and is open Thursday to Sunday from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Dorota Kozinska

Here are the directions from Montreal:

Take AUTOROUTE 10 E. to exit- EXIT 68- toward GOWANSVILLE

Follow PROVINCIAL SECONDARY ROUTE 139 and 104 that leads you to Sutton

The Gallery is located in the village at 7 Academy Road behind the Esso Station.
RIMOUSKI

ANNE ASHTON

EL CENTRO

June 17–Sept. 9, 2007
Musée régional de Rimouski
35, Saint-Germain Ouest
www.museerimouski.qc.ca

Anne Ashton paints nature. She paints it as if she were conversing in its secret language, communing with all its manifestations, from gigantic cacti and whirling wind funnels, to the tiniest of insects and shimmering dew drops.

Fragments of skies float in her paintings, suspended ever so briefly, held captive for a blink of an eye, before receding behind the clouds.

Ashton is a magical conjurer, bringing to life the inner being of her subject matter, where wilted flowers still seduce with their pursed petals, their fragile invisible core intact, and where leaves float beyond the frame, hovering on the edge of the painting, already in flight.

An exhibition of her works at the Musée régional de Rimouski titled El Centro offers an extensive look into the vibrant world of this original artist. Organized and curated by former Le Devoir art critic, Bernard Lamarche, it ought to once and for all place Ashton in the forefront of contemporary artists.

Meaning the centre in Spanish, the title of the exhibition holds particular significance for the San Diego–born artist. It is also the name of a town not far from where Ashton grew up, in the middle of the Mojave Desert, "in the middle of nowhere ..."

"My art is often situated under the radar, on the outskirts of town," the artist says of her creative process. "The world of contemporary art and I have often felt a mutual indifference for each other."

The reason is not difficult to see. Ashton's subject matter is far removed from the abstract and the conceptual, opting for the oldest and purest of subject matters, the world of nature.

But rather than being derivative, her paintings are of the highest calibre, with tight composition and highly professional handling of the medium.

Ostensibly challenging the latest trends, she seeks inspiration in beauty, mysticism, folk art and culture, all the taboos of contemporary art. Bravo!

The result are works of incredible power, nature at its most dramatic and its most delicate. In Ashton's paintings the flowers pose, the skies breathe and the air rustles scattering perfume. Tall waterspouts loom against a black cloud, dancing towards us like shadowy devishes.

Colour, texture, dimension, all are integral to the composition, and each work is unique, an objet d'art in itself. Hand-made frames are part of the whole, imperceptibly incorporated into the image.

A peripatetic, nomadic soul, Ashton soaks up inspiration on numerous road trips, breeding the accumulated impressions on canvas upon canvas of sculptural, brilliant flora and swirling air. Her works emanate the beat of the South, imbued as they are with the scents and aura of another place, far removed from our Canadian frigidity.

Ashton prompts, seduces us into a closer look at the world around us, invites us to seek the life-force in each flower, in each gust of wind that caresses our cheek. To stop and ponder the mystery that envelops us and of which we are a part. To listen to the sound of the eternal flux, where everything lives and changes, dies and is reborn.

Several of Anne Ashton's paintings will also be exhibited at Les jardins de Métis/Reford Gardens along the St. Lawrence and Mitis rivers, from June 23 to September 30, 2007. Dorota Kozinska

HALIFAX

MARY LEE BENDOLPH, GEE'S BEND QUILTS AND BEYOND

28 April–9 September 2007
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
1723 Hollis St.
Halifax, Nova Scotia

This is an important exhibition that raises many questions about the very nature of what is and what is not art. Central to the exhibition are quilts made by African American women from the very small town of Gee's Bend, Alabama who have never been formally trained as artists. Whether or not one can these women artists what they have created is surely art and, to my mind, very fine art by any standard. Terms such as folk art, outsider art and vernacular art have been used to describe items such as these quilts usually to separate them from traditional professional fine art objects made by professionally trained artists, but I think these particular quilts would not warrant any title other than good art and the women who made them are, by that assumption, artists.

The exhibition originates from the Austin Museum of Art in Texas and the Halifax venue is its only Canadian showing which is a shame because it should have a wider

GALERIE HARWOOD
3663 Harwood Dr.
Hudson
Tel.: 450 458-1557
www.galerieharwood.com

Galerie Harwood is definitely different. Its owner, "agent-provocateur" and fan of rock’n’roll, Ihor Todoruk has turned this vast three-room space into a showcase for original and often controversial artists. Unafraid of stirring up a buzz, Todoruk has a knack for finding original talent, often organizing group shows of its many Canadian and international artists.

The gallery also houses an eclectic collection of African tribal art, and other collectibles.

With photos of The Doors’ Jim Morrison—taken by Todoruk himself—welcoming the visitor and heavy metal providing the musical accompaniment, a trip to Galerie Harwood is always an unforgettable experience.

The gallery is open Tuesday through Sunday.

Dorota Kozinska

DIRECTIONS FROM MONTREAL:

Galerie Harwood is located just off the island, 20 minutes from Montreal. To get there take the 40 West, direction Ottawa, exit 26, Hudson.

Follow the HWY Signs.

Red Mojos, California
oil on wood, 29 x 25 cm, 2005
Canadian audience if for no other reason than to raise basic questions about the nature of art and artists with more people. Mary Lee Bendolph who is now in her early seventies and the central artist in this exhibition came to Halifax for the gallery opening and the following day gave a tour of the show which was an eye opener for the few who were present. I have never met an artist quite like her or had a tour of an exhibition like the one she gave. Frankly, many artists’ ‘talls’ are so boring that I would rather sit through a root canal. Not only was Mary Lee modest about her accomplishments and generous in her praise of other artists in the exhibition, and those who were responsible for its organization, but she would break into song when she was telling about a work and what a marvelous singer she is. It appears that Gee’s Bend quilters quilt together and sing together while they are working. This is a tradition that goes back many years and on top of the very nice catalogue that accompanies the exhibition there is a two CD set of gospel singing from Gee’s Bend that is also available in the gallery store. One CD is an historic recording from 1941 and the other was recorded in 2002. She had me singing “Thank you Jesus” before the tour was over. It is this strong feeling from the music that is reflected in the quilts.

All the quilts in the exhibition are abstract patterns as are all quilts that have ever been done in the history of quilting in Gee’s Bend which goes back a long way to the American Civil War. Perhaps a better, and more correct term, would be non-objective patterns, but that is me being picky about art terms as I’ll stick with the lay term abstract. The quilt patterns mirror the best imagery of abstract art, but until very recently none of the quilters had ever seen an abstract painting. The patterns in the quilts come naturally from what they see around them in their day to day life. Mary Lee states in the catalogue that she would see a brightly coloured truck and transfer those colours to a quilt or she would just look at things around her and come up with a pattern. Most of the quilts are not titled so they end up being labelled as are two of Mary Lee’s quilts Blocks and strips quilt 2005 or Blocks, strips, strings and half-squares quilt 2005.

The quilts from Gee’s Bend before they were discovered as art, and this only happened in last few years, were completely functional. They were used as bed coverings or to cover drafty walls and floors. They were made from used clothing and any other cloth they found nor were they finely crafted as are some quilts such as many of those from New England, but they were always boldly designed and this is what makes them art. Gee’s Bend had a long history as a hard and difficulty place to live. It was, and is, a very small black farming community that had to work very hard just to get by. The colour and design of their quilts must, as likely does their gospel music, have brought them joy. I know it brings the current crop of quilt makers joy if Mary Lee is an example. This joy is now shared with the rest of the world. Their quilts are now exhibited in the top American art galleries, they have been featured in national television shows and the United States Postal Service is issuing a set of stamps based on their quilts. All this has happened so fast that the artists of Gee’s Bend are still in a state of non-belief.

This is too short of a review to get into real detail about this exhibition’s importance. There is other quilters work in the exhibition besides Mary Lee. Indeed.

The earliest piece, from 1955, was made by her mother Aolar Mosely. There are works by her daughter, Essie Bendolph Pettway; her daughter-in-law, Louisiana P. Bendolph and two self-taught Alabama artists, not from Gee’s Bend, the painter Thornton Dial and sculptor Lonnie Holley. The later two artists figure in what has happened in Gee’s Bend and should warrant a separate review of their work nor do I have the space to discuss the prints that have been made by Mary Lee, her daughter and daughter-in-law with Paulson Press in Berkeley, California that are based on their quilt designs. They are drop dead beautiful and the editions have sold out.

One last point or two, a parallel can be drawn between what happened in Gee’s Bend and what happened in our own north with Inuit art. In both cases a new artistic voice was heard that made the rest of us look at the world differently and question the very nature of what we call art. The other point is that this exhibition is important to the Black Canadian culture of Nova Scotia. Black Canadians can share the pride of these Alabama artists and see in the American’s work part of their history.

Virgil Hammock

HONG KONG

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

AUTHORIZING THE STREETS OF HONG KONG

Artists: TeGustaLoQueVes

May 16th 2007—Ongoing

33 Pottinger Street, Lan Kwai Fong

Hong Kong, S.A.R. China

Lan Kwai Fong Street

Do we still believe that art can effect political change?

TeGustaLoQueVes? is an artist collective based in Madrid that has created a flurry of activity in the past two years. From issuing out forged invitations for the royal coronation to 10,000 of the Spanish public, to replacing 50 bus transit posters with their own political slogans, their purpose is simply to redirect the nature of art towards the free collective consumption and less towards cherished commodity—art is to be consumed by as many people as possible on the streets and everyone gets to experience it for free.

The production of guerrilla art is focused on cause and effect, not the material piece itself. What the artist hopes to stir is an effect within the minds of those people that live within the environment being altered. It does not necessarily aim to produce art that is meaningful in itself. TeGustaLoQueVes have recently been traveling around Hong Kong implementing their work on the streets in heavy foot trafficked areas.

From Basquiat leading to Banksy in the 90s, one might ask again what type of placement graffiti is given in the art world. “We don’t consider graffiti art” stated a member of TeGustaLoQueVes in response. “Graffiti was never really art, not even in the 80s, we admire Basquiat, of course, but what Banksy does is bring art back onto the streets where it disturbs people, not just the 10% that go to a museum. Our art making is in the process of creating graffiti on the street, not the graffiti itself.”

The performance I recently viewed in Hong Kong, consisted of 25 minutes of spraypainting and...
Artists are on other issues. Artists he encounters, are as much involved in the discussion on the environment.

Criticism/Ecology/Environment, ...quickly distracted by a nearby wedding party. 

Books, including Balance: Art and Nature Dialogues, ...documents.