MONTREAL

CLIVE SMITH:
PAINTERLY DIALOGUE
Montreal, Galerie de Bellefeuille

They’re flimsy formica-like representations of the degree of distance between individuals. What an irony and a postmodern one at that, for these people contained in cubicles that are likewise contained within the larger space of the room, seem desensitized to their environment. The same applies to the man who kneels barefoot within a smaller cubicle, one of four, in without words, but this scene is more close-up. Clive Smith inculcates his paintings with an intensity that hinges on the use of light and texture. The slight exaggeration of perspective in these paintings furthers a dialogue on closed and open space.

Clive Smith achieves a subtle psychological tension through the use of light and the elimination of extraneous elements. His interest is less in the painted subject than the spirit of painting. While Realism once furthered the dualistic schism between humanity and nature by creating synthetic recreations of idealized (natural) subjects, the individuals who we see sitting in cubicles in two of the paintings in this show, either one + one without one (1998) or without words (1998) are a logical extension of this artificial way of re-constructing a scene. While Clive Smith follows the classical canons of painting, his work ultimately deals with issues of control and freedom.

The spaces and environments he builds into these works are euclidean passageways, places of transition. The diffused light effects make these uncomfortable posed portrait subjects seem all the more contained, caught up in the parentheses of their own thoughts and state of mind, just like the cubicles, seats, stools they sit in. These painterly parables of illusion and delusion mask a deeper sense here seems to be there is no point to artmaking other than some sort of self-gratification. You will not find any social commentary or vision of art changing the world here, unless it is in Marie-Claude Pratte’s naive and witty portraits. Pratte’s large acrylic on wood FANTOME 2000 (1995), is an anguished self-expression, cartoon-like but equally laden with fear. Next to this Pratte’s Portraits de Société (1990-99) are a series of painted close-up portraits that deal with social prejudices and stereotypes, but in a witty and engaging way. These are tiny textural clitches that get their point across as much by assembling them together as an ensemble. Workers, citizens, dilettantes, autodidactes, policemen, chausiers. This collectivity of social stereotypes is as caricatured and literal as the quebecois TV programme La petite vie.

COMPULSION
Liane & Danny Taran Gallery,
Centre des arts
Sadie Bronfman
June 17 to August 29, 1999

Peace and love and the 60s with a post-mod filter, a timid nihilism and self-conscious reflection pervade the works in compulsion. While the title of this show suggests some uncontrollable urge, the works chosen by Toronto-based curator John Massier for this show look more obsessive than compulsive fashion or self-gratification may have been more honest titles, for these contemporary works are engrossed in excess in a world of excess. While they reflect the state of contemporary culture, no remedy is offered for the postmodern malaise.

Kevin El-ichi deForest’s laser printed, horizontal wall drawing Trans-Love Energy (1998) has a snake-like form that weaves its way sinuously around the paper, but this one doesn’t bite, it just bursts and breaks apart. Here is sexual energy embodied in Robert Crumb-style psychedelic San Francisco cartoon genre. Toronto-based Carlo Cesta’s installation of rustic balcony iron wrought iron is well versed in the tects of contemporary art aesthetic. These balcony fragments are welded together within another, each successively higher and more narrow than the preceding one. Cesta’s work has a superb sense of space but yet is so self-conscious of the history and tenets of modernism as to be almost a kitschy take off on the Russian sculptor Vladimir Tatlin’s model for the Monument to the Total International (1915) carried through the streets of Leningrad on May day 1926. New York-based David Kramer takes nihilism for its penultimate walk into the world of compulsion in HI LIFE (1999). Beer, wine and whiskey bottles of various colours are placed together around fluorescent light fixtures set in this forest of bottles. Though we cannot immediately read the words, the lights spell HI LIFE. Patrick Coutu’s LA MODERN (1999) construction is undoubtably one of the best pieces in this show. Coutu’s approach to the installation genre assembled out of scraps of construction material and ephemera recalls Ilya Kabakov’s The Man Who Flew to Space from his Apartment (1981-1988) now on view in Montreal at the Musee des beaux arts (Cozens) show. Looking in through a window of Coutu’s hermetically sealed cabin, one discovers a home made replica of a satellite made of wood and painted mat black. Notes, pieces of partially cut wood sketches, orange DayGlo spray-painted numbers, a kitschy relief folk carving, a half-moon of blue lights, even an amateur painting of a planet, all of this seems a very comment on modernism, technology and real modern life. It all stands tentatively on a pile of wooden 2 by 4 inch scrap wood pieces but its really a concept mobile. As with Carlo Cesta’s piece one never sure if Coutu is mocking 20th century modernism or is in love with it. If any social consciousness exists in these works it is expressed itself in a benign cynicism that suffers from a hulluma that is part of any addiction. Curator John Massier’s juxtaposition of this ensemble of artworks together may be the real work of art here.

John K. Grande
TORONTO

JOE PLASKETT:
THE MISSING LINK
Exclusive interview with John K. Grande July 1999

JOE PLASKETT
EXHIBITION OF NEW WORKS
SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 12, 1999

The artist in his garden, Suffolk, 1999
Sherri Wallack

wallack galleries
203 BANK STREET
OTTAWA, ONTARIO K2P 1W7
(613) 235-4339

JOE PLASKETT
BIOGRAPHY


Timed to take place in conjunction with the release of his autobiography A Speaking Likeness (Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, Autumn 1999), Joe Plaskett will be exhibiting at the Wallack Art Gallery (opening September 15th) Wallack Art Gallery in Ottawa (opening September 23rd). Book launches for A Speaking Likeness take place at: Gallery 76, Fredericton (September 19th), Bau-Xi Vancouver (October 2nd), Bau-Xi Vancouver, Victoria (October 12th) and Galerie Walter Klinkhoff, Montreal October 16, and where new works by Joe Plaskett will also be on view.

the limelight of exposure.

Joel Plaskett will also be on view.

Still life with Radishes and Chair, Joseph Plaskett, 1999 oil on canvas, 81 x 67 cm
The Dabrinsky-Friedland Gallery

day, in all its enigmatic ordinariness, an authentic transfiguration of die every­

certainty. Chinese porcelain, period

works are more than a new rep­

successful: "I like to look at things the sec­

rather, these still lives breathe

Mystery and its  meanderings
carry the spectator beyond the painted surface, into the dream state of the arrested instant, into the fragile and uncertain equilibrium between that which is "not yet" and that which is "no longer". These are paintings which leave one pensive, which invite memory and imagination into a slow drift between the unsaid and that which is merely suggested, between implicit meditation and what the image explicitly evokes, between the visible say, and what can be read into it (and constantly reformulated) on many levels.

Jean-Pierre Duquette

RECALLING SOCIAL
REALISM

STEPHEN LACK: LANDSCAPES,
DRAWINGS & DRAMAS

Gallery One

Sept 23 - Oct 13, 1999

Stephen Lack, who began his ca­reer exhibiting at venues like Vehicule Art in Montreal, made his name amid the chaotic confusion of the East Vil­lage scene in New York, exhibiting at Grace Mansion in the 1970s. As his Edge of Anxiety show comprising 47 oils and acrylics held at the Lynnym­Allyn Art Museum in Connecticut last year proved, this painter has staying power. Stephen Lack is one of a very few painters of his generation still working in the Pop genre who ad­dress contemporary issues: the perv­asive power of the media, the abstract nature of violence in society, and mass destruction. The latest landscapes and draw­ings are exeuctive, have a superb sense of colour and tonality. In Stephen Lack's own words, they are "a marriage between nostalgia, colour printing and line art painting".

oil on linen, 50.8 cm X 61 cm

Arôme des deux soeurs
Encaustic
99 x 180 cm

Richard Storms
November

The Wedding Party, Steven Lack, 1999

Robert Birch Gallery
241 King Street East
Toronto, Canada M5A 1J9
Telephone: (416) 955-9410
Fax: (416) 955-9409

Richard Storms

Euan Macdonald

September

Sydney Drum

October

10th ANNIVERSARY
EXPLORING THE AMERICAN STEREOTYPE

CINDY SHERMAN
Art Gallery of Ontario
October 1, 1999 - January 2, 2000

American superartist Cindy Sherman made her name early in her career with her Untitled Film Stills (1977-80), a series of (9) black and white provocatively staged photograph works featuring the artist herself in the role of “B movie” female characters and magazine centerfolds. Playing on the ambiguity of audience perception and artistic presentation, Sherman displayed a penchant for soap opera drama. Her Rear Screen Projections (1980-81), a group of large-format colour photographs, extended the typology of female characters Sherman was developing by including projected images as backdrops for each photo. The actual presentational character of these works may be more challenging than their visual content. Mixed messages about violence, perversion and the inescapability of the perfect image, becomes a unexamined leisure culture pursuit titled Office Killer. America’s largely fun and has since made a film audience, absolution or if, more often, death and decay. One began to wonder if Sherman was seeking redemption, absolution or if, more probably, she was just playing around. Sherman proves girls can have fun and has since made a film titled Office Killer. America’s largely unexamined leisure culture pursuit of the perfect image, becomes a horror show in a lot of this work and overt sexual guises, masks and mannequin-like add-ons present mixed messages about the nature of identity. This is what the hall of mirrors might be, if American pop culture had its way all the way.

Cindy Sherman has emerged as a major artist precisely because her work explores stereotypes, sometimes painfully, oftentimes with a wit and candor that is aptly of our era. It is as if Sherman were voyeur and participant, engaging in bizarre reflection and exploration of the inner workings of the American mind. Sherman’s more recent portrayals of the body are unsettling, for they manipulate the viewer as much as they manipulate their content. Using the photographic medium, Sherman draws and defines her imagery from the plethora of available material that is American Pop gizmo culture. This mid-career retrospective of approximately 150 works includes examples from all her major series, from her early images of provocatively ambiguous portraits to the later works. For the fascination with horror, humour, pornography, surrealism and the grotesque Sherman’s work reveals, she may be the art world’s answer to Gothic horror genre writing...

Organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, this retrospective makes its final and only Canadian stop at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

John K. Grande

DISPOSABLE CONSCIOUSNESS

MAKING IT NEW! (THE BIG SIXTIES SHOW)
Art Gallery of Windsor
July 24 - October 10, 1999

Comprising some 90 works by 25 artists and artists’ collectives from the 1960s Making It New! (The Big Sixties show) bills itself as the first exhibition of its kind to present the work of artists from coast to coast in Canada. To an extent this show achieves its goal, presenting an array of 60 works including a surprising sculpture by Richard Lacroix, Michael Snow, Vancouver’s Michael Morris, N.E. Thing Company, Charles Gagnon, Bill Vazan, John Boyle, Gilles Boisvert, Diane Asiede, CUCCHI and Greg Curnoe. Internationally renowned artist Les Levine will present a re-enactment of his performance Cornflakes (first presented in Edmonton in 1969) at Great Western Park in Windsor on July 22. The work involves the spreading the contents of 250 jumbo-sized boxes of Kellogg’s Cornflakes. Les Levine comments about the original event: “In 1969 pre-oil Alberta’s image was grain and corn. When I did Cornflakes, I was thinking about putting something back in the ground that had been taken out, something biodegradable, or food for the birds. It was a public artwork to generate public consciousness about the earth’s fragility and the process of nature and man’s interaction. This was a truly disposable state of consciousness. Likewise much of the art in the show reflects a disposable consciousness and like Quebec’s own 1960s déclics: art et société show, fared less well in museum/gallery settings than it did when created by the many now renowned artists at the time. London-based artist Greg Curnoe’s Handle for Art Lovers (1952) sums up the spirit of the era by presenting a handle with knives and domestic knitting needles atop it. Trashy and accessible, Curnoe’s obstruction does not prevent us from overcoming implied social barriers, yet makes us aware they exist. The same holds true for CUCCHI’s jongle-Nouvelles (1970) which creates its social (read object-based) barrier with a forest of red, blue and silver tubing. Bill Vazan’s Cross-Canada Line (1969-70) was a highly site specific yet conceptually biased artwork that involved marking site locations simultaneously at various Canadian cities simultaneously. Gilles Boisvert’s works embody the Pop art spirit as well as any in this show. Joyce Wieland’s multi-media Pop assemblage Young Woman Blues (1964) includes a heart with woman’s face behind it, and a toy airplane. This early feminist Pop work is like a parody of a portable cosmetic case. Win Hedore (Ted Godwin, Ken Lochhead and Ronald Bloom) created a Vaillancourt-like assemblage out of cast-away metal that looks like a primitive African sculpture. Making It New! neatly compliments Quebec’s own déclics: art et société show held at Montreal’s Musée d’art contemporain and the Musée de la civilization in Quebec. For its insights into 1960s Canadian art Making It New! (until October 16th) is well worth seeing.

John K. Grande

DU 11 SEPTEMBRE AU 2 OCTOBRE
HAR-PRAKASH KHALSA
photographie
du 30 SEPTEMBRE AU 4 OCTOBRE
ART FORUM BERLIN

du 9 AU 30 OCTOBRE
MARC SÉGUIN
nouvelle peinture

du 6 AU 27 NOVEMBRE
ENZO CUCCHI
mote média

ART CORE
33 hazelton avenue, toronto, 416.920.3820
gallery hours: tuesday to saturday 11 - 5
e-mail: artcore@the-wire.com
www.the-wire.com/artcore

VIE DES ARTS N°136 — 81
CALGARY

JOANE CARDINAL-SCHUBERT
FROM MARGIN TO MAINSTREAM

Respect for all things is Joane Cardinal-Schubert's value system as an outspoken artist. She describes her sharp, but still sensitive, contemporary art as in-your-face and that's exactly what she means.

When Canada's social fabric was ripped apart in the turbulent 1960s, Cardinal-Schubert unambiguously became aware of systemic racism. Raised in a supportive family, her attendance at university to study art forced her unwillingly to acknowledge that she was somehow different from her classmates. Respect is the essence of the moral principles in which she was raised and applying respect was how she learned to understand the world she lives in. Stereotype is not a word in her vocabulary, systemic discrimination was imposed on her from within.

Cardinal-Schubert questions the mainstream that decides what is native art and what is art. "The centre has moved", she laughs, "and the margins are enlarging."

Cardinal-Schubert has good reason to be happy when, in September, Master's Gallery celebrates a twenty-year retrospective of paintings and drawings that is part of the validation of her perceptible art and determined efforts. This artist is redefining the mainstream that decides what is native art and what is art. "The centre has moved", she laughs, "and the margins are enlarging."

JANE ASH POITRAS
FROM PARIS TO CALGARY

"Art is a powerful thing", says Jane Ash Poitras, one of Canada's most vocal contemporary artists. Her paintings are a conduit for First Nation's historical truths, blazonry-coloured mixed media exuding energy with collaged, ripped old black-and-white photographs, newspapers and drawings, to get the message across.

Riel to Pelletier, a large canvas exhibited in Paris at the Canadian Cultural Centre this autumn, seizes the viewer with its bold startling white names stencilled across the canvas labelling images of Big Bear, Riel, Poundmaker and Crowfoot. Familiar names but courageous legends known only to a few until now. This is not the history that Poitras learned in her school textbooks, but her own sons, Josh and Eli, understand the subtleties of this misinformation.

Poitras' extended research and comprehension is it helping to reshape history so others can read and understand forge a link between past and present. First Nations emerging in response to experiences of past alienation from the dominant culture. A vanishing race that has suffered from over a hundred years of general public neglect and discrimination, is recovering and redefining, through self-determination, who they are.

"My art is for everyone", says Poitras speaks openly, truthfully and with authority from her own historical and cultural experience as a native Canadian. On at Collectors Gallery

"I'm not afraid of the truth. I want my messages to sing."

Anne Severson

MARGARETHA BOOTSMA:
CONTEMPORARY ARCHAEOLOGY

The refined material landscapes of Margaretha Bootsma are metaphors. Endless Passings is an environmental statement involving humanity's compliance with nature's transformations over time. She blends photographs with alternative materials such as earth, sand, or discarded oxidized metal. Likened to Arte Povera, the matter-paintings link metaphorical statements about nature and culture. These collaged photographs take the viewer into a forest or along a river walk. In layers she creates narratives. With our eyes revealing the transparent coverings of time, it is easy to be drawn into the frame and become involved with her fieldwork research of thoughts and feelings. This type of contemporary archaeology is Bootsma's search for basic principles of humanity through interaction of life forms through time and place.

Nature and its chaos are considered in The Land Speaks 2. Humans provide order in symbols and rituals that bridge the physical and metaphysical. These primary signs, like the circle, triangle, and rectangle, are found in nature and are symbolically universal in meaning. These symbols communicate that which is inexpressible.

In Relic, "Time passes, says Bootsma, and things develop and change. We need to participate and to care more about what happens."

Bev Tosh
FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING

Bev Tosh's tall, calligraphed figures are still, silent, charged with emotion that informs.

"They are thoughts made manifest. I am drawing from the inside out," says Tosh.

She has always used figures to express her thoughts and emotions. "The figure is everything to me. I relate so strongly to the way I feel as a person." There is a quiet space where thought develops, an internal space, a vessel: supportive, positive and reassuring.

"Thoughts and emotions evolve meditatively, almost unconsciously, through the brush on paper until finally the calligraphic, elongated frames emerge. These figures are edited to an essence with the structured economy of brush stroke."

During studies with a master brush painter while living in Singapore, Tosh says, "I came to love the feel of the way I hold the brush, the way the stroke was informed by something inside. It's a different way of touching the surface. It allowed me to know the figures so well that I could work from inside myself."

This minimalism means that each ink stroke is loaded with meaning as it is laid down in space. All her marks are integral to the image. There is no misleading peripheral information. "All my work is about silence, but these are also about communication," says Tosh concerning her latest body of work on exhibition at Virginia Christopher Galleries until October 30. "My concern is for personal space that individuals maintain between themselves and others."

Three figures emerge as one, as division of self rather than separate people, in Matrushkas. Referencing the painted wooden Russian stacking dolls traditionally stacked hierarchically one inside the other, Tosh has altered them democratically. In the world that Tosh lives in, this group acts as one, fitting together, supporting and balancing one another.

The autobiographical off-balance stance in Blueprint for Wings may resemble Tosh, but "the way its read is up to the perception of each individual. They are as honest as I can make them", says Tosh.

Anne Severson

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Anne Severson
With his black trees painted entirely in tar on canvas, Attila Lukacs makes a surprising departure from mural-size oil paintings of skinhead youth and homoerotic subjects at Diana Farris Gallery this October. Ining in New York after several years in Berlin, Lukacs has developed what he describes as a Zen-like process in a series of about 50 black paintings of various subjects begun earlier this year.

**JOHN MACDONALD**, a young British Columbia painter whose work is attracting favorable reception as it matures. Originally from Prince George, his recent paintings are impressionistic landscapes worked in an intuitive and painterly manner in a studio located in his Kisdi salano garden. At the Douglas Udell Gallery, October 13 to 30, Macdonald presents a landscape series that is a continuation of earlier swamp-shore subjects with reduced means and imagery. Refraining for the time being experiments with encaustic and other media, he applies pure oil paint to blown-up details of plants and water reflections. A 1998 exhibition of landscapes at Udell's Edmonton gallery. Macdonald also returns to the figure with the theme of a solitary woman in a wilderness setting. This personification of a mysterious zone between city and wilderness serves as exploration of the uncertain margin of urban life inhabited by nomads and fugitives.

**BRATSA BONIFACHO**, AL CAMPO SANTO

Bonifacho's vivid, vigorously constructed abstract oil paintings embody a highly subjective response to landscape and natural phenomena at Bau-Xi Gallery, October 21 to November 8. These new works reprise his earlier "Scotland Series" and "Fire and Earth Series" in smaller-scale canvases. The exhibition title recalls Italian cemeteries, in particular the famous Campo Santo of Pisa which received victims of the European Black Death epidemic five hundred years ago.

Bonifacho continues to wrestle with contending notions of landscape as site of global disaster and a nostalgia for landscape as sanctified refuge. The Romanticism of this senior Serb-Canadian painter, and his projection of emotion on landscape subjects to achieve effects of the heroic sublime, may result in beautiful paintings but compromise his response to political and environmental issues.

**EVE LEADER**, FLESH AND BLOOD

On the fringe of Vancouver's Granville Row art walls, the Third Avenue Gallery makes emerging artists its mandate. Eve Leader shows new figure paintings with precise drawing anchoring expressionistic colour and gesture from November 4 to 27, 1999. She explores the figure as compassionate metaphor for human experience in suspended, ambiguous beings painted in oil on mylar influenced by Betty Goodwin, whose work they resemble in subject and medium. In other recent exhibitions, Mandy Williams Flesh and Blood, paintings capture the essence that typifies the energy of this gallery.

Anne Grant: 5.6 at an 1/8 of a second, a dictionary between grit and romantic photography gives the subject an aura of wonderment.

Joan Richardson
The Eighties further established the cultural links between Open Space and the community in more issue-oriented, politicized ways. Jeanne Shoemaker's Outdoor Projects introduced public art and site-specific installations to a nervous Victoria, in an effort to increase public and media awareness and initiated "Monday Nights at Open Space" including a public forum on street prostitution, outreach programs, Artilnk and Gallery on Wheels.

The challenge of the Nineties required restructuring and redefinition. Sue Donaldson and Michael MacLennan (Interim) threw their energies into creating policies and rewriting bylaws, establishing a protected framework in which to function. Administrative and grant-writing skills were honed in a climate of funding cutbacks and government conservatism. Donaldson's directorship highlighted "Creating in Context" a colloquium for visual artists involving the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Xchanges Gallery, the University of Victoria, Camosun College, the Royal B.C. Museum, and the Community Arts Council. She also re-established the publication of exhibition catalogues as sites for critical discourse.

In 1992, "The October Project," a twenty-year anniversary group exhibition was testimony to the outstanding community commitment of the contributing artists and organizers to Open Space. The kind of support that keeps it alive and vital today. The shifting concerns of the post-modern condition mimic those of all artist-run centres struggling to serve the needs of their artistic communities, funding bodies, and larger communities. The policies of reciprocity, transparency, sponsorship, and support realized by Open Space over twenty-seven years are important and deserve celebration.

Linda Giles

(Research Source: The October Project catalogue, published by Open Space, 1992)

**PAINTING, PAINTING...**

WINCHESTER GALLERIES

1545 Fort Street, Victoria, B.C.

1010 Broad Street, Victoria, B.C.

A preponderance of summer festivals have certainly interrupted the calm that is Victoria with their vigorous panoply of art, music, dance, performance, poetry and other exuberant offerings. Winchester Galleries, with an introspective gesture typically Canadian, propose a departure from the summer spoils. Featured here this fall are six shows about painting.

Opening the season, Paul Hunter's new abstract paintings on canvas buzz with an urban energy reminiscent of the Italian Futurists. In "Untitled 43," Hunter's repetition of high-colour shapes are carefully positioned on a monochrome grid. The aggressive interplay stimulates an intellectual response. The complexity of Hunter's abstract vocabulary also allows the viewer a certain rhythmical sensation not unlike the pleasant experience of improvised music.

Winchester Galleries presents an exhibition of new and recent works by the esteemed artists Joseph Plaskett (oils and pastels), and Molly Lamb Bobak (oils and watercolours) to October 27th, with both artists in attendance at the opening Sunday, October 10th. A book launch of Joseph Plaskett's memoirs, A Speaking Likeness, published by Ronsdale Press (Vancouver), will also be celebrated at this time.

Plaskett's paintings...are among the most sought after of any painter in Canada. While often expressing a feeling of sombre melancholy, as if at the end of a heroic age, his work is always alive and vital, calling us to respond and create in the face of darkness. Having recently celebrated his eightieth birthday, he continues to paint vigorously, still excited about the discoveries he is making with form and colour.

George Woodcock

A November exhibition features figurative work by Brad Pasutti (Victoria). Pasutti tackles most articulately and thoughtfully the well-seasoned territory of the nude. The grand traditions of Landscape, Still Life, Abstraction, and figuration continue to hold their place within the multifarious virtual realities of the late twentieth century. With the scattering of millennial leaves, things shift, the centre cannot hold; art transgresses, painting persists.

Linda Giles

Prescription Burn I, Jessie Homer French, 1999

oil on canvas, 64 cm x 64 cm

Courtesy Winchester Gallery