**FREDERICTON**

**BEAVERBROOK ART GALLERY**

703 Queen Street

GENEVIEVE CADIEUX

Until November 28, 2000

**EUROPEAN MASTERPIECE SERIES: VENICE BY CANALETTO**

6 July - November 15, 2000

There are two very different exhibitions currently on view at Fredericton's Beaverbrook Art Gallery: works by Montreal artist Genevieve Cadieux, and a Canaletto exhibition. Cadieux is an artist who, though familiar Quebec viewers, has not been seen often in the Maritimes. This exhibition follows on the heels of her recent major show at the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal. The Canaletto show is an exhibition of etchings from the Arthur Ross Foundation that includes a painting, *St. Mark's and the Clock Tower*, on loan from the National Gallery of Canada.

Craftsmanship is a good place to start in any discussion of the work of Giovanni Antonio Canale, a.k.a. Canaletto. These prints have not been seen in Canada before and they are a good lesson in the art of printmaking. Although Canaletto was better known as a painter, he was an accomplished etcher. The prints on view in Fredericton are virtually a complete set of the works done by the artist's hand. There are other prints which are reproductions of his paintings made during his lifetime by other artists. Prints of views of Venice were handy and inexpensive, mementos for 18th century British aristocrats on the 'Grand Tour' of European cities. Early prints are mostly thought of as reproductions of other media, but they were very much a medium in their own right. Besides Canaletto, Rembrandt, Durer, Pratoge, Aquatilo and Goya also used printmaking as an independent medium. Many of the prints in this exhibition are quite small in size. They demonstrate the remarkable skill of the artists in fitting detail into such a small space. An etching needle, the drawing tool, is not that easy to use and when you add that you have to draw backwards on the plate these little prints are exceptional.

In both his paintings and prints Canaletto's views are often a combination of the real and the imagined. Many of Canaletto's views of Venice are idealized although most contemporary viewers think of them as totally realistic. It is his imagination that makes him an artist rather than a copyist of photographic reality. There is a certain fluency in the use of optic devices in this work, most evident in the painting *St. Mark's and the Clock Tower*, but that is an issue best left for another time.

The Cadieux exhibition comprises only two works, *Rubis* (1993) and *The Milky Way* (1992) both of which are very large. The former, recently purchased by the Beaverbrook Art Gallery with funding from the Canada Council and Senator Richard Hatfield Memorial Fund, continues the gallery's active acquisition of contemporary and challenging Canadian art work. How these works are displayed is very interesting. *Rubis* is on one wall of the main lobby facing Dali's Santagio El Grande which has for many years been a permanent and popular fixture in the gallery. It is usually facing a wall of Cornelius Kreighoff paintings, another popular standby, Changes in this lobby setup are often met with dismay by many gallery regulars particularly when the removed works are replaced by a difficult contemporary art work.

*The Milky Way* is not in the gallery at all, but installed on the roof of the gallery for all to see from the street and road. This is taking art to the people whether they want to see it or not and very uncharacteristic of the staid Beaverbrook of old. Curator Curtis Collins has done much to bring the face of contemporary art to Fredericton. *Rubis*, like *The Milky Way*, is a large photo based work.

Split in half, one side is a colour photo of the artist's mother's back and, on the other side, a microscopic view of a cancer infected blood cell. PostModern works such as this one place demands on viewers that are different from more traditional art. Because many postModern works emphasize the idea, rather than the execution, they may leave some viewers, who prefer craftsmanship to a lesson in sociology, quite unimpressed. However, I believe that *Rubis* can stand on its own as a beautiful and well crafted work of art.

**MONTREAL**

**SHIRLEY KATZ: RECENT DRAWINGS**

Galerie d'Avignon

102, Laurier Street West

7 - 21 November, 2000

Artists who focus on the human portrait are often forgotten in a contemporary art scene burdened with concepts, ideas, and dogmas of technological innovation. The art of Montreal-based Shirley Katz stands out precisely because of her dedication to portraying the intricacies of the human figure. When Katz became a professional artist in 1979 the monotypes and mixed media pieces she experimented with were inventive and satirical. Since the early 1990s she has turned her attention to making intimate large scale pastel portraits. Using bold outlining, chiaroscuro, muted colouring and textural effects, Shirley Katz captures the personal idiosyncrasies, the markings of experience that are part of each person she depicts. Her subjects aren't beauty queens or idealized Adonises, but everyday people. The marks of their personal experience emerge amidst the details, in the facial expressions, the bodily gestures and neutral backgrounds that go to make up each portrait. The expressions are reflective, and reveal their inner psychology, which is a kind of personalized modern day mythology. Caught in a moment in time they seem equally aware of the passing of time.

**CATHERINE YOUNG BATES - VISTAS VI**

Galerie d'Avignon

102, Laurier Street West

March 28 - April 16, 2000

Renowned for her bright colourful canvases of the Eastern Townships landscape of Quebec, an area that attracted Goodridge Roberts for its textural, earthy character in earlier times, Catherine Young Bates is exhibiting a series of new works at Galerie d'Avignon that mark a major shift in her approach to painting. Since April 1999, Bates has been producing multi-panel paintings that
Catherine Young Bates' painted vistas likewise move back and forth from this unearthly cosmic vision playing with the earthbound/skybound dimensional shift metaphor in Clouds (Spring Vision). This painting evokes a feeling of pure joy in light effects worthy of Monet. The transparency of Bates landscape vision is furthered by the vivid yellows and cloud forms in the centre of Clouds (Spring Vision). The horizons at the top and bottom anchor this piece, making it an ethereal landscape. Early Autumn (2000) has Bates' classic expressive brushwork, and an animated sense of the atmosphere of sky and land.

As a personal document of the Nazi persecution of the Jewish people, these works recreate a life experience full of a tragic humanism, but are also painted with a great colouristic sense, a near psychic beauty and intense emotion reminiscent of Marc Chagall, Raoul Dufy and German Expressionist work. In Salomon's portraits the eyes and faces of the people do not look directly at the viewer. They are often shown lying in bed. Their bodily gestures are calm, implacable, as in an image of an artist kneeling before a brilliant Mediterranean sea. Accompanied by painted textual references these images blur the lines between fact and fiction, thus imbuing Salomon's art with an even more unsettling sense of imminent and all encompassing tragedy. Life or Theatre? Will next travel to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Aug. 9-October 28, 2000) and the Jewish Museum in New York (Dec. 10-March 25, 2001).

John K. Grande

PETER BOWYER
FLOWER
The Toronto Sculpture Garden 115, King Street East
May 10 - September 15, 2000
Tall, quiet and lovely, Flower stands in the middle of the Toronto Sculpture Garden. A hybrid of sorts, this 27-foot galvanized steel form at once references a typical urban lamp post and also an optimistic futuristic flower. While smaller in stature than a utilitarian lamp post it is larger than any indigenous flowering plant should be. Rooted in concrete this towering form is married to the skyscape it informs and reflects. This union is both physical (the concrete) and visual (the sky line). Peter Bowyer, the artist responsible for this addition to the city-scape, is a Torontonian who has been well received nationally. In recent years he has been featured in shows at the Power Plant, Paul Petro Contemporary Art, and Galerie Optica. Bowyer has also been involved in several interesting group shows housed in found spaces, artist run centres and public institutions. This said, it is not a surprise that a team of engineers and fabricators were called into action to help realize Bowyer's Flower.

It is easy to imagine tourists coming upon the site holding their panoramic disposable cameras vertically in an attempt to capture Flower in its entirety, with their family clustered around its base. Will it be the less memorable, more ephemeral experience of Flower...
that local pedestrians will remember? It is these habitual passers-by who will see the form melting softly into the dusk of many summer evenings and blossoming sensuously into the dawn. Flower is perfectly planted in the garden of sculpture in the season of sun and sky.

Elizabeth Fearon

TIM HAWKINSON

The Power Plant
Contemporary Art Gallery
231 Queens Quay West
June 17 - September 4, 2000

With the finesse of inspector gadget and a simple playfulness American sculptor Tim Hawkinson walks us through his psyche and the role he/she fills and informs in a mechanical/biological environment. Curator Philip Monk has selected 16 works from 1997-2000 in an effort to coherently represent this internationally respected artist's intentions. To further illuminate and place Hawkinson's work in context, both L A Weekly art critic Doug Harvey and Monk have created catalogue essays. As in past Hawkinson exhibitions in New York, Japan, and Los Angeles, it is the text on the wall cards that will most immediately help the viewer to understand this complex work.

A case in point is Bird (1997) which stands 1 x 1 x 1.75 inches. This piece is a bird-like skeletal structure one may freely associate with flight, museum visits, and extinction. When we realize that this fragile form is made out of the artist's ground fingernails and super glue it acquires a deeper resonance. We associate it with our life span, individual sacrifice, toxic adhesives, and contemporary cement.

DOS LTD

Kâxlâya "Grîlîs: Heiltsuk Art and Culture examines works and artifacts of Heiltsuk artists created at a time they came into contact with white culture in great detail. A must see for enthusiasts of North West coast Native art, Kâxlâya "Grîlîs: Heiltsuk Art and Culture brings together approximately 50 objects from the ROM's collection including tools, basketry, ceremonial puppets, bows, walking sticks, staffs, blanket boxes, musical instruments, jewellery, painted masks and fishing gear. Many of these were collected and donated to the ROM by the Reverend Dr. R.W. Large, a Methodist missionary who lived among the Bella Bella between the years 1898 and 1910. When he collected these treasures of Northwestern Native Art, Reverend Large combined the somewhat contradictory approaches of the museum professional and the missionary, but the Heiltsuk people were encouraged to actively participate in creating works for the collector. Interestingly, Bella Bella was not a traditional 19th century native community but a new model Methodist village at the time. The Heiltsuk used European tools for their crafts and artwork, worked for wages in fishing and other industries, dressed in European style clothes, lived in single family dwellings, learned English, and practiced Christianity. Despite these changes, the
When Urge donated the objects he procured with the collaboration of the Heiltsuk peoples to the Northern Provincial Museum in 1901 and 1906, he greatly helped future ethnologists by actually attributing some of the donated works to five known Bella Bella carvers/artists: Chief Robert Bell (1859-1904), Captain Carpenter (1841-1931), Enoch (died 1904), General Dick (1822-1902) and Daniel Houstie (1880-1912). Thus a lineage of traditional Heiltsuk art is now partially established.

The Tartan Years (1967-1976)

Ted Godwin: To the Tartan Years

Mackenzie Art Gallery

May 12-July 16, 2000

There is no overwhelming temptation for writers who have met Ted Godwin to preface comments on his work with a description of the man himself. Paula Gustafson, for example, leads a 1992 Clivyscope article with "Ted Godwin is a big, garrulous bully—bear of a man... [a] social animal, louder than anyone else at a party, intimidating lesser mortals with grand gestures and truly awful crude jokes, his booming vitality camouflaging his other, equally robust persona of poet." A first meeting with Godwin— with his meaty handshake, theatrical presence, hyperbolic opinions, instant confidences and horrific possess—is enough to inspire anyone to become a diarist. More a figure from fiction (Henry Miller? Jack Kerouac?) than a living person from Regina(!), Godwin's paradoxical balance of Falstaffian extravaganza and mad monkish studio practice is a key to why his paintings differ from his painterly heritage and more intellectual or introspective colleagues.

If, at 67, post triple-bypass and post alcohol, Ted Godwin is a painter version of his earlier self, that self must have been truly terrifying. Cataracted to (relative/Canadian) art stardom as the youngest member of the Regina Five in 1961, he tore through the remainder of the '60s and '70s experimenting with all manner of experience and art materials before coming to an abrupt semi-retirement—heart surgery, disability pension, a return to his birthplace, Calgary, and landscape painting—in the mid-1980s. This exhilarating period is chronicled in rollicking memoirs included in the catalogue to the exhibition Ted Godwin: The Tartan Years (1967-1976). His version of the hard living, hard drinking, he-man artist's life might only be cartoonly in retrospect if it weren't linked to some extraordinary studio production.

Nickle Arts Museum (Calgary) director Ann Davis has rescued from storage a series of beautiful paintings of loose, watery grids Godwin made at the height of his career. They are playful, colourful, always harmonious, somewhat decorative, and yet rigorous and serious embodied investigations. Why were they neglected for so long? A relative latecomer to the glory days of abstraction, by the time Godwin got to his project, and had some success with his experiments, the art world had already moved on. But unlike most work from the second or third generation of painters who took their lead from the New York School, Godwin's work does not, today, seem nostalgic or derivative. You get the sense from these paintings of someone struggling, not so much to find or express, but to pull together.

Standing before a painting like Voice of Fire, by Godwin's mentor, Barnett Newman, with its metaphysical aspirations and sublime achievements, a viewer is unlikely to wonder much about the person who created it. And that would suit Newman who wanted the viewer to wordlessly commune with his paintings in a meditative, ecstatic event he called "omeness." Though inspired by Newman's attitude toward painting as a serious, even sacred, activity, the extroverted, more material and experimental Godwin was not so much interested in purity and a search for the absolute as he was obsessed with exposing the machinery of his restless investigations: "I am insistent that the carcass of chaos, Godwin was a barbarian seeking to subdue his inherent chaos through pattern.

As the thorough, entertaining and insightful catalogue for this show demonstrates, Godwin is, in his promiscuity with materials, techniques and ideas, beholden to no school of art or thought. He is an eclectic sensualist who seeks to trust only that which he can mix, roll, spread, attack, and seduce with his hands. There is an orderliness to these works and a desire to please, but they always seem on the verge of falling apart, evaporating. Because the grids are veil layered rather than woven, they are fragile. If they hold ideas, experiences or simply the trace of their making, it is a bond that seems ready to dissolve the instant we look away.

Davis describes Godwin as "a random abstract thinker." His thoughts are abstract and random because his heart and hands are elsewhere occupied. Godwin's strength is not intellectualism or even his apparent spirituality. He does not build (Newman-ish) portals to the infinite but constructs pleasurable experiences for the present moment of seeing. The best example of this, and of Godwin's humour, is High Rise #1. From a distance, the purple and ochre grid painting looks out of step with the other works. Up close, and especially after reading the title, you see a photo-realist painting of a brightly lit, modernist apartment building, complete with balconies and uniform drapery. Painted in 1970, it has the irreverent freshness of works by recent artists who are making playful twists on formalism. Like the man, Ted Godwin's paintings are gregarious, playful and take up a lot of room. They are snapshots not to be missed.

David Garneau

Ted Godwin: The Tartan Years (1967-1976) originated at the Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary and is on view at the Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina from May 10th to July 20th.
accentuated by the actual exhibition context, which uses recorded sounds of drumming and chanting, subdued lighting, and has its walls painted in colours that simulate the artist's palette.

The inclusion of artwork by various other Kwagiulth artists, members of Hunt's extended family encourages viewers to appreciate the complexity of the Kwagiulth art form. A kind of artistic exchange takes place between Richard Hunt's carving and such works as a Mungo Martin Thunderbird Mask, a magnificent Killer Whale by Henry Hunt Sr., a rare Tony Hunt Bee Mask. The patina of exchange is most visible in two model poles. One is carved by Henry Hunt Sr. before his death in 1984 and depicts an eagle, a crest that belongs to the Kwagiulth at Fort Rupert often used by the senior carver. Richard Hunt's response pays tribute to his father's last carving. Three eagles are incorporated into the piece, two at the front, and one at the back. The similarities and differences between the two poles create a silent dialogue between son, father, and grandfather, making the expression, "through my father's eyes" seem quite literal. A Wolf Headdress (c. 1985) made for Hunt's daughter, Sarah to attend Henry Hunt's memorial potlatch, personalizes the gallery experience of his carving, as does the inclusion of Richard Hunt's Thunderbird Headdress, used to initiate the Hamsa Dance. Two serigraphs use designs that are playful and contemporary, and include both formal and narrative elements. The first, a print used to raise funds for a Big Brothers and Sisters golf tournament, depicts an eagle on a golf green. In the second, we see a dancer mimicking a hopping Brother of Thunderbird. It is a brilliant evocation of a traditional Artus design full of vitality and humour.

Over the years, Richard Hunt has produced a large number of artworks, many of which form part of the Royal B. C. Museum's Potlatch Collection. Members of contemporary aboriginal families may now borrow these ceremonial objects for use in their (now legal) Potlatch celebrations. During his career as a carver, Hunt, whose Indian name was Gwe-la-yo-gwe-la-gya-Ush, Usutus, "a man that travels, and wherever he goes, he potlatches" has traveled extensively throughout the world giving carving demonstrations and educating people about his culture. His artworks are now in international collections, including a totem pole commissioned by Queen Elizabeth II for Windsor Park, England. Since leaving the B. C. Provincial Museum in 1986, Hunt's work has become increasingly popular. He continues to produce masks, serigraphs, clothing designs, jewelry, and larger objects for private and public collections. Richard Hunt's designs were included alongside other aboriginal art in the 1994 Victoria Commonweal Games, the same year he was awarded the Order of Canada, and he recently completed a monumental public art sculpture for Vancouver's International Airport.

Without a doubt, the strength of this exhibition relies on Richard Hunt's ability to carve masks of extreme beauty. Many of these masks have been created for ceremonial use and have been danced at Big House celebrations. They are infused with the magic of ritual and the ancient legends to which they are attached. When the masks are used in native ceremonies, a deeper meaning is extended to these objects in a way that can rarely be communicated in a gallery setting. Kwakwaka'wakw chief, Robert Joseph expresses this idea profoundly when he says: "In a world of endless change and complexity, the mask has offered a continuum of drumming and chanting, subdued accentuated by the actual exhibition context, which uses recorded sounds of drumming and chanting, subdued lighting, and has its walls painted in colours that simulate the artist's palette."

Through My Father's Eyes pays tribute to the diverse artistic practice of Richard Hunt, a Kwagiulth artist and carver and celebrates his commitment to the ancestral traditions of the Kwagiulth people. The exhibition includes over 100 works created by the artist in a 52-year period, and occupies two galleries in the Greater Victoria Art Gallery. Selections loaned by the Hunt family, the Royal B.C. Museum, private collectors, and from the artist's collection include masks, carvings, ceremonial regalia, totem poles, prints, jewelry, and art on clothing. Hunt's strong, confident and stunningly beautiful work is further Through My Father's Eyes, the strength of this exhibition relies on Richard Hunt's ability to carve masks of extreme beauty. Many of these masks have been created for ceremonial use and have been danced at Big House celebrations. They are infused with the magic of ritual and the ancient legends to which they are attached. When the masks are used in native ceremonies, a deeper meaning is extended to these objects in a way that can rarely be communicated in a gallery setting. Kwakwaka'wakw chief, Robert Joseph expresses this idea profoundly when he says: "In a world of endless change and complexity, the mask has offered a continuum of drumming and chanting, subdued accentuated by the actual exhibition context, which uses recorded sounds of drumming and chanting, subdued lighting, and has its walls painted in colours that simulate the artist's palette."

VANCOUVER

THE NEW
AVANT GARDE
MIRROR'S EDGE

Vancouver Art Gallery
750 Hornby Street, Vancouver, BC
(604) 662-4700
March 18 - August 13, 2000
CURATED BY OKWUI ENWEZOR
CIRCULATED BY BILDMUSEET,
UMEA, SWEDEN,
TRAVELING TO TORINO,
ITALY AND TEAMWAY, SCOTLAND

Mirror's Edge is the most challenging, important exhibition of contemporary international art to be seen at the Vancouver Art Gallery in recent memory. Thirty artists with ties to twenty-two countries present an extraordinary range of work.

The best way to enter the maze of this packed exhibition is with a sense of play and some abandon. Many of the pieces appeal to the real experience of the visitor, provoking a pleasurable anxiety akin to a circus funhouse as the unexpected and the unfamiliar yield new insights about self and that which exists outside of self.

Okwui Enwezor, born in Nigeria and working in the United States, focuses his writing and curating on contemporary African art in local and global contexts. Mirror's Edge reflects some of the thoughts he will take with him as the next director of Documenta in 2002. Enwezor proposes a new avant garde that will transform Western dominance of cultural production and lead the way to a global culture. He believes some contemporary artists bypass and resist the binary oppositions of "real" and "fictive", and seek to reclaim authentic agency in the discovery and representation of new experiences. Essential to this is the location of an intermediate space where the "real" and the "fictive" can interplay with surprising results.

While this show has neither a multicultural intent nor an ethnic viewpoint, it nevertheless departs from a Nigerian position. As Fisher notes, the avant garde that Enwezor identifies relies on "cultural producers entering the Western metropolis from hither to disenfranchised spaces, who had their own stories to tell..." Yinka Shonibare, born in London and raised in Nigeria before returning to England, creates historical costumes and settings out of his own crossings between cultures. Murial-size photographs of scenes in the life of a Victorian dandy — featuring Shonibare himself incongruously costumed as a British gentleman — parody historic salon paintings and feature films. He usurps a cultural position, and throws into question our ways of understanding history, moral codes and differences in others.

One of Shonibare's scenes of a gentleman in a private library applauding Shonibare the erudite
dandy appears in a book about contemporary African art co-edited by Enwezor and fellow Nigerian Olu Oguibe whose interactive website and CD ROM Ethnographicia are in Mirror’s Edge. In this fictive anthropological research project, Oguibe mixes invented ethnic types with categorizing texts, thus creating incongruous and startling results. By disrupting familiar historical accounts, Oguibe questions the categories of difference ethnographer’s invent, suggesting it tells more about them than the real individuals they purport to represent.

Raymond Pettibon (USA) and Pascale Martine Tayou (Cameroon) employ words and images in an immediate, personal interplay of the real and the fictive. Pettibon’s ink lots on paper sheets tacked to the wall and Tayou’s urban graffiti are small eruptions of real experience through chunks in the enclosing structures of popular culture and media. Pettibon’s private musings plunder images and sayings from any arena – religion, music, entertainment — with apparent randomness and chaos. Tayou’s Tourneur en rond is a labyrinth the viewer enters and traverses. Plastic bubble-wrap covers the circular wood hoarding, a disposable surface that Tayou covers with felt-penned graffiti and comments. Random messages and motion-sensitive alarms confront us without warning, making our passage confused and anxious. Urban experience is disordered and perilous, but also potentially transforming, as we adjust our ideas of self and other. Henrik Håkansson (Sweden) expands art into the realms of natural science and popular entertainment with his electronic manipulation of insect sounds. In The Monsters of Amphitheatre Tour, a scaled-down concert stage pens hundreds of live crickets whose chirps are picked up by microphones, then electronically modified and amplified by rock concert equipment. The crickets seem to represent real nature, yet live a contingent existence in an artificial ecology. The absurdity of their insertion into a prevalent system of mass entertainment challenges our ideas about both popular culture and nature.

While many of the works in this show appear awkward next to one another, independently conceived projects by Lisa Roberts (France, Finland) and Thomas Struth (Germany) expand each other’s meanings. In Roberts’ enclosed installation of two silent colour films, a pair of women viewing from within and through a café window sits playing on either side of a gap closed by a large sheet of plate glass. Through this ambiguous window we see Struth’s photowork on the opposite wall. Struth’s large C-print shows Titian’s Pieta (containing a self portrait of the artist) in the Venice Academia as it is viewed by tourists while seated on a bench. As in Velasquez’ paintings, here are endless layers of viewpoints and relationships. The visitor enters and negotiates an unexpected and interrupted passage through Robert’s viewing space, in which different categories of art, space and time compete and undermine the the viewing subject. Works such as these, and many others in Mirror’s Edge, do appear to stage the correspondence between the Real and Fictive” that Enwezor sees as the project of a new avant garde.

Joan Richardson

PARIS

THE TEXTURE OF THE TRIBE
SYLVIA SAFDIE
AUTRES TERRITOIRES/ OTHER PLACES
Centre culturel canadien
5, rue de Constantine, Paris
March 17 - June 3, 2000

Montreal artist Sylvia Safdie made a strong showing of her recent work in an exhibition at the Canadian Cultural Centre on rue de Constantine.

The exhibition brings together a critical mass of drawings executed on mylar in earth pigments and oil. In them, the artist traces dense microcosms of human figures and their shadows, all the while teasing out the texture of the tribe. These deftly delineated human forms wander through the vast translucent spaces of the mylar background in a variety of poses: lurching forward, suspended, or even flipped upside down like marionettes on an invisible string. Though always accompanied by others, they project a sense of isolation — solitary figures reaching out even when shrinking down to nothing. These elusive normads emerge as silent interlocutors of our own identity. At times, their configurations point to the essence of our earthly presence and to the charged, yet silent spaces between us. Other drawings resemble a gathering of miniature geolom, lieo clay figures barely detached from the earth that has shaped the and from their dense and even messy surroundings. Digital imprints and obscured fragments of text might be embedded in the same earth.

Against the smooth opacity of the mylar, the figures assume a rich relief, stepping out into the viewer’s consciousness away from the territory of representation into one’s own discursive space. Arranged in groupings variously titled Earth Notes, Earth Marks and Notations, among others, Safdie’s almost musical variations strike by their insistence. Like explanation marks in a landscape of memory we struggle to recover. They are thematic explorations of journeys into the void, made up of unex-pected movements and secret codes. Safdie’s rigorous, disciplined probing into an ostensibly simple theme brings out the strength of her technique and the compelling thrust of her organic medium. The strong tactile quality of the earthy pigments imbued with an unmediated power from both the stiUness of the earth and the Book of the World (Sylvia Safdie and the Book of the World), a critical mass of drawings executed upon the canvas and the mylar background in a variety of poses: lurching forward, suspended, or even flipped upside down like marionettes on an invisible string. Though always accompanied by others, they project a sense of isolation — solitary figures reaching out even when shrinking down to nothing. These elusive normads emerge as silent interlocutors of our own identity. At times, their configurations point to the essence of our earthly presence and to the charged, yet silent spaces between us. Other drawings resemble a gathering of miniature geolom, lieo clay figures barely detached from the earth that has shaped the and from their dense and even messy surroundings. Digital imprints and obscured fragments of text might be embedded in the same earth.

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