SACKVILLE, NB

TROUT RIVER GULCH: PHOTOS BY THADDEUS HOLOWNIA
March 15th - April 1st, 2002
Fog Forest Gallery,
14 Bridge St., Sackville, N. B.
Tel.: 506-536-9000 / e-mail: gallery@nbnet.nb.ca

Thaddeus Holownia is mainly known for the photographs that he has taken around the Tantramar Marsh in New Brunswick. This is the place where he has lived and worked over the last twenty-five years. Holownia has, of course, taken photographs in Canada, the United States and Europe, but it has been those taken closest to home that come to mind when many people think of his work. The photographs in this exhibition are very different not only for the place where he has lived and worked, but also in their execution. These photographs were produced during a Gros Morne National Park Artist Residency, a program co-sponsored by Parks Canada and the Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador. Holownia is the first photographer to have taken part in this residency. It has given him the opportunity to make several trips to Newfoundland to take photographs in the Gros Morne Park.

The twenty-four black and white photographs in this exhibition were taken along a sixteen kilometre stretch of road in the park between a place called Woody Point and Trout River, also known as Trout River Gulch. This is a desolate place, yet Holownia has been able to find great beauty there. Like many of his other photographs, these were taken with his custom built large format, 7 x 17" view camera and then printed as contact prints. Unlike most of Holownia's other large format pictures, many of these photographs have a narrow depth of field. The photographer is known for his images that have razor sharp focus from foreground to background. This results from using a very narrow, or small aperture such as f/6.4 or even f/2.8. The new narrow focus photos were taken with the lens wide open (f8) and using 305 and 450 mm lenses. This results in pictures where the depth of field can be measured in millimetres. A single section of a branch of a tree might be in sharp focus while the rest of the photograph will be in soft focus.

A majority of photographs in this exhibition are a sub-series that Holownia titles Tree Calligraphy. It is an apt title, as the trees in these photographs have been twisted into calligraphic-like forms by the harsh forces of nature in this lonely part of Newfoundland. There are photographs in this series that are taken in exactly the same place over a period of several months by this method. They reveal how different the same place can look in the summer and then winter.

All of the photographs in the exhibition are beautiful. This is not surprising, as beautiful is a quality common to all of Holownia's work. Indeed, some critics claim that Holownia's vision whitewashes the reality of nature and, in turn, of life itself. This is not a criticism that I would accept, as I believe beauty to be very important, if not central to art, but I also admit to being a romantic. Photography can be a difficult artform to criticize. A lot of people who own cameras think of themselves as photographers. In truth it takes a fair bit of vision, as well as a good grasp of technical knowledge to be a photographic artist. Holownia has both of these skill in spades.

The photographs in Trout River Gulch are flawless, but it is the artist's vision that makes them art. It is Holownia's ability to see beauty in places that others would pass by that makes the crucial difference. Even then there is more to taking a great picture than just finding the time and place and pushing a button. You need real skill to get it right. The exposure is one thing, and a real important thing it is, and the other is making a decent print. Holownia's prints are far more than decent. They are objects of beauty. Comparing the late American photographer Ansel Adams' photos of national parks with those Holownia made for this show in one of Canada's national parks - Gros Morne, Holownia does not fare badly. His prints are of a similar technical quality to Adams' and he also shares the American's love of photographing the natural landscape with a large format camera. Holownia, however, different from Ansel Adams in that he will do a number of photographs on the same subject or place over a period of time. Three sets of series photographs: Headlighting, 1974-1977; Rockland Bridge, 1981-2000; and Juliaca Pond, 1996-2000, were recently included in a major German exhibition at Hamburger Kunsthalle in Hamburg titled Monet's Legacy, Series-Order and Obsession. Holownia was the only Canadian artist to be included in this important exhibition.

The Sackville exhibition is a prelude to a major exhibition that the Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador are mounting in 2005 of the photographer's work. It will subsequently tour Canada after its Saint John's opening. Thaddeus Holownia is an artist whose work I have followed for a quarter of a century and during that time he has become a major artist whose work will endure. The works in Trout River Gulch are simply wonderful photographs. Virgil Hammock

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en permanence

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Membre de l'Association Professionelle des Galeries d'Art du Canada
MONTRÉAL

PRISONERS OF AGE: THE ALCATRAZ EXHIBITION

Photos by Ron Levine
(Montreal: Synchronicity Productions, 2000)

Ron Levine's photos of lifetime prisoners in North America's prisons complete with accounts that form the basis of this book, are both revealing and upsetting, for they document a world of broken dreams, expectations, and sheer stupidity. As the Montreal-based photographer comments in the book's preface: "In March 1996 I walked into a geriatric prison for the first time. I was expecting metal bars, tiny cells and hardened criminals ready to pounce from every dark crevice of the institution. What I found was not unlike a nursing home, but oddly juxtaposed with barbed wire and guard towers. There were men who required walkers, canes, wheelchairs... men attached to IV drips, oxygen tanks and catheters. My first thought was: What can these men possibly like seeing on the web at Ron Levine's prison project can an objectivity that opens up a whole tank's and catheters. My first thought were who posed with barbed wire and guard a nursing home, but oddly juxtaposed with a real­ crevice of the insti­ from every dark crevice of the insti­ from his considerable legacy of artis­ tings a cornucopia of traces that draw​​​​​

The subject of an exhibition at the McClure Gallery, Michael Merrill uses the photograph as both reference and as a medium of expression. The show consists of three large flash-in-masonry panel paintings, one small circular work (London), and a selection of collages integrating photos in the work. Citing Bill Vazan's photographic reflections from the early 1970s, Alan Palemunt, and Escher as influences, Merrill's paintings deftly defy gravity as they recreate sites and spaces of human habitation using 360 degree panoramic perspectives. He achieves this by rearranging the photographs into a schematic layering on the front plane.

The show's title, Pan­ morphic means both pan (denoting all) and morph (denoting form). So in a way these works can be considered fundamentally formalist. That said, they also work as potentially subversive representations of how mass culture can impose itself on the artist's vision and the creative process. This exhibition ushers in a new distinctive episode in Merrill's work. (Previous to this he used his own body as source material for painting on casts, extending his visual method of working to appropriating living environments as site.) This new work carries a cornucopia of traces that draw from his considerable legacy of artistic activity from the past. The resulting works arrive at an original voice.

In the painting Ottawa (Snow­ fall), a view from the Wellington bridge looking deep into the heart of the downtown district, Merrill achieves a technical mastery of the scenery, and there is a dynamic an­ archy to the way he renders this scene with a panoramic 360 degree perspective. The poetic gravitational pull of the large descending snowflakes keep the painting from physically unsettling the viewer. These works are an extension of a series of similar works done while Merrill was in Paris for three months. Bringing exterior photographic doc­ ments back to his studio, Merrill set about using the reflective pan­ orama to explore the potential of the photo­ graph as a vehicle to discover new ways of representing space. Merrill considers his oeuvre, once to time, to be an "implied self portrait". This work is self referential, even though it also explores sites in their entirety.

The work titled Studio. St. Henri is another fine example of Merrill's mastery of composition. Taken from rearranged photographs of a studio in St. Henri, this virtuoso spiral­

OTTAWA

GHITTA CAISERMAN-ROTH

Nov. 29th - Dec. 31st, 2001
Galerie d'art
Jean-Claude Bergeron
150 St-Patrick
Ottawa, Ont. K1N 5J8
Tel: 613-562-7836
Fax: 613-562-1677

Long a part of the Montreal arts scene, Ghitta Caiserman-Roth is holding a rare exhibition event at the Galerie Jean-Claude Bergeron. The show consists of a wide ranging selec­tion of exploratory print and multi-media works that demonstrate the range Caiserman-Roth has achieved in the printmaking medium over the years. Born in Montreal, as a child she painted under the guidance of Alexandre Berevich and went on to study printmaking in New York City with Harry Sternberg at the Art Students League. She likewise studied with the painter Moses Soyer and graduated from Parsons School of Design. It was Sternberg who intro­duced Caiserman-Roth to the prints of Goya, Daumier and the art of Mexican revolutionary artists Posada, Rivera, Siqueiros and Orozco. Their social themes ex­icted the young artist for their novel approach to real life subjects. An early lithograph from 1942 titled Fledgling, Mother Sending son off to War on view in Ottawa reflects this social realism tendency, integrating el­ements of the industrial and urban texture of life, factory buildings, a water tower, empty streets. The forms are austere and foreboding, but there is a humanitarian warmth to the pathos and tragedy implicit in the mother and son. Another delightful lithograph titled Dance Class (1943) interprets the graceful, elongated and stretching bodies of dance students at Martha Graham's Studio in New York with an elegant flow of lines and forms in space. Park Benches (1941), a pastel and char­coal piece, recalls Philip Sorley's soc­ial realism urban repertoire with its grouping of people and distinct 1940s coloration. The earlier works from the 1940s and 1950s offer viewers a rare glimpse at original
pastel, charcoal, and ink drawings, as well as oil on paper works in varied formats and sizes.

Albert Dumouchel's class at the École des Beaux Arts in Montreal (1962) was an inspirational and liberating influence on Caiserman-Roth's emerging talent, because of the artistic freedom she encouraged. Weddick (1961) an oil on paper work from this period has a Chagall-like imagism, with its characteristic of a married couple floating through the air, holding a bouquet of flowers. In the late 60s and early 70s, the Ottawa-based printmaker Jennifer Dickson encouraged Caiserman-Roth to branch out and take more chances with the printmaking medium, to use its unique characteristics to further advantage by combining plates, integrating other media and materials in her work. Caiserman-Roth comments: "Printmaking like any other art form is never just technique... although techniques in printmaking are difficult and demanding. What is the spirit behind the work? What is the artist trying to say? What is the particular quality of that artist? We can call it content but what we mean, of course, is the emotional content. We can call it the emotional content or meaning. We look for a fusion of how it is done with what it says. The tradition of printmaking going back to Rembrandt and remembering Hinter was a rich brew of past and present. However, rules are made to be broken, because this is how we push the boundaries further... through deeper self knowledge and the occasional breakthrough into new forms and ways of doing things."

Caiserman-Roth's expanded repertoire is on view for all to see at Galerie Jean-Claude Bergeron. It includes reprints from older plates, superimposing one plate image onto another in the same print, or repeating images in whole or part as a serial image. "A cascade of imagery: sunflowers, figures embracing, dancers, jugglers, acrobats, interior and exterior spaces intertwine and fuse together in Ghitta Caiserman-Roth's mixed media printworks. They develop internal rhythms and this flourish of forms, shapes, colours conjures up any number of unconscious associations in the viewer's mind. In the Family series, she incorporates painted images, symbols and decorative elements around the borders that live up the medium gesturally. Other works are literally painted on aluminum plates earlier used to print from. Dream-like images of faces and forms build up their psychological content in legs, as if these were memories collected and brought together from various times and places.

Among her many accomplishments, Ghitta Caiserman-Roth co-authored Insights, Discoveries, Surprises (Drawing from the Model (McGill-Queen's Press, 1993) with Rhoda Cohen, a book whose candid dialogue, photos of drawings, discoveries and insights when they shared a studio and drew together. The book communicates a lot about the art process in a very personal way, just as Ghitta Caiserman-Roth's art does, awakening dormant emotions and sensations with a strong sense of colour and feeling for the tenor of life."

John K. Grande

TORONTO

PETER DOIG: LANDSCAPES - CANADIAN STYLE?

December 8th, 2001 - March 3rd, 2002
The Power Plant
231 Queens Quay West
Tel: 416 973-4949

First, let's get over How Canadian is it? Sarah Milroy in the Globe and Mail referred to him as "the one that got away", and the gist of much discussion of this work turns on a question: Doig's generation never produced inside Canada. I'd say "escaped" to Rembrandt and remembering Hinter is a rich brew of past and present. However, rules are made to be broken, because this is how we push the boundaries further... through deeper self knowledge and the occasional breakthrough into new forms and ways of doing things.

When they're at their best, though, these paintings play a local, Canadian-specific variant on a formal landscape model: no earth-shattering surprises, but pictures that are romantic, spatially convincing, and a pleasure to look at in their expansive generosity of field. Oliver Goring

YOKO ONO - YES!

February 22rd - May 20th, 2002
Art Gallery of Ontario
317 Dundas St. W
Toronto, Ont. M5T 1H4
Tel: 416-977-0414

Between the icebergs of minimalism, conceptual and performance art, Yoko Ono forged a particular brand of time/(-)motion study with compassion and a basic humanist wisdom, manifesting this in a vast array of ways: as music, performance, objects, installations, in film. "I would like to see the sky machine on every corner of the street instead of the coke machine" Ono wrote in Grapefruit in 1964. Chance, the fusion and unusual juxtaposition of idea and object, and an ecletic mix of philosophical and religious world-views came together in Ono's art. As early as 1961 she performed A Piece for Strawberries and Violin, and AOS - To David Tudor at Carnegie Hall. The conceptual bias seen in Ono's art, most evident in her early 1960s and 1970s works, were part of the tenor or fashion of art from that era. A lot of this is on view at the AGO.

The Yoko Ono Yes tour, the first major retrospective of Ono's art production ever in North America, includes 150 works. Many are Fluxus inspired, with a particular attitude to object and materiality that is highly conceptual. Paul Levinson (1994-6) for instance, consists of a simple crystal sphere with the words: "This sphere will be a sharp point when you get the corners of the room in your mind." Three Spoons (1967), places not three, but four spoons in a plastic box (despite, or because of, the title). Duchampian tricks of the eye and mind informed with a Zen-like sensibility were always Yoko Ono's forte. While sometimes they seem a bit obvious, in the broader scale Ono's imagination and vision helped push the London and New York art scenes into the mainstream of Pop culture in the 1960s and 1970s. Her actions and writings liberated not only women, but men as well, from the habits and mores of the post-war patriarchies: FOR THE ROSES, NO BOMBS! We see it in..."
Sky TV (1966) a rare Ono videowork that featured a live feed of sky and cloud movement onto a gallery screen. Water Piece (Painting to be Watered) (1962-66) with its natural sponge, eye dropper and water, reveal that basic sensitivity to nature's energy, movements and processes. Yoko Ono never abandoned this wisdom and continues to thrive on the exchange between materials, energy and idea...

Among the objects, installations, works on paper, photodocs, and films presented for the Yest tour are Ono's classic 22 Instructions for Paintings (1962). Originally exhibited at Sogosha Art Center in Tokyo in 1962 Ono displayed instructions as paintings in an attempt to push the visual art to some optimal conceptual point. As Ono said: "It would open up a whole new horizon for the visual arts. I was totally excited by the idea and its visual possibilities. To make the point that the instructions were not themselves graphic images, I wanted the instructions to be typed." (An earlier, less purist series with instructions on canvases were shown a year earlier at the AG Gallery, New York.) Yoko Ono instruction painting: "Write five hundred telephone numbers on a canvas in a space as large as your palm. The numbers can be overlapped with one another. Also, the numbers can all be the same. Observe the drawing by enlarging it with a microscope. Also, you may take a view surfaces continually, in the her videos and films. Fly (1970) documented a fly moving across a woman's body — the commonplace event becomes epic. Her early fluxus films No. 1 and Eyeballstretch and elongate a moment into several minutes. These Ono filmic experiments pressaged Andy Warhol's later continuous real time time films. For No. 4 (Fluxfilm #6) better known as Bottoms, Ono captured a body bottom from derriere. The shots are so close-up, it becomes an aesthetic statement.

What remains, after all the 1960s ideas, concepts, idealism and excess baggage have evaporated in thin air! The LIONE view notes that these events, performances, art concepts were all about, documented in this exhibition — Yoko Ono Yest — are now heavily laden with self-importance. LIKE LEAD! None of this was ever intended to become ART! Nor was it destined for the Museum of Modern (F)Art (an early Ono performance). Even George Maciunas, that fluxus ringleader, deplored all the later merchandising and commodification of fluxus art. I personally find the new turn (not a U-turn) Yoko Ono has made into installation art, with the Wish Tree (1996), Cleaning Piece (1997), and more significantly EX IT (1997) seems the most aloof. Though these works are not in the AG show they have the most growth potential for future Ono art. Her EX IT piece has row upon row of coffins. Trees grow out of holes in the coffin lids. New life emerges from these body containers. It's a powerful affirmation of the ephemeral side of life. YES YOKO bridges the divide between art, nature and society with compassion, above all, and wisdom ONO YEST

John K. Grande

Yoko Ono's involvement with John Lennon opened up a whole exchange. She commissioned billboards stating WAR IS OVER! for Times Square, New York and DER KRIEG IST AUS! for Berlin in 1969. Accums for Peace (1969) consisted of one accordion made to each of the world leaders with a request they plant it for peace. John and Yoko's bed-ins for peace in the Amsterdam Hilton, and in the Bonaventure in Montreal, the Surrender to Peace and they took out in the New York Times (1983), helped fire up a generation who lived with idealism, loved their performances, and followed their passion and work with a passion. These interventions and actions often involved reduction, unfettering the materialist mind. Ono's comment "Make yourself dispensable, like paper" This ephemeral (Asian?) vista view surfaces continually, in the her videos and films. Fly (1970) documented a fly moving across a woman's body — the commonplace event becomes epic. Her early fluxus films No. 1 and Eyeballstretch and elongate a moment into several minutes. These Ono filmic experiments pressaged Andy Warhol's later continuous real time time films. For No. 4 (Fluxfilm #6) better known as Bottoms, Ono captured a body bottom from derriere. The shots are so close-up, it becomes an aesthetic statement.

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John K. Grande

OUT OF THIS WORLD: TEXTILES FROM THE SPIRIT REALM

The Textile Museum 55 Centre Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M5G 2H5 Tel: (416) 599-5321/ Fax (416) 599-2911

With war in Afghanistan, who thinks of the rug-weavers playing their trades amidst the bombs and tanks? Not National Geographic, who spent five years tracking down a green-eyed refugee with movie-star looks who'd graced their cover in the '80s. When they did find her and photograph her again, it came as a shock only to the editors and perhaps a few North Americans that she'd never been photographed in between times (or before the first time). Why on earth should she have been? The visual culture of Afghanistan, as well as Turkey, Iran, Uzbekistan, Chechnya and all around the Ural's and Caucasus, is astonishingly rich beyond the camera's reach. Although traditional Islamic culture prescribes recognizable imagery, in practice the knotted silk and wool rugs, the silver jewelry, the embroidery and the paintings are rich with images of all kinds.

The exhibition OUT OF THIS WORLD: Textiles from the SPIRIT REALM, curated by Natalia Nekrassova and Max Allen, is an intriguing collection of cloths, batiks, yarn painting and jewelry, that includes an informative section about materials and dyes. The seventeen Islamic prayer rugs on view are especially captivating, not only on account of their formal beauty, but also because they reveal a connection between the motifs of the artisan and experiences of her or his society.

The "war rugs", of which there is a 1900 example, were woven by Chichaito nomads, and incorporate such items as hehcopters and tanks. They've been touched, the work is fragile. The device (the text claims) translates brainwaves into code that alters the brainwaves, that is not some reality outside ourselves, but is the result of an interior process that makes and sustains our body image and its relationship to a world". The success of Pandaemonium depends upon which side of the Matrix you inhabit.

The installation occupies a dim space lit by two video projections on either side of a blue figure that lies on a table in the center of the room. Suspended above the body is a homemade virtual reality headset — all wires, exposed hardware and chassis. A wall text offers a cautious invitation: Though meant to be touched, the work is fragile. The device (the text claims) translates brainwaves into code that alters the abstract images we see projected on the right-hand wall.

The body is a plaster cast of a young man. He is of average height, bald and fit. Because the cast is coated with thermochromic paint, its tone fades slightly in response to the warmth of your hand. Touch is key to this work. As you glide your hands over the body, sensers activate the second screen and the VR headset — both show fuzzy video images taken from what look like old movies, including some Film Noirish scenes. (In my message I found six sensors.)

SASKATOON

THE EINSTEIN'S BRAIN PROJECT: PANDAEMONIUM BY ALAN DUNNING / PAUL WOODROW.

January 11 - March 10, 2002 Mendel Art Gallery
950 Spadina Cres. E.,
Saskatoon S7K 3L6
Tel.: 306-975-7617
Fax: 306-975-7670

PANDAEMONIUM is the latest edition of Alan Dunning and Paul Woodrow's The Einstein's Brain Project, a series of collaborative installations characterized by plays on simulation and reality and on the mind/body problem. As described in their artist statement: "The project examines the idea of the world as a construct sustained through the neurological processes contained within the brain. It suggests that the world is not some reality outside ourselves, but is the result of an interior process that makes and sustains our body image and its relationship to a world". The success of Pandaemonium depends upon which side of the Matrix you inhabit.

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ALIBI, the Einstein's Brain Project's
Anatomically Unlike Biological Interface
84 x 34 x 30 in.
Digital prototype by Alan Dunning
copyright Einstein's Brain Project 2001

The thesis seems to be that memory is distributed through the body and can be activated kinesthetically. The idea is terrific, but the images the artist chose are disappointing. Like the body, they are generic, Hollywood clips from half a century or more ago. It is difficult to develop a narrative or find anything specific about the mind/body that might have generated them. It may be that the artists suggesting that in the media age our memories are collective, engineered by movies and television. Even so, wouldn't the images that stick in an individual mind bear some infusing stamp?

The blurry projections, however, are magical and approach the uncanny sublime. They resemble a moment in the brilliant 1967 British sci-fi/horror movie Quatermass and the Pit (aka Five Million Miles to Earth). In a key scene, the hero scientist dons a strange headgear that transmits mental images from one mind to another. The blurry video-like scenes are ancient alien 'memories' stored in dormant human DNA — Jung's collective unconsciously with a Martian twist. The activation of these memories leads to chaos as people become possessed by their alien aspect. Woodrow and Dunning's Pandemonium has an equally engaging form but the content is not compelling.

It is important to see Pandemonium as part of a greater whole, The Einstein's Brain Project, which includes other installations and a website (http://www.ucalgary.ca/~enbrain). If you cruise the website you are likely to be more sympathetic. There is much poetry in this collage of ideas. The voice is that of a mad (computer) scientist who has overdosed on continental philosophy and cyberhype. The voice is convinced that it inhabits the threshold of a new paradigm. If you suspend your disbelief (hope and lived experience) and engage in the text's enthusiasm, you realize that the work is in the traditions of conceptual art and fiction. The play (of ideas) is the thing. If you immerse yourself in these solipsistic musings as a form of serious play, you are more likely to appreciate the alchemy; if not, the work may appear as gimmick. Woodrow and Dunning are like the Matrix's Morpheus and it is up to the viewer to choose the red or the blue pill.

Missing from their website is a consideration of what may be the 'real' content of Pandemonium. The installation sets up a situation where men, women and children are invited to grope a faux, naked, young man in the dark. I observed some uncomfortable people — particularly young men caught between technological curiosity and homosexual panic-searching for his erogenous triggers!

David Garneau

VICTORIA

VICTORIA BLOCK: SURFACES

Nov. 22 - Dec. 23, 2002
Galerie de la Ville
Centre des arts de Dollard
12001 de Salaberry
Dollard des Ormeaux
Tel.: 458-4102

Galerie St-Laurent + Hill
333 Cumberland
Ottawa, Ont. K1N 7J3
Tel.: 613-789-7145

Exposition permanente
Beaux-arts David Astrof
3650 rue McTavish
Tel.: 262-9212

For her latest show, Montreal artist Victoria Block has brought together a selection of recent ceramics and paintings. The latest paintings markedly contrast the large-scale pat-
into nature. The window effect establishes an immediate parameter or frame the viewer looks through or into. A tension is established between the landscape scene depicted and the paintingly surface effect. For its very inexactitude, and lateriser faire depiction of a landscape scene, the journey through recreates the visual/optical effect of being there. It is more about the sensation of things, than the recording or depiction of “what really represents”. No Gold Frame builds the same textural surface effect, recreating a landscape scene from near the Rivière Rouge region of Quebec. Victoria Block’s art has a spiritual dimension. This displacement of that sensation of the wilderness or landscape experience, transformed from memory, onto the surface of things—builds a new world of tactile effect and visual sensation. It has a life of its own. John K. Grande

CONTOURS: EXTENDED
PAINTING IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

December 7, 2001 - March 3, 2002
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
1040 Moss Street, Victoria, B.C.
V8W 1P1
Tel: 250-384-4101
Fax: 250-361-3995
courriel: aggv@aggv.bc.ca

CONTOURS, an exhibition that extends the language of painting, examines the work of ten artists — five from Victoria, five from Seattle. Based on past curatorial moments at the AGGV, CONTOURS recapels solo Seattle artist exhibitions from the 1950’s and 1960’s initiated by then director, Colin Graham i.e. Mark Tobey: Recent Paintings (1957), and Morris Graves (1959); and Seattle Now, a group exhibition from 1984 curated by Greg Bellerby. The most recent incarnation pairs the talents of Lisa Baldissera, Curator of Contemporary Art at the AGGV, and Matthew Kangas, guest curator from Seattle. As Lisa Baldissera notes, this exhibition is not intended to be a survey of Pacific Northwest work, but instead focuses exclusively on the production of ten artists’ work.

Tom Burrows’ polymer resin paintings (four diptychs), are beautiful objects – minimal and seductive. Milky Way (2001), pair two panels—one a deep, smoky aubergine and the other black. The latter has “Alphabits” that cluster in suspension, forming constellations reminiscent of the night sky. Like the paintings of Vija Celmins and Paterson Ewen, Tom Burrows’ works are elegant meditations on life and its passing. Victoria Arrangement (2001-2002), a painting installation by Seattle artist Susan Dory, articulates the wall. Seventeen panels of various dimensions employ a complex technique of sprayed enamel and wax on birch. Screened patterns emerge and dissolve as though viewed through the lens of a microscope. The randomly organized abstract patterns resemble structures found in nature. Three works by Isabel Kahn, a Seattle printmaker, reference traditional textiles such as kimono and prayer shawls. Kahn combines intricate layers of handmade mulberry paper mounted on muslin. She works small sections of alternating prints, mounting them together into architectural pieces like Grass Ladder (2000). The structure of this scroll is composed of twelve sections that combine ink wash painting with printmaking techniques. The Space Between (s 2001), a wall-sized mural in two sections has a rhythmic surface, organic, and punctuated with Hebrew text. Isabel Kahn’s art is heroic and formal, with an abstract language. In the spirit of Duchamp, Patrick Holderfield combines found objects — toys, car parts, and trophies, with painted poly-urethane foam. The protruding elements, like bloated organs, refer to the body and its hidden functions. Untitled (bumper) extends the metaphor of road kill into the realm of the absurd.

Seattle based Jesse Paul Miller’s Unknown Collaboration (2001), paints the wall casually with an image borrowed from computer programs. The patterns are repeated on the floor in organized collections of debris scraps found on the streets of Victoria. Miller’s other installation, 7 Light Drawings (2001), is a sound and laser light piece. The viewer “gets it” through the simple act of listening, physical action—pouring, dripping, and tilting, dominate the art practice of Mark Takamichi Miller (Seattle). The multiple layering of colour and image are skillful. Two of the six acrylic panels are titled: The Beginning of the World (2001) and The Origin of the World (2000), titles that seem to show how curious about time and place Miller is. Takamichi Miller’s paintings contain themselves within their contours. Like Takamichi Miller, Brian G. White (Victoria), immerses himself in the physical act of painting. The Beginning of the End (2001-2002), is a site-specific stripe painting that extends across the entire length of one wall: it is the wall. White’s practice is rigorously conceptual and relies for its effect on the viewer’s physical response (often described as vertiginous). Stephanie Aitken’s canvases are quiet places where nothing happens. Her imagery is private and poetic, obscure, and at times altered. Imagine a Juilet Oilsk canvas in which moths and butterflies or seed clusters and spheres of light are suspended. Imagine a lot of space in which for these forms hover between opacity and transparency, between being and becoming, Parish (2001), and Trappist (2001), are tiny fields of colour, fragile, barely there. We are attracted to their beauty. For all their delicacy, Stephanie Aitken’s paintings are resilient, and possess a tenacity for life. They nurture, and like prayers, protect us.

Jeremy Borsos’ Salon-style painting installation appropriates imagery from numerous sources. Susanna and the Elderberries (2001), is a spoof on the original and on its feminist revisions. Jenny, After Boucheur (2001), and To Forgive Is Human, to Err Divine (1999), further scramble our notions of painting and its traditions. Borsos’ audacious irreverence does not hide the brilliance of a mind that is constantly pushing the limits, demanding (of himself), new forms of expression. Twentieth Cen-