CARAQUET, NB

VISUAL ACADIA!
FESTIVAL DES ARTS VISUELS EN ATLANTIQUE
4th-7th July, 2002

With a unique and ever changing cultural mix, Acadia maintains its persona in the gestures and sounds that embody everyday life there. The popularity of local cultural manifestations such as the Festival des arts visuels en Atlantique, held annually in Caraquet, New Brunswick, is not confined to the young, middle-aged or old—but involves all the community. This initiative, which began as Caraquet en couleurs in 1997, consists of a brief and intense summer celebration of Acadian culture. It includes workshops for young people, four major exhibitions, a francophone visual arts competition, an Acadian book launch, an art auction, as well as a professional art show. There is even an on-site restaurant with local cooking.

Le défi de création en direct brought together 19 professional artists Carole Bherer, Michel Robichaud, Pauline Brulé, Dominique Crochet, Alex Thériault, Frederick Avery and Antoine Thomas from France, Jacques Lanteigne, Alexandre Robichaud, Jean Gallen, Nathalie Daigle, Gilbert Leblanc, Gorges Goguen, Jocelyn Philibert, Rita Lamontagne, and Roger Vautour. Unveiled during the event, Caraquet sculptor Norbert Gionet's Brise collective (2001) a fibreglass and bronze commission depicting a maritime boat, figure and sea, is to be sited in Caraquet's Fédération des Caisse populaires académiques. Festival host Lise Robichaud's installation Écrire l'avenir, with its flotilla of envelopes and image of hand writing alluded to time, place and memory, past, present and future. For the open competition this year, Lise Rocher won 1st prize for her ceramic and steel sculpture Hommage to Jean-Paul Riopelle and Françoise Magdée. Marie Hélène Nardini's Bagage Vial won 2nd prize and honorable mentions went to Gorges Goguen, Nathalie Daigle and Monique Côté. This year's Festival des arts visuels en Atlantique proved to be a lively celebration of, by, and with, Acadian art, culture and identity.

John K. Grande

SACKVILLE, NB

I'D BE A FOOL
7th ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF ART
Owens Art Gallery
49 York Street, Sackville, NB
Struts Gallery
7 Lorne Street, Sackville, NB
21-26 October 2002

This year marks the 7th annual international symposium of art in Sackville. Co-sponsored by Mount Allison University's Owens Art Gallery and the Struts Gallery, this year's I'd be a Fool symposium is centred around performance art. Performance art is not new. It can certainly be dated to the Dada period during, and after, World War One and the Happenings of Allan Kaprow which date from 1959, but it is an art form that continues to be controversial and within that controversy lies its charm. The press release refers to time-based art... Doesn't all art exist in time? At least when this kind of art is bad and it is over, it disappears without a trace, unlike bad painting and sculpture which continues to haunt us. Performance art is documented, but documentation is a poor substitute for the real thing: being there is everything...

Music in performance art is often performed by non-musicians under the vague premise anyone with an artistic license is gifted. The results leave much to be desired, just like painting by actors. For the Sackville event music is being performed by Motion Ensemble under the solid stewardship of co-directors and professional musicians, Andrew Miller and D'Arcy Gray. This group has commissioned works by composers who include Atlantic Canadians James Godle, Michael Miller and Alexandre MacLean, and will be giving public workshops on the work of the American composer John Cage on October 18th, 19th and 20th. Motion Ensemble will lead off the symposium with a concert featuring works by composers associated with John Cage, including David Tudor.

Symposium events which will happen in and around Struts Gallery include the very interesting Project Mobile: Bookmobile. The project is a bookmobile housed in a specially designed twenty-six foot vintage Airstream trailer. It features artists books, hand-made magazines and other independent publications.

The trailer will be parked outside the gallery and project staff workshops on the publication of hand made books and magazines will take place. Based in Montreal and Philadelphia, Project Mobile: Bookmobile tours Canada and the United States, stopping at public libraries, community, senior and youth centres. The project seeks to demystify art by letting ordinary people in on the act.

Three events during the week at Struts: DUORAMA, performed by Toronto artists Ed Johnson and Paul Collard; a performance by Ontario artist, Shane Boyle titled Honki-tonkisk, and a piece by Vancouver artist Smart Bodies. These events may prove more challenging to the public than the bookmobile. DUORAMA addresses the relationships and the social and political reaction to various aspects of gay culture. It does so by having the performers, among other things, engage the architectural surroundings. Shane Boyle's performance combines drawing with country and western karaoke and, finally Smart Bodies will work with her audience to uncover areas of public surveillance by using readily available technology.

The symposium will wrap up Friday night (October 25th) with a lecture titled Joseph Beuys: Prop for the Memory of Remnants of Doing Wrong by art writer and teacher Kristine Stiles from Duke University. Ms. Stiles is co-author, along with Peter Selz, of the reference Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Source Book of Artists Writings. Her lecture will question Beuys' Nazi past and may assert Beuys was more of a good Nazi than he led people to believe during his life. In all, the symposium I'd be a Fool promises to be a busy week full of surprises. It is the co-sponsors credit (The Owens Art Gallery & Struts Gallery) that this event occurs annually in Sackville and at Mount Allison University. Pots do need stirring every once in a while, if only to make sure we don't get too comfortable with our ideas about art and life.

Virgil Hammock
producing works that reflected the area, I gave up on working from photographs and remembered Hartley’s approach to his Memory Series. I then began to take on Hartley’s process and paint the light, shapes, and lines of the New Mexican desert I had left behind.” As a result, MacLeod developed a more acute eye for the qualities of local colour, the blue and purple light he had discovered while painting the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and desert mesa floor.

Scott MacLeod learned how to capture the essence of desert light the longer he painted there, but on his return to Montreal the real seeds of the Taos Memory series germinated into the celebration of the New Mexico landscape now on view at Victoria Hall in Westminster. Some of the paintings such as The Ceremony series (2002) constitute narrow vertical slices of the horizon reminiscent of Japanese calligraphic works. They are likewise suffused with the vibrant complimentary desert colours. The abstraction recalls California painter Richard Diebenkorn’s work but the colours are deeper with saturated hues and soft light. Others paintings based on visits to various sites in New Mexico including Abiquiu, Ghost Ranch, Pilar, and the Ranch de Taos, where remnants of the old pueblo settlements can still be found. The overall impact is of light suffusing and diffusing, and of majestic natural landforms, the ever changing atmospheres of the desert landscape.

John K. Grande

HULL

VIKINGS

NORTH ATLANTIC SAGA

Canadian Museum of Civilization
100 Laurier Street
Tel.: 819-776-7000
1-800-555-5621
www.civilization.ca

May 8th—October 14th, 2002

On the shores of the Ottawa River at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Vikings have landed! More than 500 artifacts from nine countries from navigational instruments, to agricultural tools, wood and stone carvings, jewellery, armor, a whalebone ironing board, and a scale model reproduction of the Viking Gokstad ship are here until October. Interestingly, a team of fifteen curators from museums around the world helped assemble this intricate weave of objects to bring an important part of North American and European history to the public.

Apparently, when evidence was discovered proving the Vikings had been in North America 500 years before Christopher Columbus, the Italians rioted in New York! The Vikings were pirates, and the loot they captured, some on view in Hull, evidences the range of territory they covered: a 6th century Buddha, a 10th century Irish cross, Runway’s 8th century copper and enamelled casket from Scotland, ivory chess figures from the Isle of Lewis. Looking at the swords, with their intricate design and construction one can only be impressed by the high level of Viking blacksmith work. A carved limestone slab from 8th-9th century Gotland depicts a Viking ship carrying the dead warriors to the afterlife in Valhalla where, we can see, fighting and feasting continue to go on! A mini-section that will delight children and adults, shows the famous Viking helmets from an IKEA version, to the Modern and too self-conscious of what sells and what does not. Lucy Tassor-Tutsweetok and Nick Sikkuak are two notable exceptions among the fascinating Viking documents and relics on view. Worth a visit!

John K. Grande

OTTAWA

KENOJUAK

PRINTS

National Gallery of Canada
380 Sussex Dr.
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9N4
Tel.: 613-990-1985
www.national.gallery.ca

April 5th—October 20th, 2002

This 40 year overview of Kenojuak’s art and life is a well kept secret. While some of these images now look stereotypical, others (mostly the earlier work from the 1960s and 1970s) are animated and full of life. The 1962 work titled Birds has an incredible animal even Mickey Mouse-like better than any Disney animator could conceive of. They display Kenojuak’s almost organic skill at merging line, colour and image to present an unconscious cosmology, something Saami (James Houston) recognized and encouraged early on. Why is Kenojuak never presented as a contemporary Canadian artist?

The famous Kenojuak print The Enchanted Owl (cut by Iyola King-watsi & printed by Eegyvudluk Pootoogook in 1960) is an icon of Canadian art... that eventually became a postage stamp! Kenojuak images have penetrated Canadian households as poster images, but not enough has been said about the aesthetic of Kenojuak’s art. Maybe there has been too muchcape Doses print production without serious critical input into the content and style (something that could help their art to evolve and grow). This mini-retrospective of Kenojuak’s art does not remedy the sorry state of the art in the print co-ops and the Innu art exchanges. A lot from art is stereotypical and too self-conscious of what sells and what does not. Lucy Tassor-Tutsweetok and Nick Sikkuak are two notable exceptions to the rule, and there is always new talent, but it needs to be recognized and supported!

Surprising images surface, like Kenojuak’s first earliest print, Rabbit Eating Seaweed (1958), based on a design from a seal skin bag she made in the early 1950s. These early prints, and the drawings in particular, are imaginative, and with a sensitive use of line and texture that highlights the inner world and cosmology of Innu culture. We would like to see more such work, but sadly, technique of...
The Enchanted Owl, 1960
Stonecut in red, blue and black on laid paper
61.0 x 66.1 cm
Collection National Gallery of Canada

Kenojuak Ashevak

Water Drawings

KARILEE FUGLEM...
WATER DRAWINGS
Leo Kamen Gallery
Suite 406, 80 Spadina Avenue
Tel.: 416-504-9515
r.holt-kamen@sympatico.ca

Kariilee Fuglem continues to explore aspects of the ephemeral with her new Water Drawing series on view at Leo Kamen Gallery. Best known for the Breath of Breath was exhibited at CUMSC in 1995, Fuglem has recently experimented with the colourless medium of water, brushing it directly onto tracing paper. The first results were exhibited in a show titled Secret Visibility. Fuglem’s Water Drawings are a must see!

SASKATOON

TALES OF TWO VALLEYS
The Mendel Art Gallery
950 Spadina Crescent East
P.O. Box 655, Saskatoon
Saskatchewan S7K 3L6
Tel.: (306) 975-7610

June 13th—September 2nd, 2002
Qu’Appelle: Tales of Two Valleys, the Mendel’s programming centerpiece for 2002, considers Saskatchewan’s most famous valley...
from multiple historical, social, industrial, spiritual, visual, textual, even medical points of view. More than an exhibition, this multimedia event includes two art shows and a well-designed and informative website (http://quappelle.mendel.ca/exhibition/) that includes histories, school projects, recollections, comments, and filmed interviews and slide shows from writers, artists, and Piapot elder, Beatrice Lavalle, and a very cool virtual tour of the shows. The gallery has arranged on-site and outreach educational programs and a two-volume exhibition catalogue.

The historical art survey, co-curated by Robert Stacey and Dan Ring, is a collage of paintings from the 1840s to the present. There are dozens of big and little scenes and portraits, mostly hung salon-style, by C.W. Jefferys, Inglis Steldon-Williams, Nicholas de Grandmaison, Ernest Lindner, and others. Many are little known varnished, muddy views, or brighter confections. They reveal an imported Romantic gaze that figures both the original inhabitants and “grandure” of this modest little valley to suit the needs of recent colonizers. The immigrating farmer who judges the whole of southern Saskatchewan from these oasis pictures. But there are also some sensitive surprises from early and mid-20th century by artists such as Illingworth Kerr who seems to be searching for something of the place itself, or for something of himself in this place.

The works by contemporary artists are familiar but, in this context, enlightening. They range from modernist documentaries by Gregory Hardy, Dorothy Knowles, Landon Mackenzie, etc., to attempts to evoke hidden meanings of the valley: Bob Boyer and, especially, Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak’s crowded video installation, Blood Records, which examines the “Fort San” tuberculosis sanatorium. Exceptional and thorough though it is, Qu’Appelle: Tales of Two Valleys is too much of too little. It is a native experience filtered through an international caliber art practice. Poitras offers complex challenges, not solutions.

Broken is a wooden replica of the Fort Qu’Appelle stone obelisk that marks the Treaty Four signing. Poitras’ version commemorates broken treaty promises, it is a symbolic deconstruction and reclamation (the structure is fitted with Bison horns); and the translation from stone phallos to dismembered wood is a funny revenge wish.

Residential Girls (2002) has 62 framed photographs of Aboriginal girls lined up on a shelf that passes through a white wall. The photos were rescued from a rural school group picture. While the assembly line suggests the regulation of Indian bodies by the combined institutions of religion and school, Poitras’ salvaging and separating of the individuals from the group asserts the fact that these people are individuals. Their passage through the white wall (if they conform) is a more indelible description of assimilation than any book on the subject.

Because he is Métis, Poitras is both a physical and cultural site of the mixing of the cultures that inhabit the valley. This unique intertwine and amorphous is reflected in thoughtful and witty work that tends to interrogate, underline ironies and express ambivalence rather than simply record and denounce or celebrate.

Finally, while this provocative exhibition is eager to be exhaustive, inclusive and generally fair-minded to the many views of this valley, it is puzzling that the title, Tales of Two Valleys, insists on inscribing a division between dominant culture and First Nations. There is one valley and many, not just two.

David Garneau

VICTORIA, B.C.

RON NOGANOSH

IT TAKES TIME

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
1040 Moss Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 4P1
Tel: 250-384-4010
Fax: 250-386-3995

July 12th–Sept. 22nd, 2002

Cecilia looked at him with horror, and then, to his shock, she threw herself from the fast-moving car. The whiskey was clouding his mind, so it took him a long time to realize what had happened and stop the car. He hurriedly put the car in reverse and sped backwards to find her and see if she was injured. The rear of the car bounced up and down with a terrifying scream of anguish he realized what he had done. At the trial they said that he had passed her from the car and then had deliberately backed over her. They said that he had had too much to drink and didn’t know what he was doing, and that instead of sending him to jail they were recommending that he go to the hospital for a while...

The narrative above refers to the experience of growing up Native on a reserve in rural Ontario, on or around 1956 and is an excerpt from Anon Among Us written by Ron Noganosh.

The issues of identity and displacement embedded in this text echo the complicated, unresolved histories shared by the original people and the dominant culture, descendants of the the New World “discovered” by Columbus. Within this discourse of difference, the sculptures and installations of se­nor Ojibway artist, Ron Noganosh, hover with honesty and eloquence. Since the 1980s, his work has addressed the concerns any contemporary Native community struggles with in defining itself.

Using the shield as a cultural icon Noganosh began to deconstruct its form. When asked what a shield might represent to an Amerindian, his response was, “alcohol.” Inspired by a drinking binge, Noganosh’s first shield was named Shield for a Modern Warrior, or Concession to Medals and Teeth in Indian Art (1983). This quick, dark, wit informs much of his shield production. Shield For a Yippie Warrior, (1991) pairs hide, fur, beads and bone (Indian artifacts) with silk fabric and a designer label (consumer artifacts). A similar critical edge is established in That’s All It Costs, a shield that juxtaposes a Hudson Bay blanket with a shredded American flag, Tiny Dollar Store trinkets—a deer, a teddy bear holding a Canadian flag, an Indian in regalia, dangle informally from the fabric.”

Two earlier works, Been There As It May, (1998), and Turtle Shield, (1996), are meditations on the ephemeral nature of culture. Invested with irony and humour, Noganosh’s sculptures are spare and beautiful.

Inews (1999), pairs a trio of toy fighter jets with a Big Horn sheep’s antler. Similar elements are echoed in another work, Where the Buffalo Roam Where the Deer and Antelope Play, (1991). This sculpture elicits a somber response because Noganosh tells us, through metaphor, what we know is true: deforestation and clear-cut logging practices are destroying our environment. Miniature animals and fighter jets, antlers, chain saw blades and a dead tree trunk form a visual narrative integral to the sculpture’s meaning and prove how Noganosh knows how to manipulate objects and the relationships they bear to one another. Massey Harris (1985) relies on a similar semiotic format (of signs and signifiers) to deliver its political punch, while Shraerling (1994) whose title is the Viking word for Native People activates the space with its dramatic structure.

Noganosh’s 1999 video installation, Anon Among Us is a moving eulogy to twenty-six of Noganosh’s family who have died violent deaths, often due to alcohol. Their names are projected on the wall behind a crude grave site consisting of a mound of dirt and a wooden cross. The piece bears witness to an epidemic situation of neglect in a country where national pride is dismaying of its original people. Now on view at The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

Linda Giles

Ron Noganosh

BELLA, MY SISTER—DRANK HERSELF TO DEATH AFTER HER FAMILY DIED