ST. JOHN, N.B.

A NATIONAL TREASURE IN NEW BRUNSWICK

JAMES BARRY'S THE DEATH OF GENERAL WOLFE

New Brunswick Museum in Market Square until 31 December 2003

www.nbm-nmb.ca

James Barry's The Death of General Wolfe has been in the collection of the New Brunswick Museum since 1928, but it has never been displayed before at the museum's Market Square location. This installation also marks the painting's return to Saint John after a three year hiatus at the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI). The results of this restoration are spectacular. The painting looks as if it was completed yesterday. No one is really sure of the exact date the painting was completed, but it was first publicly shown at Royal Academy exhibition in 1776, where it was the subject of some controversy.

The Irish born James Barry saw himself as a worthy competitor to his more famous colleague, the American born Benjamin West. Both were working in London at the end of the 18th century. West had shown his version, now in the Royal Academy and his painting slipped into obscurity. The central question is whether Barry's painting is an equal to West's more famous work. In a word, No. West was a better painter and his The Death of General Wolfe a better painting. Barry's painting is very good in the same way that Antonio Salieri's music is very good, but it was not as good as Mozart's. There are times, however, when I enjoy listening to Salieri and I certainly think that Barry's The Death of General Wolfe is worth viewing and, in particular, because of the way that it is placed in context in this installation. Surrounding Barry's paintings are a number of other works relating to the General Wolfe portrait. They include two small and interesting copies of West's masterpiece by unknown artists, one painted on metal, the other on canvas. They provide a way of comparing West's and Barry's pictures. West puts the paint down in a nicer way than Barry. Of course, one could only truly judge which painting was better if they were exhibited side by side. This was done a couple of years ago at the National Gallery of Canada in an exhibition titled The Many Deaths of General Wolfe.

The Saint John exhibit also includes a small study of the head of General Wolfe by the 19th century British artist, George Romney. The study was made for a now lost version of the death of Wolfe by Romney, an equal, if not a better, painter than West. There is also a Wedgwood jug (ca.1778) decorated with a transfer print of General Wolfe's death on display. The jug demonstrates the popularity of this theme with the general public at the time, as does a satirical engraving based on West's painting by the caricaturist James Gillray - The Death of the Great Wolf (1785). The engraving depicts then prime minister William Pitt the Younger surrounded by his party colleagues dying on the battlefield of politics. The entire exhibition is from the New Brunswick Museum's Webster Canadiana Collection put together by museum founder Dr. John C. Webster (1863-1950) and donated in 1984.

Dr. Webster actually traced the whereabouts of the James Barry painting and bought it for his own collection, a story elaborated on at the museum's website. A finely curated exhibition, and well worth a look!

Virgil Hammock

MONTREAL

ROMANY EVELEIGH: FIELDS OF SILENCE

Espace 527 372 St. Catherine W.

Art provokes many emotions, from visual pleasure to visceral anguish. What the mixed paintings of Romany Eveleigh offer is refuge from the avalanche of stimuli that our modern society is subjected to. And so much more... For eyes honed on art, Eveleigh's works are a reminder of what painting can and should be, and what constitutes good art.

The daughter of the designer and painter Henry Rowland Eveleigh (1903-1990) Romany was educated in Canada and Europe. She has been exhibiting her works internationally since the 1950s. Eveleigh's paintings are a rare treat in Montreal, which makes her latest exhibition at Espace Théâtre Dion in the Belgo building all the more significant. Her canvases are composed of large, almost entirely monochromatic planes, quiet fields of muted browns and sepia, marked by a minute fissure, a line of dots of white paint that cuts into the sombre universe with delicate persistence. This final pictorial gesture is an act of ultimate courage, irreversibly altering the tableau while at the same time awakening it. Eveleigh is never hurried and applies the paint delicately, persistently. The process results in large geometric spaces, planes that form and dissipate. They seem to be lit by a barely visible light. It lingers beneath the surface, disturbing the composition's tranquility. Contemplation is at the root of her works, a seriousness and a refusal to compromise, coupled with a masterful handling of the very art of painting.

What sets Eveleigh apart from most contemporary abstract painters, is the unbearable simplicity and "humanity" of her canvases. Her works are instantly recognizable for their elegant sophistication and unobtrusive visual vocabulary. There is almost a sense of atavism in her signature, earthy palette that recalls the deep tones of fresh soil, inviting, quieting the senses, comforting. Even when she suddenly reaches for a different colour; her choice is that of green, which only further accentuates the organic, living atmosphere of her canvases. It appears in several of her recent paintings, its role reduced to that of a remnant, vestige of a colour plane, almost entirely covered by a milky white that spills, pours down slowly, like glass in window panes over centuries. In her works, two layers co-exist, two worlds that overlap but never intrude on one another as the painter alternates between them.

If abstraction is indeed the de-materialization of the art object, then it may be difficult to consider Romany Eveleigh's paintings truly abstract. Rather than deconstructing, her paintings seem to be at the threshold of a new form. "What is consistently reductionist and sparse in my work is not a sought-after end, but a sought-for-beginning," she once wrote, and there is little to add. The line between banality and the sublime is very fine, but in the case of Romany Eveleigh, it is never crossed.

Dorota Kozinska

PAPA PALMERINO & THE GREAT ANTONIO

Darling Foundry / Quartier Éphémère
745 rue Ottawa
Oct. 22 to December 7, 2003

On view in the cavernous space of the Quartier Éphémère is an installation of important artworks and documentation of two Montreal legends. The two are Papa “The Pope of Montreal” Palmerino and Antonio Barichivich, known to Montrealers as The Great Antonio.
Curated by Marcus Macdonald, this departure into outsider art marks a new direction that contrasts the trendiness that appears to remove itself from pretension yet remains inevitably linked to academic trapping. Like other great discoveries such as the former slave and black artist Bill Traylor, these two men lived their art without tipping a hat to anyone other than creativity itself. This exhibition is refreshing for its sincere homage to these truly folk art heroes.

Sorgente's selection includes glass bead-encrusted statuary of the Madonna. The outer look of these statues is of a shimmering and hallucinatory Catholic imagism. Hothi hats encrusted with a variety of gliterring stones, glass cases of brass rings, handmade rosemary necklaces, and many objects of veneration, reveal an artist on the fringes of kitsch sentimentality. Despite this, Sorgente remains grounded in the ultra serious messagery of Christ and the Catholic church. These works are so kitsch they might have inspired Lisa Neighb or to integrate them into the illuminated neon heraldry she is known for. Still a healthy eighty-five years old, Papa Palmerino Sorgente has risen to the occasion of recovering from a devastating fire in December 2000 that claimed most of his life's artwork. Considered by many to be a latter day saint, Sorgente has come through the debacle with flying colors, and an astonishing vitality.

If Sorgente's muse has been electrified Catholic signs and symbols, then The Great Antonio, who recently passed away in early September, might be regarded as being a muse unto himself. Heaven was his roof, and his diaries, as it were. Upon entering into the gallery, the lovely operatic voice of Antonio serenades from the ceiling, an arti-

fact of his many talents) gently caressing while one peruses the biographical documents of The Great Antonio's life. Photos from the 1950s depict him as a pro wrestler, and there are even early photos of Antonio in his native Yugoslavia. Other photos are of photo ops with celebrities and politicians. They line the walls, testament to The Great Antonio's life. Of particular interest are his numerous collages and postcards, and these recall the glory days of the 1960s. One show The Great Antonio pulling STCM buses down Saint Catherine Street. These visual creations are funny, well composed and are works of art in their own right. The postcards started in 1972, and up until his recent passing away, The Great Antonio could be found on the streets of Montreal distributing them to passers-by. He was allowed to ride the metro for free, acting as an ambassador for the STCM. Starting out as a street-dore in the Old Port of Montreal, Antonio's reputation as a modern-day Hercules grew in direct proportion to his appetite for fame.

The Great Antonio was a colossus of Everyone who managed to win the hearts and minds of a turbulent patch of time, of wrestling fans and culturalt agents alike. This show reveals how important it is for custodians of culture to preserve the legends of Montreal, long after the public has ceased to pay attention to them. An excellent tribute to two respectively prodigious artists.

Elliott Augustine

ERLING VALTRYSON: SILENCE AND SERENITY
Galerie d'art Suzanne Baron-Lafrenière
October 1 - November 15, 2003
Tel.: 514-486-6634

Norwegian printmaking has a long and illustrious history. The woodcuts of Edward Munch were replete with imagery of the landscape, sometimes with hard-beautiful women or could they be goddesses? From Bergen on Norway's west coast Erling Valtryson is another kind of printmaker, but equally accomplished, and contrary to Munch's angst and guilt ridden sturm und drang, his mezzotints have a serenity and composition that feels timeless. Over the years, Valtryson has acquired a significant reputation for his mezzotints, to the extent that he exhibits regularly in Japan and is highly regarded there.

Valtryson's mezzotint technique requires him to "rock the plate" manually for up to five hours a day, and for large plate images he has worked for up to 50 hours on a single image. The rocking process achieves a deep black density whereby an equivalent mechanical process would lack something of the rhythmic intensity. The mystical quality of these still life mezzotints on view can include bizarre conjunctions of objects, a clothes peg, antique teacup, wine glass, and eye glasses, all in the same composition.

Like a museum of memory, Valtryson works on our perception of a form or formal grouping in a composition using his mastery of chiaroscuro (light-dark contrast) to develop an intense image. A wrapped asparagus becomes almost a ritual object with his treatment. While Valtryson earlier in his career worked on abstract forms, he has developed a kind of magic figuration, where hyper-real elements are juxtaposed in bizarre, often surreal combinations. These immaculately executed prints can be borderline macabre, as with Like an Angel (2002). Here, a partially bandaged hatted figure is curiously framed by abstract architectures. The dynamic aura is mediascal and cluttered.

Though these mezzotints are clichés, they exploit the ordinary in an unusual way and in a unique medium Picnic in Moonlight (2002) has a cat who steals amid stones while a typical nordic landscape worthy of Munch or Christian Krogh resonates behind this. This is Valtryson's second show at Galerie Suzanne Baron-Lafreniere. While these works can have a quietude and stillness that can be unsettling, others, like Sleep (2002) with its hybrid hibernating chameleon / seahorse and streaking comet in an eternal sepia sky - are sincerely poetic and eventful.

John K. Grande

DONNA SHVIL
LIGHT FALLS
Donna Shvil at Galerie de Bellefeuille
1367 avenue Greene
Tel: (514) 933-4406
www.debellefeuille.com

A portrait is a picture of a person with something wrong with the mouth.

(John Singer Sargent)

It is not by chance that a quote from a great American portraitist opens this review. Both, his words and his art resonate through the work of Donna Shvil on view at Galerie de Bellefeuille.

Her almost entirely monochromatic paintings focus not so much on the human figure, as on the play of light and shadow. Her models are but a pretext for the exploration of this ethereal universe, and the dialogue of two opposing and opposite worlds, those of darkness and light.

With a title as nuanced as Blur, the portrait of a woman, her face half-hidden in the shadows, is a masterfully accomplished exercise in capturing the elusive quality of light, whether reflected from the hand the model holds to her face, or filtering through murky curtains in the background. The composition is grounded by grid of the window frame, its shadow dancing on the textured fabric.

This geometric accent takes centre stage in a work titled The Glass House; Prism, in which vertical strips of light change hue turn-
Noreen Mallory has been fascinated by herons since her childhood in Brockville in eastern Ontario. The Great Blue heron has traditionally migrated and stopped over in the nearby marsh areas of the Rideau Lakes region. The present exhibition is an homage to the life of the heron species. In After Hard Winter!, Mallory depicts a heron nest damaged by the ice storm, which destroyed the heron’s habitat and eastern Ontario nesting area. A semi-circular image of a beaver hut superimposed on the checkered landscape plays up the contrast of two distinct species, and that the sharing can be fascinating in the Heronry works that adds to their visual and textural richness.

One of Mallory’s environmentally sensitive mixed media paintings depicts a series of heron nests atop a forest of dead trees in a marsh area near Brockville. We are made aware that this is a sophisticated community of birds. This image of the collective architecture of birds’ nests atop tilting trees above a swamp in the chaos of nature, is interesting. Mallory’s art seems to communicate a simple message, that we can share the life we experience on the earth with other species, and that the sharing can add a healthy dimension to the life experience. There is an aura of exotic unreality to Heronry and Beaver House II. It integrates the semi-circular image of a beaver hut with that of a heron’s nest on a tree top. The notion of shared habitat of creatures living in direct contact with one another, is enhanced by Mallory’s integration of innovative collage techniques. All manner of materials, and lengthy shreds of paper, textured and coloured, furthers the inherent material richness.

In this stunning portrait of Madame X (Madame Pierre Gautreau), the 19th century artist created the same kind of optical paradox, by placing the unquestionably human body of the woman in a black, strapless dress, that resembles a void. She seems to be a woman in a chair seems to be composed of a different material, superimposed on the checkered background, her bare limbs all soft skin against the blurred, alien background.

This pictorial juxtaposition takes on sensuous and almost surreal tones in a work titled Out of the Blue, that recalled a painting work by John Singer Sargent. In this kind of optical paradox, by placing the unquestionably human body of the woman in a black, strapless dress, that resembles a void. She seems to be a woman in a chair seems to be composed of a different material, superimposed on the checkered background, her bare limbs all soft skin against the blurred, alien background.

The exhibition also includes Shvil’s signature Brugmansia flowers, their wilting petals turning an unusual red, almost flesh-like colour. The 24-hour life span of these tropical organisms, she focuses on their anthropomorphic characteristics without ever losing her painterly touch and these unusual portraits have the feel of an old master’s painting.

Dorota Kozinska
their mandate is non-commercial. So the co-operative galleries fill a much needed gap for artists and public alike. The missing ingredient in government funded galleries is spontaneity and the calendar scheduled show can be its greatest hindrance. The oldest Toronto co-operative gallery is Mercer Union which has been around for over 23 years. A danger with any institution whether commercial, governmental or independent co-op is that the shows and artists can be predictable.

The current show at Propeller boasts a range of artists, including rammed earth sculptures by Lois Dellert. Using nature-based materials to build formal geometric sculptures, Dellert has modernist architecture in mind, but these skyscrapers are nature-based and have colourful geo-layerings. Fogo Island, a small community of 250 people off the Newfoundland coast inspired Frances Key. Her series of polaroids with watercolour pencil additions evoke a quality of past memory. This museum of memory can be vertically arranged as a triptich of polaroids, or can include a 3-D ladder and small scale painting, *Haïtaland*, Susan Lukachko’s mixed media on mylar innovation investigate the suburban lawn. Photo of grass close-up become the subject for further glue and graphite additions. Inspired by Robert Flaherty’s *Man of Aran* documentary film about Inis Mor in which an Irish family struggles to survive on a wild island, Kathy Goldman’s photographs present the exquisitely detailed hand built stonewalls on one of the Aran Islands, off the West Coast of Ireland. The next exhibition at Propeller features Ian Revell’s ephemeral and evocative C-Print photos of clouds from November 5th to 16th.

Located in the Queen West Gallery District, AWOL provides a unique environment of gallery show space and shared studio settings. One can feel the creative and open atmosphere while visiting and talking with some of the artists. Their innovative contemporary art ranges from abstract to realism, and photography to sculpture. AWOL, was founded in 1999 by a group of artists who had left Propeller, the seven founders included Dale Thompson, Ross Bonfantil and Sandra Tarantino. This artist-run co-operative space is operated like a business. There have been large group shows that have included non-member outsider artists. As Ross Bonfantil answered when I asked him about AWOL’s future: “We are starting to become more established. We have taken five years working at it. We are serious about putting on shows and we work hard. The large exhibitions are organized outside the gallery as umbrella
world. The best comparison is with the music industry where independent labels can work, or alternatively can fail. The rest, as the saying goes, is up to the individual. Gallery 1513 is located in the heart of Parkdale, a community with a rich history, a diverse population and an active arts focus. Once a bedroom suburb of Toronto, Parkdale has had a troubled transitional history but now it is becoming a hip neighborhood. The Gallery opened its doors in January of 1998 and became the new home of the Parkdale Village Arts Collective, a group of 80 artists from across the GTA practicing a wide range of artistic practices. Gallery 1513 hosts about 22 exhibitions a year in the main gallery and another 20 in the members or Cell Gallery. A third gallery exhibiting video and smaller art installation and smaller exhibitions. The Gallery receives submissions for exhibitions from across Canada and overseas. Korean artist Helena Kwon will be exhibiting light box, photo and painted work at 1513 in November. Loop Gallery located nearby at 1174 Queen St. West is another such co-operative gallery. While the actual space is quite small like AWOL, it is accessible and the public is not intimidated to enter as is so often the case with “official” contemporary public galleries like Power Plant. A diverse range of shows are presented at Loop including Maria Gubankova: New Paintings (to Oct. 19) Lorne Towes: Recent Work (Oct. 25 to Nov. 16) and Mike Legrady (from Nov. 20 - 30). There is also a comic book launch at the space for Conundrum Press’s Contemporary Canadian Narrative Art on Friday November 21st.

Ontario also has an artist’s co-operative called EBA (Enriched Bread Consisting of 23 core artists, the co-operative has studios on two floors of the building and all spaces are occupied. The EBA merges the meaning of art and bread each year with an open studio in October (the same date The Standard Bread Company originally made its first bread there in 1924). For their events the EBA does have commercial sponsors who provide some financial support and services. This co-operative is a resounding success and a community within and unto itself. The idea and creative exchange going on there continues through the years and evolves. The EBA co-operative is a vital forum in the Ottawa community for artists and the arts.

**BILL BURSTON: GRIDLOCK**

**Engine Gallery**

1112 Queen St. W.  
Tel: 416-531-9905  
enginegallery@rogers.com

**Beyond the Grid**

35 x 48  
graphite on styrene

As Bill Burston comments in a gallery statement for this show: “There are only 256 shades of tonal grey available to the naked eye.” With these engaging images, he certainly seems to be exploring wide variety of these tones somewhere between the number 1 and 256. These experiments with graphite on polystyrene are unusual for they have a near photographic appearance while they are achieved by non-reprographic methods.

Using gridded shapes, graphite powder and an acrylic medium, Bill Burston generates an astonishing number of variations on the grid with surface textures to die for. Burston’s art can be sensuous, and can call to mind Man Ray’s experiments with rayograms. The grey graphite textures are like memory passages from early black and white films, and the abstract surface patterns and light dark contrasts likewise recall the days of early cinema and Constructivist photography. The difference is these forms are more physical and tangible. Analogies have been made to organic forms, or even fractals, but all these cogs, wheels, and solitary or overlapping grid structures challenge our eye on a purely perceptual level. Graphite and a tangible graphic sense make these artworks very Burston-esque!

John K. Grande

**DEGAS SCULPTURES**

Art Gallery of Ontario  
Oct. 11, 2003 - Jan. 4, 2004  
327 Dundas St. W.  
Toronto M5T 1G4  
www.ago.net

Hilaire-Germain-Edgar De Gas (1834-1917), or Degas as he is better known, was an Impressionist and keen observer of Paris society and life. His pastel and oil sketches of ballerinas, dancers, musicians and café-goers celebrated 19th century Paris society and everyday life with an intimacy and keen sense of the observed moment. While Edouard de Goncourt once called him “the painter of laundry women and ballet girls” Degas’ sculpture is less well known. He exhibited just one wax sculpture in his life, titled Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen, at the 6th Impressionist show in 1881. Critics of the era considered the sculpture to be vulgar and “low”. Like Dammier and Renoir, Degas chose to sculpt later in life to achieve a greater “realism” in three dimensions.

Using the same models as in his paintings, Degas made wax models of horses, dancers, and nudes. The realism he sought was furthered by the use of actual cloth material for the sculpted dancer’s corset and
ballet skirt in Young Dancer (1888). Presenting 73 posthumously produced casts after Degas' wax sketches from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Collection in Copenhagen, the Art Gallery of Ontario offers us a glimpse of the quotidian life in Paris captured with his wax studies of these gems are in this show. There is less of the media culture derived source material in Stephen Lack's latest show at Gallery One. The surprises include a series of printed and scaled plaster car sculptures. These are prototypes Lack calls G7s. Amorphous, these Porsche-like objects have a sexy feel, but mounted on rigid steel structures, they look like design prototypes for display. This blurring of the line between art and design makes these predictable sculptures. Lacks, Ferraris... These Dream Symbols are disinhernated like an earthquake after-shock rather than the real thing. Media neurosis, it seems, has been institutionalized in America's mind-scape.

The paintings Lack excels in are portraits of suburban pre- or after-life, painted with that dull video or TV glow (a hallmark or keynote of Lack's best works). Monk's Daughter (2003) is one of the best. A young girl in a blue dress stands on a front lawn, seemingly abandoned or alone while the parents are elsewhere. The gloomy sky and the lifeless lawn, both conspire to make this a portrait of impending or implicit doom. State of the World (2001) is an 8 panel extravaganza. The same image is in each of the panels, just the hue changes... like dialing up your favourite colour combination, the way people mix and master colour imagery on a computer. Porsche on Steel (2003) is a sharp horizontal piece - a sports car to the left and a tiny yellow-orange window to the right. The car - a freedom symbol - builds a counterpoint with the tiny window – which is suggestive of containment or imprisonment. Boy at the Lake (2003) shows youth 1960s style. A paintings like this begs the question: How innocent can Americans really be after all they have been through with 911 and the 2nd Iraq War? Another question Stephen Lack's curious painterly scenarios entertain: What will Americans do with all that lost innocence? Maybe just re-invent it and market it all over again!

**RON BLOORE: A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME**

The Art Company
Oct. 15 - November 2, 2003
744 Queen St. W.
Tel: 416-864-9009

**STEPHEN LACK: PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS + PROTOTYPES**

Nov. 1 - 22, 2003
Gallery One
121 Scollard St.
www.galleryone.ca
I blushed more than once while walking through Daring Confessions: Romance and the Modern-day Girl. Tetyana Gershuni’s luscious painting of hypertrophic chicken parts arranged with robust gynecological intent did it. Calculating how often Risa Horowitz had bowel movements and orgasms during her thirtieth year also warmed my cheek. Curated by Alexandra Strandal for the Mendel Art Gallery, Daring Confessions features work by Robin Arseneault (Calgary), Lissa Robinson (Calgary), Tetyana Gershuni (Sudak, Donetsk, Ukraine), Andrea Cooper (St. John’s), Risa Horowitz (Winnipeg), and Eliza Griffiths (Ottawa). All these artists are women in their late twenties and thirties considering the place of romance in our feminist, and not, era. For every satirical jab at the absurdity of the social constructions of romance, there are heartfelt evocations of unrequited desire and passionate confusion.

Tetyana Gershuni’s Delicatessen, is a corpulent, seductive painting offering a queasy comparison between female genitalia and a grocery chicken. The deadpan joke sticks in my cheek. Curated by Alexandra Strandal for the Mendel Art Gallery, Daring Confessions features work by Robin Arseneault (Calgary), Lissa Robinson (Calgary), Tetyana Gershuni (Sudak, Donetsk, Ukraine), Andrea Cooper (St. John’s), Risa Horowitz (Winnipeg), and Eliza Griffiths (Ottawa). All these artists are women in their late twenties and thirties considering the place of romance in our feminist, and not, era. For every satirical jab at the absurdity of the social constructions of romance, there are heartfelt evocations of unrequited desire and passionate confusion.

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metaphor for an almost too stereotypical western Canadian culture. Introduced as a counterpoint in the centre screen is an image of the artist projected onto an early 20th century watercolour landscape. The question remains...How much do so-called old Canadians actually relate to these conservative stereotypes? Is Jin-me Yoon’s artform a conservative rephrasing of colonial and post-colonial history? How much is the new Canadian manipulated by curators and art gallery directors for ulterior motives?

Truly fascinating are the underwater films titled Memorial Project Vietnam (2001, 2003) by Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba. These films are a reconciliation in the artist’s mind for the great tragedy of Vietnam’s boat people many of whom died at sea in search of a new life. In the video we see cyclo-drivers struggling to move their bicycle transport along the Indochina sea bed. This common form of primitive transport/taxi is now being outmoded in Vietnam and so, the video becomes a symbol of loss of some intimate culture amid global era economic intervention in Vietnam’s history. We see these drivers rising to the surface for air, then re-descending to continue their struggle to cross this metaphoric, largely unseen underwater terrain.

Other artists include Fiona Tan whose fashionable double screen video captures the coming of age ceremony in Kyoto mixing a tourist, documentary and artistic style. Sharon Lockhart’s Teatro Amazonas (1999) documents Amazon kinship relations and presents a video that presents the audience as subject. They watch a film in a 19th century theatre in Manaus, Brazil and we watch them. A poignant commentary on changing cultural identity, Lockhart’s work re-phrases and re-interprets ethnography with a post-colonial sense of irony. The thrust of her work is fatalist and does nothing to actually change the world she is pseudo-documenting.

At the risk of being called reactionary, the real installation work that uses materials, and creates actual forms, such the multi-media suitcases of Yin Xiuzhen, are truly fascinating. Yin Xiuzhen’s Portable City is sewn into a suitcase. These soft cuddly buildings are Claes Oldenberg-esque miniatures, memorials that are hand-crafted yet relate feelings of exile and nomadism common to new world migrants or immigrants with great sensitivity for that no-man’s land of displacement. The same goes for Do-Ho Suh whose camp-like tent structures were set up in a New York apartment (2000). Everything in the installation has an inflatable or reconstructed/deconstructed portable temporariness, evoking his Seoul family home and New York apartment... exciting!

All in all, this is an engaging and challenging show, part of one trend in contemporary art, struggling to recognize the hybridity and temporal nature of cultural life in a very politically predetermined global miasma.

John K. Grande