

English Reports

Volume 44, Number 179, Summer 2000

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/53060ac>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

La Société La Vie des Arts

ISSN

0042-5435 (print)

1923-3183 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

(2000). Review of [English Reports]. *Vie des arts*, 44(179), 76–81.



Geneviève Cadieux
Rubis, 1993
Colour photographs mounted
on plexi-glass with aluminum frame
268,6 x 358,8 cm
Beaverbrook Art Gallery Collection

FREDERICTON

BEAVERBROOK ART GALLERY

703 Queen Street

GENEVIEVE CADIEUX

Until November 1st, 2000

EUROPEAN
MASTERPIECE SERIES:
VENICE BY CANALETTO

6 July - November 1st, 2000

There are two very different exhibitions currently on view at Fredericton's Beaverbrook Art Gallery: works by Montreal artist Geneviève 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 Giovanni Antonio Canle, 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, Piranesi, Tiepolo 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 *Santaggio 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.

Virgil Hammock

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 idiosyncracies, the markings of experience that are part of each person she depicts. Her subjects aren't beauty queens or idealized Adonis', but everyday people. The marks of their personal experience emerge amid 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.



Jean-Pierre in striped shirt
Pastel
104 x 76 cm

Shirley Katz considers two of her main artistic influences to be Egon Schiele and Alice Neel, but the dignity she imbues her subjects with is equally reminiscent of Montreal painter Louis Muhlstock's realist paintings and drawings from the 1930s. Most recently Shirley Katz has exhibited her pastel portraits in solo shows at Galerie d'Avignon (1999) and the Centre culturel de Verdun (1998). Her work was represented at Pratt & Whitney's *Les Femmeuses* (2000) and a group exhibition organized by the Thomas More Institute this May. Shirley Katz will be the subject of a solo show of her recent drawings at the Hollywood Art and Culture Centre in Hollywood, Florida that begins April 27 and continues until June 25th. As Katz states: "I draw the human form because it offers an infinite range of gestures and expressions: each one of these offers the opportunity to discover or invent new surfaces."

John K. Grande

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

capture 180 degree vistas. The difference is not so much one of style as it is of scope, for now landscapes can be found at both the bottom and top of each work. As Bates states: "This format evolved from the need to paint out of doors and still be able to achieve sizes suggestive of great space. When that is the way I look at landscapes 'out there', it amuses me that it has taken so long to join that action with the concepts. I did not anticipate the 'world view' concept. I simply began to see more clearly and to play with the conceptual scope of the vistas." This shift in scale and conception is most evident in the largest 12-panel piece titled *World View* (1999). Each successive panel follows on directly from its adjacent and complementary section in *World View*, but the links are not exact and suggest a shift in perspective, akin to the way we actually perceive the land and sky when walking out of doors. Though painted in the landscape, *World View* no longer represents a real place but more a place of the soul. We see stars peeking through the central space of sky. The scale shifts from earthbound to cosmological as our eye proceeds from land to sky and returns to an inverted landscape at the top. It is as though we were looking through a double prism.

We sense an unseen energy and movement pervading the whole scene. Another 10-panel piece *Mount Owl's Head* (1999) recreates three different levels of depth: foreground, mid-ground and sky. The sky seems to go on forever. The brushwork varies according to each specific section of the piece. The trees and mountain details are painted in a traditional landscape style, while the sky section to the right is freeform, abstract and gestural. It reflects: "A growing concern for the land, the planet, the possible cooperation between mankind and nature, the social uses and misuses of nature". In *Spring* (2000) the sense of a rebirth and awakening of the land is captured through Bates' intense colourful brushwork. Her strong identification with the landscape places Bates' work firmly within the Canadian landscape tradition of Maurice Cullen and J.E. H. MacDonald, yet she takes it all a step further. The surface of a field is made to express in microcosm what Bates' multi-panel pieces do in a macrocosmic way: the universal energy found in nature that permeates all things. Among the most visually rewarding works in this show are the bright two-panel studies which achieve the same land-sky-land effect from bottom to top in micro-scale that the multi-panel pieces do.

Catherine Young Bates new *Vistas VI* series of paintings still reveal a love of the land, yet follow an ever more soul searching path through the forests, fields and mountains of Quebec. With a purely painterly poetic vision Catherine Young Bates describes what she strives to capture best when she com-

ments: "I reach to touch the colours and fall into the arms of the world" Nature is a force Catherine Young Bates now alludes to with an ever broader, more cosmological scope and panache. The shifts in scale are more inventive. The textures and representations of earth and sky are more playful. While Catherine Young Bates always revealed a love of Quebec landscape in the painted scenes she has captured over the past 30 years, an inner landscape of the soul has now emerged. Through the exacting process of painting she has discovered a new realm of mind and memory, something that makes these new landscapes, this nature of which we are a part, look more alive than ever in her *Vistas VI* paintings.

John K. Grande

TORONTO

LIFE OR THEATRE? THE WORKS OF CHARLOTTE SALOMON

Art Gallery of Ontario

317 Dundas St. W.

Until July 9th the Art Gallery of Ontario will be hosting an extraordinary exhibition of the little known works of German-Jewish artist Charlotte Salomon. An educated Berliner from a rich cultural and intellectual milieu, Salomon packed her life's experience into two sketchbooks of paintings done in the south of France while in exile from 1940-1942. When her life was threatened Salomon wrapped them in brown paper, labelled them Property of Otilie Moore and gave them to a local doctor stating "Take good care of it, it's my whole life." The package miraculously survived but Charlotte Salomon, who perished at Auschwitz four months pregnant with child aged 26 did not. Some 405 of Salomon's 800 extraordinary works incorporating images, texts, and musical references to Bizet, Schubert, Mozart, Bach and Gluck are on view in Toronto.

Duffy 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 29, 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 cityscape 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.

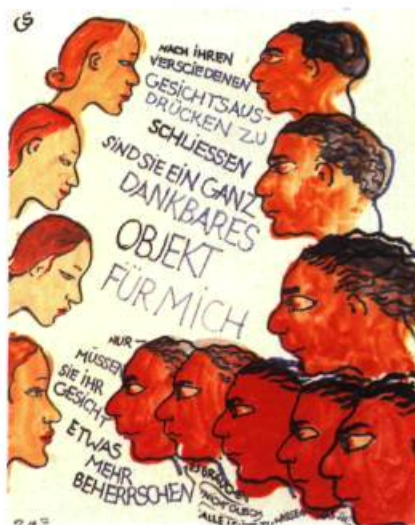
This said, it is not a surprise that a team of engineers and fabricators were called into action to help realize Bowyer's *Flower*.

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*



April IV
Oil on 6 panels
24 x 42"

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.



Daberlohn and Charlotte #507
JHM Invent. # 04625, gouache
On loan from the Jewish Historical Museum,
Amsterdam
Charlotte Salomon Foundation

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

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



Peter Bowyer
Flower, 2000
Galvanized steel
27' x 6.5' x 6.5'
Photo courtesy the artist

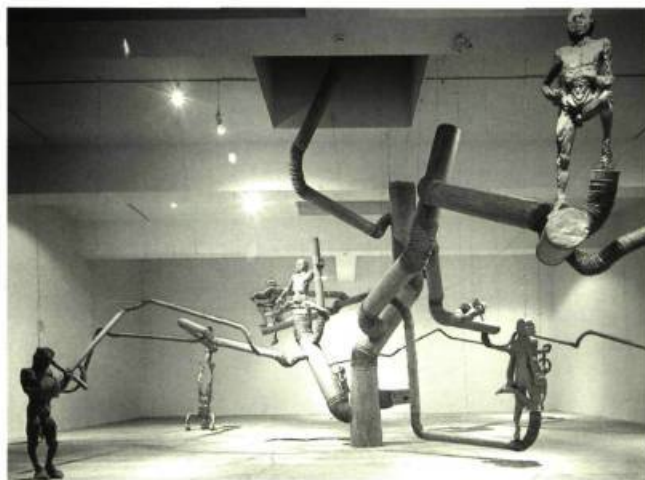
TIM HAWKINSON

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 we/he 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!



Pentecost, 1999
Polurethane, foam, sonotubes,
mechanical components; installation

While *Bird* is certainly not the centre piece of the exhibition, the intensity of this small work is hard to deny. The main attraction is definitely *Pentecost* (1999) which was Hawkinson's contribution to the last Venice Biennale. A sprawling, mechanized, faux wood grain, sonotube tree-like construction it is fitted with 12 perched human figures. The number 12, of course, references the number of apostles. These "apostles" tap out Christmas carols with different parts of their bodies. We recognize *Pentecost* to be an artistic re-interpretation of the biblical speaking in other tongues. However all the bodies are based on the artists own body.

Viewers too may be in a heightened state of bodily awareness in the heat of July and August! It is a joy to imagine the sort of complex reading that will ignite the imaginations of gallery visitors while the perspiration from their bodies is cooled by welcome air conditioning.

Elizabeth Fearon

KÁXLÁYA ~GVI'ÍLÁS: HEILTSUK ART AND CULTURE

Royal Ontario Museum

June 21, 2000 to Spring 2001

Never before comprehensively exhibited, *Káxláya ~Gvi'ílas: Heiltsuk Art and Culture* presents and takes a look at objects from the ROM's collection of North West coast native Heiltsuk art. The original descendants of a coastal tribe whose geographical area covers over 13,800 square miles of islands, land and sea where they have lived for over 9,000 years, the Heiltsuk nation now live 300 miles north of Vancouver. The Heiltsuk people, their art and

culture is once again thriving though in the 19th century they came close to extinction due to disease, and the changes wrought by contact with white colonial culture and economy. As the central place of Heiltsuk culture in Northwest coast Native art is still not well known, this show plays an important role in bringing Heiltsuk culture, the art and artifacts of the peoples of Bella Bella into public view. Co-curated by Martha Black, curator of ethnology at the Royal British Columbia Provincial Museum and Pam Brown, curator of ethnology at the U.B.C. Museum of Anthropology *Káxláya ~Gvi'ílas: 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, *Káxláya ~Gvi'ílas: 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 Northwest coast 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 practised Christianity. Despite these changes, the



GALLERY MOOS LTD.

en permanence

Jean-Paul Riopelle

622 Richmond Street West, Toronto
Ontario M5V 1Y9
Tel.: (416) 504-5445
Fax: (416) 504-5446

Membre de l'Association Professionnelle des Galeries d'Art du Canada

Heiltsuk ceremonial traditions and social structure were maintained. When Large donated the objects he procured with the collaboration of the Heiltsuk peoples to the Ontario Provincial Museum in 1901 and 1906, he greatly helped future ethnologists by actually attributing some of the donated works to five known Bella Bella carver/artists: Chief Robert Bell (1859-1904), Captain Carpentier (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.



Daniel Houstie (1880-1912)
Ceremonial Box
Carved cedar
51.2 x 42.5 cm
Photo: Brian Boyle

Though the Heiltsuk peoples are not all in agreement that their heritage be kept in a museum, and many would now would like these artifacts returned to Bella Bella, this show helps educate the public as to Heiltsuk ceremonies, rites and rituals, their links to the land and sea where they live. As a gesture of respect to the Heiltsuk peoples, the ROM is sending a complementary travelling exhibit, based also on the ROM's collections, to the Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre in Bella Bella, British Columbia. Accompanied by video, archival and contemporary photographs as well as audio recordings, this show is a remarkable record of traditional Heiltsuk culture. Fifteen artworks by contemporary Heiltsuk artists will also be on view thus establishing links between past and present.

John K. Grande

REGINA

TED GODWIN: THE TARTAN YEARS (1967-1976)

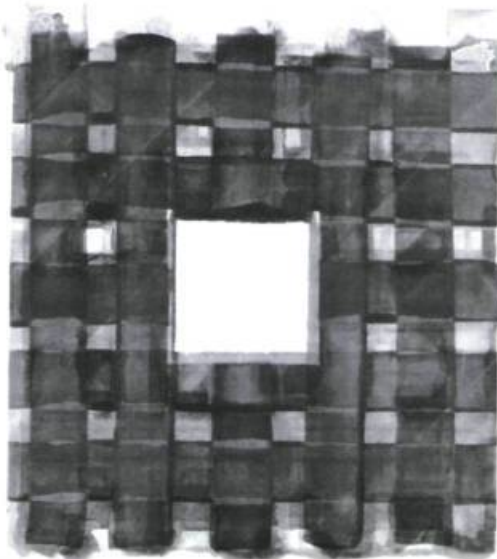
Mackenzie Art Gallery

May 12-July 16, 2000

There is an over-whelming temptation for writers who have met Ted Godwin to precede comments on his work with a description of the man himself. Paula Gustafson, for example, leads a 1992 *Cityscope* 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 gossip — 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 extroversion yet 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 fainter version of his earlier self, that self must have been truly terrifying. Catapulted 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 birth place, 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 cartoony in retrospect if it weren't linked to some extraordinary studio production.



Lost Tartan for Will, 1976
Mixed media on canvas
186.8 cm x 170 cm
Collection of the artist

into the bliss 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 seems to trust only that which he can mix, roll, spread, attack, and seduce with his hands. There is an orderliness in these works and a desire to please, but they always seem on the verge of falling apart, evaporating. Because the grids are veils 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 photorealistic 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 spectacles not to be missed.

David Garneau

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 "oneness." 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 and the bones and the architecture and the history all be one." If his mentors Barnett Newman and John Cage were poetic intellectuals seeking to free humanity from our pattern-making habits and propel us

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 12th to July 16th.

VICTORIA

RICHARD HUNT: THROUGH MY FATHER'S EYES

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
1040, Moss Street

March 16 - August 27, 2000



Screenprint by Richard Hunt

The art of the Kwagwiltsh people of the Northwestern Coast of Vancouver Island is sophisticated and of the highest quality to be found anywhere in the world. Like the people who make it, Kwagwiltsh art is inextricably connected to place and tradition. Their interpretation of a coastal environment is unique in that it transcends physical and geographical boundaries; it speaks of physical experience grounded in a nature-based spirituality. The Kwagwiltsh established a society in which a connection to the four realms — the Sky World, the Undersea World, the Mortal World, and the Spirit World — dominated their daily existence making possible a rich oral vocabulary. This, in turn, has informed their elaborate rituals of celebration. Art making in this context is a cultural process: to speak of Kwagwiltsh art is to speak of cultural property.

Through My Father's Eyes pays tribute to the diverse artistic practice of Richard Hunt, a Kwagwiltsh artist and carver and celebrates his commitment to the ancestral traditions of the Kwagwiltsh people. The exhibition includes over 100 works created by the artist in a 32-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

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 Kwagwiltsh artists, members of Hunt's extended family encourages viewers to appreciate the complexity of the Kwagwiltsh 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 poignancy 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 Kwagwiltsh 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. 985) 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 Hamtsa 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 Kulus 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-lis, literally, "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. Provin-

cial 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 Commonwealth 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 for Native people to acknowledge our connection to the universe. Through masks we identify our humanity. Through masks we affirm celestial places that honour the moon and the stars. Through masks we conquer our fears of the ocean deep. Through masks we interact with the spirit world, our final destination."

Through his art Richard Hunt identifies his humanity, affirms his ancestral inheritance, and reminds us of our final destination.

Linda Giles

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 BILD MUSEET,
UMEÅ, SWEDEN,
TRAVELING TO TORINO,
ITALY AND TRAMWAY, 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.



Franz Ackermann
Untitled (Pacific No. 16: Full of Gold and Silver), 1998
Mixed media on paper
13 x 19 cm
Courtesy Neugerriemshneider, Berlin

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. Mural-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 gentlemen 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 *Ethnographia* 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 jottings on paper sheets tacked to the wall and Tayou's urban graffiti are small eruptions of real experience through chinks in the enclosing structures of popular culture and media. Pettibon's private musings plunder images and sayings from any area — religion, advertising, entertainment — with apparent randomness and chaos. Sylvie's *Tourner 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 images 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 Rock 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.

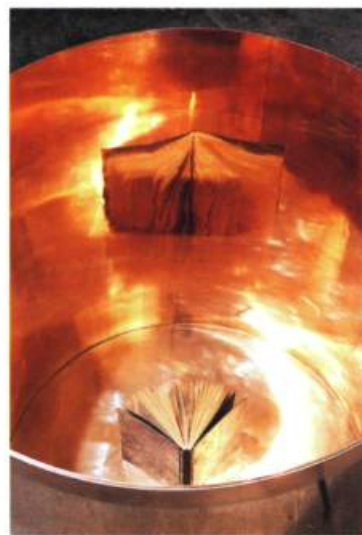
While many of the works in this show appear awkward next to one another, independently conceived projects by Liisa Roberts (France, Finland) and Thomas Struth (Germany) expand each other's meanings. In Roberts' enclosed installation of two silent colour films, a pair of women viewed from within and through a café window sit 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 *Pietà* (containing a self portrait of the artist) in the Venice Accademia as it is viewed by tourists while seated on a bench. As in Velasquez' painting, here are endless layers of viewpoints and relationships. The visitor enters and negotiates an unexpected and interrupted passage through Roberts' viewing space, in which different categories of art, space and time compete and undermine the viewing subject. Works such as these, and many others in *Mirror's Edge*, do indeed 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



Keren No 4, 1999
Copper, book
79 x 78 x 91 cm

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 nomads emerge as silent interrogators of our own identity. At times, their configurations point to the transience of our earthly presence and to the charged, yet silent spaces between us. Other drawings resemble a gathering of miniature golems, inchoate 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 quality, 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 insistency. Like exclamation marks in a landscape of memory we struggle to recover. They are thematic explorations of journeys into the void, made up of unexpected 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 earth — imbued figures simultaneously provides a forward thrust, yet is literally rooted in the ground of its origins. The artist employs both scale and detail to conjure an almost cinematic sense of movement.

The three-dimensional works in Safdie's Paris exhibition, though fewer, have a natural affinity with the two-dimensional works discussed above. *Conjunctions*, a wall installation of powerfully shaped stems of wood with metal fittings, shares the tribal tension of the *Earth Notes* in a natural projection into space of a missing link. *Threshold*, a stone, aluminum and glass installation on the floor, uses both optics and perception to remind us of the illusory quality of boundaries and what they reveal. *Be'er*, a mirror-based well framed in metal, extends a spatial inquiry vertically, reaching below the floor and through the

ceiling to bring out the invisible. Finally, *Keren*, a superbly crafted copper barrel impel us to engage in an illuminated (and illuminating) circular walk around it, a walk which reveals and "turns" the leaves of a book standing at its bottom. Its text consists in our ability to see, to "read" the narrative of objects.

Appropriately enough, the original essay that accompanies the beautifully-produced catalogue of the exhibition is entitled *Sylvia Safdie and the Book of the World* (*Sylvia Safdie et le livre du monde*). The author of the essay, French psychoanalyst and author Gérard Wajcman, provides a perceptive, and fresh, assessment of Safdie's work. His narrative is simultaneously structured as a case study of "Sylvia S." — a gatherer of objects, a collector of meanings — and as a travelogue through her work. This encounter, a voyage of discovery between a French writer and a Canadian artist, is deliberately brought about by the co-ordinator of the exhibition program at the CCC, Catherine Bédard, and is one of its most interesting features. As curator of Safdie's exhibition, Bédard made imaginative use of the elegant spiral staircase which brings the spaces together. She appropriated the ground-floor 'niche' created underneath the stairs as a miniature viewing area in which a recently completed video by Montreal film director Doina Harap complements and explicates the theme of the exhibition in a broader context of Sylvia Safdie's work. As well, the artist and the curator used the curved walls of the stairwell to create an intriguing 'trackway' of drawings and objects that ultimately lead the visitor to the space of the main gallery.

An independent, yet complementary work which itself makes a superb use of the stairs is *Abstraction (White)*, a 16 metre-long acrylic, canvas and metal installation by Montreal artist John Heward which is suspended in the stairwell and which draws its silent power from both the stillness of the signs executed upon the canvas and the implicit movement of the stairs along the metal rails of the balustrade. Heward's own comment in an accompanying brochure, namely, that "the work is made to give points of reference and reflection to the known unknown," resonates in this counterpoise. The viewer had a unique chance to discover the work gradually and from multiple perspectives as its meaning emerges along the long and sinuous trajectory.

Irena Murray