



Floating Faces, Installation, Flashpoint Gallery, Washington DC, 2008

Review

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Lucy Hogg: Mastering the Old Masters

GALLERY AT FLASHPOINT, WASHINGTON DC APR 4 TO MAY 17 2008

by JOSEPH R. WOLIN



Lucy Hogg *Smug Woman (Orange)* 2005/*Worried Man (Grey)* 2008

Close Move

For her third show in her adopted city of Washington, the former Vancouver artist Lucy Hogg has lined two parallel walls in a narrow gallery with oval canvases painted in odd monochromes—muted plums and raspberries, olive-lime, bruised grey, brick, teal, tamped scarlet and dulled turquoise. From each oval a face, limned in various light and dark tones of the same hue, seems to emerge, becoming more distinct as the eye adjusts. Hogg has rendered a collection of mostly unattractive, fleshy, often middle-aged individuals, the kind of people one might pass on the street, or sit next to at the movies or in church. A couple of them look familiar.

Like all of Hogg's recent productions, the works in the exhibition, which is titled "Floating Faces," are copies of Old Master paintings. When we look with that knowledge, the familiar countenances become recognizable: *Convivial Man (Purple/Red)* (2005) excerpts the grinning central figure in Velázquez's *The Triumph of Bacchus* in the Prado, while *Comfortable Boy (Pthalo Green)* (2008) recaps Titian's *Portrait of Ranuccio Farnese* in Washington's National Gallery. Other canvases, despite their provenances in paintings by the likes of Rubens, Rembrandt and Delacroix, are not as instantly recognizable, which is precisely Hogg's point. The likenesses from images of the distant past—shorn by the artist of their clothing, gestures and settings, their hairstyles reduced to the schematic and generic, all traces of their location in history elided—appear to portray ordinary, living men and women, unique, specific, full of personality and foible. *Smug Woman (Orange)* (2005), after a Rubens in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, stares at us, doe-eyed and quizzical, with pursed lips; *Bemused Man (Cadmium Green)* (2005), from a Rembrandt in the Metropolitan, wears the tints of the Incredible Hulk

and half-smiles, his eyes nearly twinkling.



Lucy Hogg *Comfortable Boy (Phthalo Green)/Worried Girl (Dioxine Violet)* 2008

These faces speak to the enduring life of the kind of Old Master representation that retains its hold on us because of its approximation of our own preferred way of seeing: photography. Hogg says she searched for "the proto-photographic moment," and she has found images of fleeting expressions, ephemeral glances and transitory states of mind that suggest the decisive click of a camera's shutter rather than the *longue durée* of traditional portraiture. That the Old Masters used lenses and optical devices (which both anticipate photography and are its direct ancestors) to achieve this sort of realism indicates the desirability of such a mode of representation from early on.

Hogg's serial portraits play with the conventions of both photography and painting, articulating continuities between them while embodying their difference. Her strange monochromes evoke the alienating yet familiar grisaille of black-and-white photographs. Her masterful combination of linear marks and more volumetric handling analogizes the simultaneous abstract flatness and three-dimensional modulation produced by the camera. Even the way the bodiless faces seem to coalesce in the centre of each panel might correspond to a photographic image appearing on the paper in a developing tray. These faces float in the space of their coloured panels, and in a timeless present, but they also seem to drift, unmoored from epistemological anchors in a shifting sea of meaning. (916 G St NW, Washington DC)

- www.flashpointdc.org



LUCY HOGG WASHINGTON

Supernatural suggests the possibility—albeit failed—of a break with this logic through a collective action that, far from being inchoate and directionless, takes direct aim at forms of social and economic power. Most interesting about this juxtaposition is the question it poses concerning the relationship between media, representation, historical memory, and politics.

Images of the urban space reminiscent of Dan Graham and Andreas Gursky, and which Arden defines as “landscapes of the economy,” make up the third phase. This series consists of images that capture the occasionally grisly intertwining of nature and history, most strikingly captured in *Tree Stump, Nanaimo, B.C.*, 1991. Through dramatic juxtapositions of the inner city spaces of Vancouver’s Eastside and Strathcona neighborhoods with the surrounding suburban spaces, as in *Landfill, Richmond, B.C.*, 1991, and *Monster House Coquitlam, B.C.*, 1991, Arden tackles the disappearance of the past and the ubiquity of what he calls the “sudden, brutal appearance of the new.” These works visualize the deeply ambivalent relationship between modernization and modernism. Historically, modernism sought to challenge the logic of capitalist modernization in invoking the “new.” Now, modernization has appropriated both concepts—modernism and the new.

The most recent phase of Arden’s work is characterized by “breathing tableaux”—frozen images that “thaw” ever so slightly before freezing anew—and *World as Will and Representation*, 2007, a durational collage titled after Arthur Schopenhauer’s influential book. Set to music, it is a slide show of a massive image archive that Arden has assembled over many years from the Internet, posing some of the same questions as his earlier work. The reference to the dyspeptic, mid-nineteenth-century German philosopher is ironic insofar as Schopenhauer adhered to Kant’s dualistic schema, whereby appearance is quintessentially expressed in painting and reality in music. By contrast, Arden challenges us to think about appearance’s *reality*.

—Samir Gandesha

Lucy Hogg calls *The Last Pony* a personal meditation on the end of painting [Meat Market Gallery; November 2—December 16, 2007]. According to her, the focus of the exhibition—a large equestrian painting that has been reworked through a series of digital prints and a video—also alludes to the Bush administration. But for viewers overlooking the gallery’s press release, neither concept makes itself readily apparent. Instead, they are confronted by the inexorable tension produced by juxtaposing the single canvas with multiple inkjet versions of the painted image in the artist’s studio. Against the strength of this pairing, the video installation tucked away in a smaller back gallery comes across as an afterthought.

On first impression, the exhibition calls to mind a very traditional way of working. The series of digital prints presented on one gallery wall suggests studies based on a color wheel. Now linear, it passes from warm through cool tones, at which point the eyes jump to the painting: a massive purple-blue horse set in a landscape of muted reddish-browns and greens. Despite the obvious similarities between prints and painting, the relationship seems antipodal. Hanging unframed before the viewer, the horse’s adrenaline-charged body declares itself through lively brushwork, the physical qualities of the paint, and the work’s immense scale. While its bulging eyes, flared nostrils, taut muscles, and writhing mane and tail all speak of panic, light entering the gallery’s front window underscores the painting’s materiality—the articulation of paint textures, contrasting matte and glossy passages, and planar deformations in the canvas.

The viewer’s relationship to the prints is completely different. Set within the crisp white borders of their paper supports, these images of the painting in the artist’s studio, where the canvas rests on paint cans as if it were still in the process of being painted, have been drained of any sense of materiality or impressive scale. Their presence suggests posters. Details are not only fuzzier, but the surface texture, which possesses a fine felted quality, appears unaffected by the presence of the

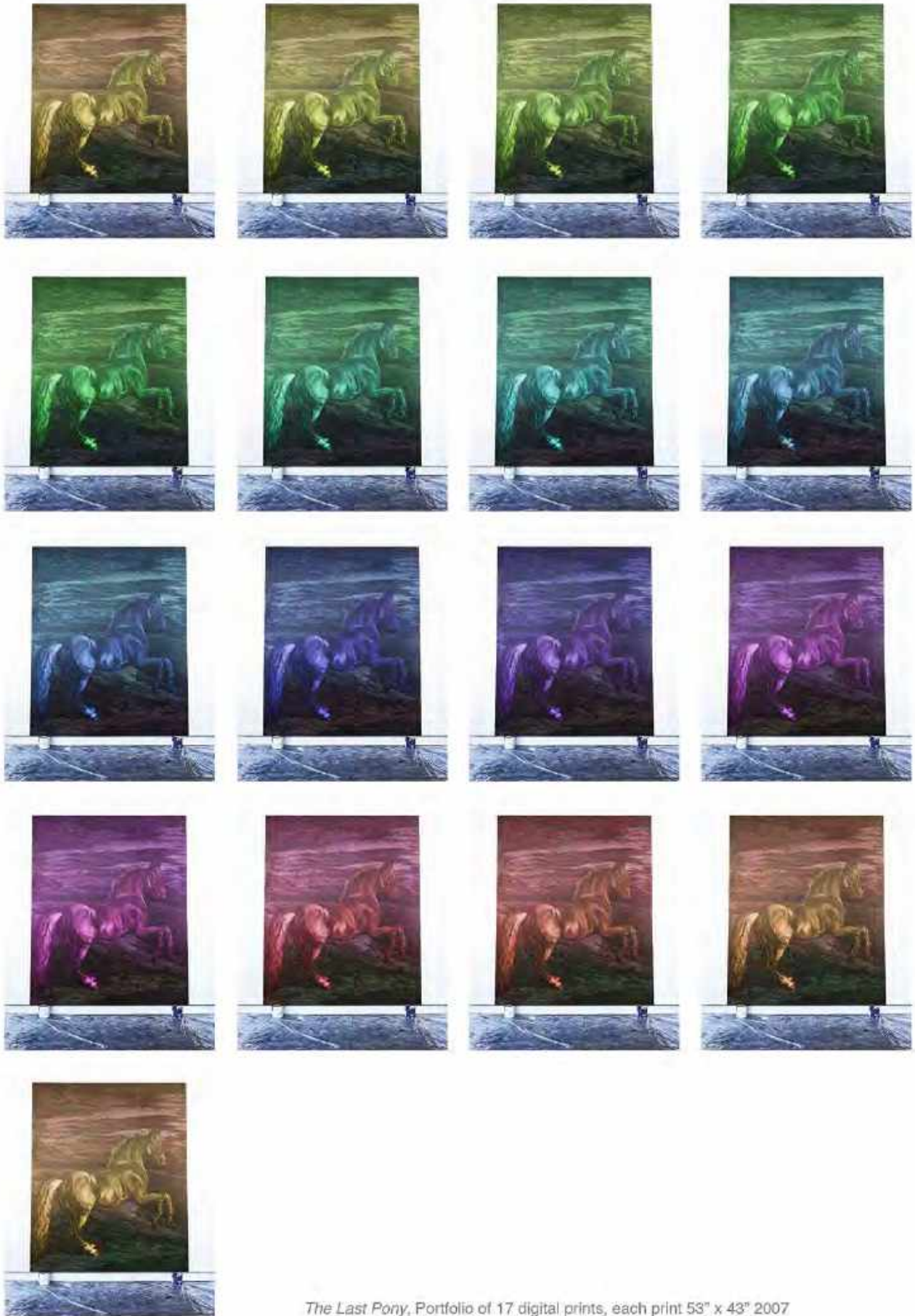
same light. Though the painting’s color varies in each image, the appearance of its immediate surroundings remains unchanged, bringing about the realization that the eyes have been misled. In fact, the prints feature versions of the completed painting. Rather than coming to a final color scheme through the course of painting, the artist has multiplied the possibilities by creating a series of studies after the fact.

One wonders if Hogg has not made an error in describing her work as a rumination on the end of painting since her exhibition both invokes and questions painting’s history, traditions, and related ideas. In *The Last Pony*, 2006, she merges George Stubbs’ *Whistle-jacket*, c. 1762, a picture of a horse against a blank background, with the landscape from Diego Velasquez’ *Philip IV on Horseback*, c. 1634, a figure known for his disastrous performance in matters of finance, foreign policy, and military matters, then shepherds the image through a color metamorphosis that culminates in prints and a video which rolls through the gamut of selected schemes. The exhibition points up the ongoing copying, reinterpretation, and investigation into new or alternative media that artists have practiced over centuries.

Though the press release states that Hogg’s interest in photography has now superseded her painterly concerns, the canvas cannot be seen as a mere artifact meant to be hidden away in storage. Does the artist plan to continue to paint for the purpose of digital exploration? Or is it possible for her to satisfactorily pursue her investigations of painting without applying a brush to canvas? And though her digital prints and video take the painted image into new realms, are images that can be consumed more easily preferable to works that challenge us through their physical intensity? This exhibition poses many interesting questions.

—John Gayer

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Roy Arden, *Supernatural*, 2005, DVD loop for projection, with audio (collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC; purchased with financial support from the Morris and Helen Belkin Foundation and the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program); Lucy Hogg, *The Last Pony*, 2006, oil on canvas, 120 x 92 inches (courtesy of the artist and Meat Market Gallery, Washington)



The Last Pony, Portfolio of 17 digital prints, each print 53" x 43" 2007



Sliding Landscapes, 2004, Strand on Volta Gallery, Washington, DC/Studio installation, 2006
Collection of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC

Lucy Hogg

Sliding Landscapes

September 17 – October 30

Opening Reception: Friday, September 17th 7 – 9 pm

Artist talk: Sunday, October 3rd 12:00 pm

Gallery Hours: Thurs, Fri, Sat 11 – 4



Lucy Hogg paints monochrome and bichrome images in a range of unlikely shades: impure, tinged, slightly "off" reds, oranges, blues, purples, yellows, browns, and greens. She calls them "diminished" colors, to denote their minor key and their distance from the unsullied, uninflected, callow colors of the tube, but they are rich and deep like aged velvet or old postage stamps, and they look to claim the lovely, lapsed names of philately: carmine, rosine, heliotrope, bistre, lake. Yet her colors also recall the strange, acidic hues of Sherrie Levine's abstract paintings—stripes, checks, chevrons like backgammon boards—and the critical postmodernism they once seemed to embody.

Hogg's recent series of paintings, **Sliding Landscapes**, continues her love affair with the Old Masters. Rather than reproducing monuments of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century salon painting, however, she has here chosen to engage a decidedly minor genre, the capriccio. These fanciful landscapes—generally peopled, Italianate, and featuring Classical ruins—were intended as decorative ornaments or souvenirs of the Grand Tour. The capriccios Hogg has selected, by Canaletto, Francesco Guardi, and Marco Ricci, incline toward a coherent group, all of them Venetian, all of them from the early and mid-eighteenth century. She copies them on rectangular canvases and on ovals, the rectangles more or less straightforward transcriptions, the ovals curiously cropped and skewed. Focusing in on details of the pictures—tiny staffage figures hitherto overlooked—she blows up the images, positions them out of kilter on her shaped canvases, and hangs them cockeyed on the wall. Now, unlike the conventional window of the rectangle, the oval, like the circle or the diamond, tends to imply the continuation of the image past the painting support. Hogg's elliptical landscapes seem to extend in every direction well beyond the "frame" of the stretched canvas. The enlarged details appear as fragments momentarily captured in the oval, horizon lines at perilous angles, in danger of slipping entirely out of frame and off the wall at any time, sliding landscapes teetering on the brink. Rendered

with a uniform facility, not indifferently, but casually, with a kind of offhand bravura, they have an allover, abstract painterliness that combines with the reduced palette to flatten out the image, denying its illusionistic space and nearly emptying it of the charge of representation.

Despite the fitfully apparent grid that indicates the academic duplication of her models, Hogg's techniques—enlarging, cropping, converting full color to monochrome, colorizing grisaille—are the operations of photography, or, more pertinently, its successor, Photoshop. She subjects her sources, *démodé* examples of an antique art deemed dead over and over again since the invention of photography in 1839, to the very mechanisms of modernity. Yet she does this by way of the traditional methods of painting—gridding up, copying, an identifiable hand—a neat conflation or doubling of history back upon itself. With the reproduction, reframing, and replication of works from the canon, a shifting of emphasis to their human elements, and what we might call the destabilization her ovals work upon the landscape, upon conventions of representation, Hogg's practice might seem a rehearsal of an appropriative, photographically referenced, "theory"-ridden art of nearly two decades past. But, like the capriccios themselves, her pictures need not be taken with too much gravity. As with postage stamps, the images are practically pretexts, serial, nearly interchangeable save for the color and denomination. She recapitulates the facture of the originals lightly, her touch deft, cursive, and incisive; she paints with pleasure, erotically, even. Hogg has written of her "own impatience with the melancholy of the endgame of painting," yet a certain wistfulness persists, a longing, not for the representation of the eighteenth century or of any particular time in the past, but for the possibilities of representation itself, a yearning for the possibilities of painting.

Joseph R. Wolin



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◀ **Sliding Landscape (blue grey) 2004**

Oil on linen, 66 x 101 cm (26" x 40")

Source: **Extensive Pastoral Landscape**, Marco Ricci, 1730



Going for the enigmatic in a mighty and small way

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Weekend Review

GALLERY GOING

GARY MICHAEL DAULT

995 Words

13 March 2004

The Globe and Mail

R12

English

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The 48 drawings making up Kate Wilson's Utopia for Practical Purposes are small but mighty. Although they are each only 24.13 by 33.02 centimetres in area, they pack a big visionary wallop, especially in accumulation.

Wilson is a skilled and imaginative draughtswoman and a skilled painter, and this exhibition, which is called Cool Lustre (at Toronto's Katharine Mulherin Contemporary Art Projects), allows her, as with her past exhibitions, to do what she does best: load a lot of diverting and disturbing imagistic information onto a very small field.

It's not easy to say with any precision what Wilson's work is about. But it is pretty clear that each of these pungent, gnarled little drawings (sometimes with added acrylic and extended moments of "digital media" input) is somehow a sort of letter or glyph or runic mark making up a whole entropic alphabet of urban recklessness, pop-chaos, hedonistic breakup, and apocalyptic meltdown. The odd thing about these drawings is how they can be both so precise and so enigmatic at the same time. In one of them, a meticulously rendered hurricane-hairdo spirals up into the air, apparently lifting up with it bits of the built environment no longer securely attached to the culture that bore them. In others, derelict structures that sometimes look like the garish, evacuated buildings left orphaned on Expo sites sit like helpless invitations to gaiety in bleak, burnt-out urban deserts. Coloured spheres shimmer pointlessly in lead-heavy skies.

Wilson seems slightly less confident with her larger-scale portrait-engendered works (Three Deuces and the Midnight Nurse, So Is This, etc.), although even here, where a big muzzy face inhabits most of the picture-plane, there are fascinating urbanized intrusions everywhere — like strings of lights mysteriously threaded through a subject's hair. The portrait works tend to go dark and incoherent, however, while the Utopia drawings treat incoherence as nourishment and thrive on it.

\$575 — \$2,000. Until March 28, 1086 Queen St. W., Toronto; 416-537-8827.

Lucy Hogg

at Pari Nadimi

For the last few years, Vancouver painter Lucy Hogg has had recourse to a gaggle of old masters as source material for her paintings —minor old masters usually (there's no point in messing with Titian or Rembrandt, say, or running afoul of Leonardo). She has come to them again, hat in hand, in this new exhibition called *Sliding Landscapes*.

What slides here is not so much art history — though Hogg does play amusingly fast and loose with her august victims, taking neoclassical and pastoral vignettes from such painters as Guardi, Canaletto, and Marco Ricci, and repainting them in her characteristically scratchy and monotonal (or duotonal) way. The effect is as if a scene from, say, Guardi had been laboriously and somewhat hesitantly copied and then dipped unceremoniously into a vat of eye-searing pthalo green or chromeoxide green or quinachrodone red (Hogg cheerfully lists the names of her pungent hues with her titles).

But I assume that the title, *Sliding Landscapes*, refers more to the fact that most of Hogg's history-tintured landscapes are repeated, doubled, in the course of the exhibition, so that a shard of, say, Marco Ricci (the subject of her *Fantasy Landscape* (diminished violet/burnt sienna orange), for example, turns up again across the gallery as an oval painting in a different set of colours *Sliding Landscape* (blue grey). It's as if the first painting (a rectangle) somehow got projected or reflected (in an oval, mirror-like format) onto the opposite wall. I don't know why this is so charming. But it is.

\$2,100 — \$5,800. Until March 27, 80 Spadina Ave., Suite 403, Toronto; 416-591-6464.

John Kissick and Jennifer Gordon at Leo Kamen

John Kissick's big, new abstract paintings are as lush and bountiful as one has come to expect from this gifted painter-teacher (Kissick is the director of the School of Fine Art and Music at the University of Guelph), only this time out, they're more lush and bountiful than ever.

This is probably because Kissick, who seems increasingly restless at this point in the trajectory of his production, has apparently striven to enliven his paintings with new imagistic tropes and an increasingly frayed and chaotic attack (well, a highly controlled chaotic attack). New in the works, for example, are spotted, octopus-like areas, intestine-like tubes slithering hither and yon, messy cage-like weavings of ropes of colour, black sack-like things that hang down menacingly into the fray — all kinds of

raucously tasteful new additions to his painterly vocabulary. And just in time, too.

For Montreal-based painter Jennifer Gordon, painting seems to be an intriguingly attenuated, amusingly mandarin practice ("The paintings aim to be quick, subjective and introspective", Gordon writes in her gallery statement. "I'm fully present for the staging of events and then I clear out."). The staging of events, as she puts it, is wry, engagingly eccentric and deeply fascinating. Paintings are both there and not there, as if the canvases had been touched lightly, and then regretfully and poignantly abandoned. The beautiful Bloom, for example, is prematurely (deliberately) cracked and, oh, I don't know, clouded or smoked somehow. Double Rise is a pale, watery phantom of high-rise construction, maybe. The brilliant Betweenity is a pale pink, punctuated grid that looks as if it wanted to be about geometry and construction and then just grew tired of the rigour of it all and retired. Some of them make you wish Gordon hadn't "cleared out" quite so soon. But then it's nice to be left alone with the fallout from her inventive visual imagination.

The Kissicks are \$11,500 each. The Gordons are \$4,800 each. Until March 27, 80 Spadina Ave., Suite 406, Toronto; 416-504-9515.

Illustration

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Gilles (Red) and Gilles (Blue), Installation, Faux Mouvement, Metz, France, Installation., 2003,
 Gilles (Yellow) and Gilles (Violet), Installation, Owens Art Gallery, Sackville, New Brunswick, 2003
 All in the Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, N.S

AKTUELL
KUNST

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Erfurt - Jede Präsentation einer Auswahl gegenwärtiger Trends kanadischer Kunst in Europa, und insbesondere in den neuen Bundesländern Deutschlands, stellt aus kanadischer Sicht bereits ein bedeutsames Ereignis dar. Die Ausstellung, die unter dem Titel „The Ironic Turn – Kanadische Kunst der Gegenwart“ in der Kunsthalle Erfurt bis zum 24. August zu sehen ist, verfolgt aber noch ambitioniertere Absichten.

The Ironic Turn Kanadische Kunst der Gegenwart



Neben der Präsentation wichtiger und innovativer Beispiele aus dem Kontext einer höchst lebendigen und merklich anderen Kunstszene wird durch diese Ausstellung und die sie begleitenden Veranstaltungen ein vielfältiger Dialog initiiert, in den auf der institutionellen Ebene Galerien, Museen und Universitäten und auf der individuellen Ebene die Künstler selbst involviert sind.

Die Ausstellung entsteht in Kooperation mit dem Kunstzentrum „Faux Mouvement“, Metz, dem Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto und dem Owens Museum of Fine Arts, Sackville. Statt lediglich Einblicke in die Landeskultur Kanadas zu gewähren, werden ausgewählte Künstler neue Perspektiven auf Lesarten und Rezeptionsgeschichten des europäischen künstlerischen und narrativen Erbes

bereitstellen. So wird deutlich, wie tief europäische (Kunst- und Wahrnehmungs-) Geschichte ebenso wie europäische Traditionen die gegenwärtige kanadische Kunstszene beeinflussen. Diese Einflüsse treten offen zutage in den Werken von Carmello Arnoldin, John Armstrong, Janet Jones, Brigitte Radecki, Paul Collins, Lucy Hogg und Yvonne Singer und sind in untergründiger und subtiler Weise präsent

in den Arbeiten von Garry Neill Kennedy und Max Streicher. Ihre Arbeiten präsentieren eine Auswahl distanziert-ironischer „Blicke von außerhalb“ auf das europäische Erbe. Gleichzeitig versetzen sie uns in die Lage, durch die Präsentation einer uns neuen Rezeptionsgeschichte eine substantielle Rekomposition auch unserer Innenansichten auszulösen; sie bilden im besten Falle eine Folie kultureller Selbstreflexion aus.

In diesem Zusammenhang ist nicht uninteressant, dass die meisten Ausstellungsteilnehmer als Hochschullehrer arbeiten. Während KünstlerInnen in den Rollen von Kunstkritikern, Kunsttheoretikern und Kunsthistorikern in Kanada als Selbstverständlichkeit gelten, ist die deutsche Kunstszene weit stärker von der Tradition einer klar abgegrenzten „Arbeitsteilung“ zwischen Künstler und Kunsttheoretiker/Kunstkritiker geprägt. Es ist in diesem Sinne kein Wunder, dass die eingeladenen KünstlerInnen vor allem eine Gemeinsamkeit verbindet: Selbstreflexivität, z.B. vorgetragen als ironisch/selbstironisch vorgetragener Abschied von den großen Gesten und Ansprüchen der Avantgarden bezüglich der Revolutionierung künstlerischer Formen und Methoden. So werden wir mit Kunstwerken konfrontiert die sich bewusst vom Ideal der „Handschrift“ distanzieren, indem sie dieses in ironischen Bezugnahmen auf sich selbst oder seine Abwesenheit unterminieren (so etwa Armstrong, Radecki und Hogg). Ebenso ergeht es dem Geniekult, der so eng mit der Kulturgeschichte Weimars und Jenas verbunden ist. Bei all dem kann man aber doch eine versteckte Verwandtschaft zu den Gedanken der Frühromantiker (insbesondere Friedrich Schlegel und Novalis) in der Betonung des Fragments, des Hybriden und des Ausgestoßenen/Verkannten entdecken, aber auch in der unverkennbar mit Melancholie verbundenen Ironie. Einige der Arbeiten bewahren bei allem spielerischen Gestus eine – wenn auch hochgradig sublimierte – Trauer über die endgültig verlorene Naivität/Unschuld des Blicks.

Zum ironischen Blick auf die europäischen Traditionen und ihren andauernden Einfluss auf nordamerikanische Sensibilitäten tritt die Auseinandersetzung mit Elementen des modernen, von neuen Medien und Kommerz geprägten Alltags hinzu, die wir unsererseits als Zeichen amerikanischen Einflusses auf die europäische Kultur wahrnehmen – schnell befinden wir uns mitten in einem fruchtbaren Dialog mit einer Vielfalt von Standpunkten, welche die Grenzen zwischen Innen- und Außenperspektiven immer stärker verwischen.

Die Kunstwerke der Ausstellung benutzen und unterminieren – und beides in paradoxer Gleichzeitigkeit – hermeneutische Hierarchien von „hoher“ (autonom) und „niedriger“ (angewandter, als Design vermarkteter) Kunst. Als selbstreferentielle Beiträge zu der alten Frage „Was ist Kunst?“, die sie prak-



Oben: Garry Neill Kennedy, Wandinstallation, Kunsthalle Erfurt, 2003; unten: Yvonne Singer, Triptyk Trouble, 2003. Videoinstallation
Linke Seite: Max Streicher, Silenus, mit Luft gefüllte Nylonskulpturen

tisch – mit Nelson Goodman – zur Frage „Wann ist Kunst?“ transformieren, funktionieren diese Kunstwerke auch als konzeptuelle Intervention. Dies ist ein essentieller Teil ihres intellektuellen und auch visuellen Reizes. Ob als unverhohlene und subversive Variationen zentraler Werke europäischen Kunsttradition (Hogg), ob durch pseudo-naive bildnerische „Kommentare“ zu den „Er rungenschaften“ der Moderne und damit auch zur eigenen, durch den „Abstract Expressionismus“ und seinen Propheten Clement Greenberg geprägten Vätergeneration: all diese Arbeiten enthalten Humor und Ironie in unterschiedlichen Graden, zum Teil in nur homöopathischen Dosen. Auf immer neuen Ebenen werden die Ausstellungsbesucher mit einer wirkungsvollen Befragung ihrer eige-

nen Erwartungen in Bezug auf Kunst und Kunstrezeption konfrontiert. Statt dem Ideal des autonomen Ausdrucks eines imaginären „inneren Selbst“ nachzujagen, spielen die Künstler mit den Ansprüchen, Positoren und Gesten der Moderne und ihren Wurzeln in der westlichen Kunstgeschichte wie in der Populärkultur. Dabei geben sie die Einflüsse und Prägekräfte genau jenes Erbes zu erkennen – eine Erkenntnis, die auch Anerkennung impliziert – welches in so wunderbar paradoxer Weise gerade durch seine kritische Befragung eine neue Beglaubigung erhält.

weitere Termine:

Kunstzentrum Faux Mouvments, Metz Frankreich, 26.9.-29.11. 2003 / Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto / Kanada, Jan./Febr. 2004 / Owens Museum of Fine Arts, Sackville, Kanada, April / Mai 2004



Artist Dressed As a Girl, oil on linen, 68"x50", 2001, Collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.
Source: Master John Heathcote, Thomas Gainsborough, 1770-74, National Gallery, Washington DC



GALLERY GOING GARY MICHAEL DAULT

When a fire swept through the Montreal home of artist Angela Grauerholz and her husband two years ago, the couple lost, among other things, most of the library they had been lovingly and painstakingly collecting for 25 years.

Born, more or less literally, from these bibliophilic ashes, however, has come Grauerholz's eerily impressive new exhibition of photographs, *Privation*, now at Toronto's Olga Korper Gallery.

"When I first saw slides of these new works, I wondered why on earth Angela was suddenly making photographs of Raku pottery?," Korper told me. "Or maybe, I thought, they were ancient tombstones, or burnt buildings. Then, of course, I came to see that these were photographs of the incinerated books themselves. And they seemed to possess a terrible beauty."

It must have been painful sorting through the twisted and sodden wreckage of her library, but Grauerholz clearly came to see how formally and emblematically forceful these hand-held ruins were. She scanned a number of the damaged books into her computer, and had the digital images reproduced as large and surprisingly sumptuous Giclée prints on soft Arches paper. There are 48 of them in the exhibition.

It does take a few minutes — one understands Korper's initial disorientation — to see that these strange, distorted objects are the charred corpses of books. The flames and smoke and water have transformed them into alien and otherworldly sculptures.

The conflagration has left some of the books torqued into baroque writhings, as if they had become the agonized incarnations of the intellectual energy they once contained — bodies from which the souls have fled. Sometimes you can



PHOTOGRAPHER/CREDIT

Privation Book #42 (back) by Angela Grauerholz

still make out a few sentences here and there. But mostly the books are fossilized things, ethereally handsome brick-like objects, licked by flame into outlandish colour-smoky purples, pinkish-browns, bleached creams. Some of them still look warm, suffused with smouldering reds and oranges, as if still burning at their cores.

The burning of books is a terrible thing. And Grauerholz is surely justified in citing, in her exhibition statement, the burning of other famous libraries (Caesar's firing of the great library at Alexandria in 48 BC, for example) as analogues and precedents. She should probably be gently rapped on the wrist, however, for implying that her loss ought to remind us of the Nazi book burnings at Nuremberg, or of the "cultural cleansing of all the libraries in Kosovo." There is a dreadful difference between immolation and holocaust. \$6,500 (U.S.) each. *Until Oct. 31. 17 Morrow Ave., Toronto; 416-538-8220.*

Lucy Hogg at Pari Nadimi

There are few young painters who have been as wickedly conscious, in their practice, of the excesses and distortions of art history as Vancou-

ver-based painter Lucy Hogg.

During the past few years, Hogg's clanky, Pez-coloured paintings, hot chromatic reworkings and redressings of the masculinist swagger of the past, have posited a painterly alternative to the historical status quo. Seizing up the great classic painters of the past 200 years in a sort of comic aspic, Hogg has dyed them electric green and shocking orange, by which relentless reworkings they have come off as both chastened and gorgeous.

For this exhibition, *Artist's World*, she has slightly and charmingly skewed her dethroning of masculine authority in art by turning her attention to the painting of children and animals. Children and animals purloined, it must be noted, from such antique luminaries as Gainsborough, Reynolds, Stubbs, Velazquez, Goya, Constable and Manet.

In a typical Hogg painting, the original subject — say Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of little *Lady Caroline Howard* (1778) — is still clearly with us. In this case, however, Hogg has claimed the child for herself with colour and with clarity (Miss Howard, now renamed "New Artist," is suddenly a brilliant, bilious green and pink, and sits in a landscape made scintillating with pink and blue). In just such a way — chromatic rebellion — are

Hogg's other historical children brought into the purview of the painter's canny revaluations.

If you look carefully, you can see, structuring each of Hogg's paintings, a subtle overall grid, against which the subject has been positioned. Hogg's use of the grid is perhaps the key to her relationship with history: The grid is the quintessential modernist compositional device. It is thus legitimately hers. And yet it is also a time-honoured way to claim another's subject and transfer it to your own work. The grid is Hogg's way of casting her nets into the seas of art history.

That, and her wonderful, preposterous colour. \$1,700-\$5,500. *Until Oct. 27. 80 Spadina Ave., Suite 403, Toronto; 416-591-6464.*

Phil Bergerson at Stephen Bulger

Some photographers come freighted — simultaneously blessed and cursed — with a tireless, omnivorous eye. Lee Friedlander is such a photographer. So were Henri Cartier-Bresson and Andre Kertész. Toronto photographer Phil Bergerson has an eye like theirs.

Like them, Bergerson's eye is quick, endlessly engaged and, in a sense, lidless — condemned to an ongoing bedazzlement in the face of the small ironic moments that

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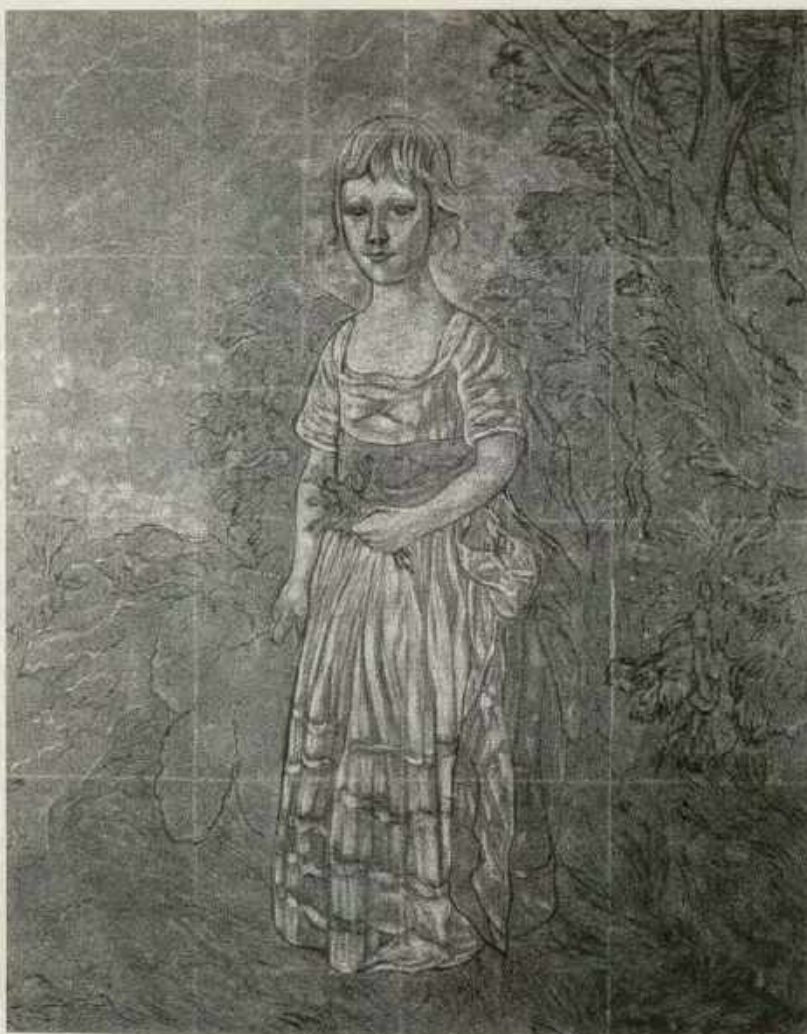
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Studio 03.2

ARTIST'S POLITIC POLITIQUES D'ARTISTE

LUCY HOGG

JUNE 27 - SEPTEMBER 28, 2003 / 27 JUIN - 28 SEPTEMBRE 2003



Lucy Hogg, *Artist Dressed As a Girl / Artiste habillée en fille*, 2001, oil on canvas / huile sur toile, 170 x 135 cm

Confederation Centre
Art Gallery



Musée des beaux-arts
du Centre de la Confédération

Artist's Politic

Lucy Hogg

As a grade schooler I would walk down this hall, passing Jean Paul Lemieux's Fathers of Confederation on my way to my prized art classes at the back of the building. I thought these Fathers were fairly radical with only Robert Harris' Fathers to compare them to. They gave the impression though, that modernism was fairly melancholic if not austere, and involved no crinolines. Later they were walled up behind what was meant to be a temporary storage area, their patriarchal stentorianism outdated. I couldn't help thinking that they were still there, psychologically forming the background noise for my understanding of history, art, and politics.



There are a lot of different kinds of artists, and they have to compete with one another. Strategy is everything. Having connections or an acute understanding of the hierarchical terrain of the art world helps. Better yet to have both. The understanding can be immobilizing without the connections. Before the 1980s, being a boy was your best bet. We still have the residue of this as networks of boys, cultivated and patronized by preceding networks of now aging networks of boys, find their way into the national and international circuits. Peer referral tends to rule. The girls have to try harder at being cute, having to decide whether to wear pants or a dress. There are the tomboys who get in there and DJ and know how to use a table saw, and the ones with the Manolo Blahniks who contract out.

The Canadian artist's landscape can seem fixed, with stylized rhetorical relations between the artist and the arbiters of reception, the curatorial class. After two or three public shows the commercial dealers may express interest, but they are a beleaguered group, and must be prudent in their selected offerings to a conservative art market (most Canadians think art should be free). After a few years and a few bruises from the glass ceiling protecting the Canadians from the rest of the world, the artist has to move sideways, keeping their day jobs and hoping for grants.

Artist's Politic presents these protagonists as they navigate this terrain. *The New Artist*, siting her unique point of view with her thumb. *My Little Pony*, who carries his hero precipitously into the future. *The Artist's Standard*, personified here as a poodle in a punt, is always in danger of tipping. *The Unidentified Nude* shows the vulnerability, usually relegated to women, of having no face. *Two More Boys* refers to an endless supply. And finally, *Artist Dressed As a Girl* suggests that dressing as a girl could be everybody's prerogative.

Politiques d'artiste

Lucy Hogg

Quand j'étais écolière, je marchais dans ce couloir, devant les Pères de la Confédération de Jean-Paul Lemieux, pour me rendre à mes chers cours d'art, à l'arrière de l'édifice. Je trouvais ces Pères plutôt radicaux – n'ayant que ceux de Robert Harris comme point de comparaison. Ils me laissèrent cependant l'impression que le modernisme était plutôt mélancolique, voire austère, et qu'on n'y trouvait aucune crinoline. Ils ont plus tard été enfermés dans ce qui devait être un entrepôt temporaire, leur aspect de stentor patriarcal maintenant dépassé. Je ne pouvais m'empêcher de penser qu'ils étaient encore là, formant psychologiquement la trame sonore de ma compréhension de l'histoire, de l'art et de la politique.

Il existe de nombreux genres d'artistes, différents les uns des autres, et qui sont en concurrence l'un avec l'autre. Tout est question de stratégie. Le fait d'avoir des contacts ou une compréhension poussée de la hiérarchie du monde des arts peuvent aider. C'est encore préférable d'avoir les deux. La compréhension sans les contacts peut être paralysante. Avant les années 1980, on avait tout intérêt à être un garçon. Il en reste encore des relents – réseaux de garçons, cultivés et protégés par des réseaux de garçons maintenant vieillissants, se retrouvent sur les circuits nationaux et internationaux. Les recommandations des pairs semblent régner. Les filles doivent s'efforcer d'être mignonnes, ayant à décider entre porter un pantalon ou une robe. Puis, il y a les garçons manqués, qui font ce qu'il y a à faire, sont présentatrices de musique et savent se servir d'une scie circulaire, et il y a celles qui sont chaussées de Manolo Blahnik, qui font faire le travail aux autres.

Le paysage artistique canadien semble déterminé, marqué des relations rhétoriques stylisées entre les artistes et les arbitres de l'accueil qui leur est réservé, les conservateurs. Après deux ou trois expositions publiques, les marchands d'œuvres d'art pourront exprimer de l'intérêt, mais ils font partie d'un groupe cerné et ils doivent faire preuve de prudence dans le choix des œuvres qu'ils proposent à un marché conservateur (la plupart des Canadiens estiment que l'art devrait être gratuit). Après quelques années et quelques blessures provoquées par le dôme de verre qui protège les Canadiens du reste du monde, l'artiste doit se déplacer latéralement, conservant son emploi de jour et espérant recevoir subventions.

Politiques d'artiste présente ces protagonistes qui naviguent sur ce terrain. *Le nouvel artiste*, montrant son point de vue unique avec son pouce. *Mon petit poney*, qui emporte abruptement son héros dans le futur. *La norme de l'artiste*, représentée ici par un caniche dans un bateau, qui menace sans cesse de chavirer. *Le nu non identifié* montre la vulnérabilité, généralement réservée aux femmes, que l'on ressent quand on n'a pas de visage. *Deux autres garçons* fait référence à un approvisionnement inépuisable. Enfin, *L'artiste habillée en fille* laisse entendre que n'importe qui devrait avoir le droit de s'habiller comme une fille.

Curated by Shauna McCabe and organised by the Confederation Centre Art Gallery with assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts. • Conservatrice, Shauna McCabe. Organisé par le Musée des beaux-arts du Centre de la Confédération avec l'aide du Conseil des Arts du Canada.



THE CANADA COUNCIL
FOR THE ARTS
SINCE 1957

LE CONSEIL DES ARTS
DU CANADA
DEPUIS 1957

Portrait of the Artist

Shauna McCabe, Senior Curator

I hate quotations. Tell me what you know. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Now, you could argue that in Lucy Hogg's paintings quotation in fact becomes the means by which she says what she knows. Blatantly and unapologetically forging classic art historical imagery, Hogg produces altered—and alternative—representations. Colour and composition hint at the irreverence of her act of quotation; cues like the paintings' vividly chromatic presentation and the visible grids that peek through layers of overpainting—elements of a critical filter that scandalises the privileged positions the works have occupied within the canon of art history. Verging on psychedelic, the series of brash figurative paintings represent Hogg's intervention in that canon, subverting the image of both artist and subject. Ultimately, her work is about identity—deliberately and cheekily breaking down the status quo that has reinforced the artist's world as one of heroic masculinity. More than that, the work is highly personal, each offering a fragment of an art world autobiography, glimpses of the space between Hogg's experience and perception and dominant cultural representations.

Artist's Politic adds another dimension to this autobiography. Raised in Charlottetown, Hogg has gone back to an image that was a key part of her visual surroundings as a child and left an indelible impression, "psychologically forming," as she puts it, "the background noise for my understanding of history, art, and politics." Citing this point of influence within her practice, the exhibition integrates Jean Paul Lemieux's *Charlottetown Revisited*, one of the Confederation murals commissioned in 1964 by the Confederation Centre Art Gallery to commemorate the historical context of the city. The striking sombre image of several Fathers of Confederation towering above the landscape epitomises the gender-determined roles that have been the ongoing object of her feminist critique. The exhibition is, in a sense, Hogg's own "Charlottetown Revisited," her return to the context of these early observations of the power of the artistic image and of the first exhibitions of her own work—at the Great George Street Gallery in 1979 while studying Fine Arts at Mount Allison University, and the Confederation Centre Art Gallery in 1981.

Throughout her MFA at University of British Columbia and her experience as an instructor at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design from 1999 until 2002, referencing her own experience and responses has been the core of Hogg's practice. Hogg works with what has come before, reworking images and practices to reveal the embeddedness of every representation and every reading of those representations within existing concepts and conventions. In the work in this exhibition, she has selected figurative images for their embodiment of certain stereotypes and using colour to draw out their particular character, challenges the Romantic notions of originality, grandeur and heroic individualism latent within them. Further, choosing to work within rather than against tradition, for Hogg, painting has been an act of resistance itself, employing a visual language, colour, and brushstroke, to undermine visual conventions. Evoking an "artist's politic" that draws upon her perception of the pathology of male dominance, she constructs a feminist critique that raises questions of authorship, authenticity and intertextuality.

Portrait de l'artiste

Shauna McCabe, conservatrice principale

Je déteste les citations. Dites-moi ce que vous savez. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

On pourrait dire que les citations qui se trouvent dans les peintures de Lucy Hogg sont en fait la manière dont elle parle de ce qu'elle sait. Hogg, qui copie ouvertement et sans excuse des images d'art historiques, produit des représentations modifiées ou des représentations de remplacement. La couleur et la composition font allusion au manque de respect de son art de la citation; des indices comme la présentation chromatique vive et les grilles visibles qui percent à travers les couches de peinture—éléments d'un filtre critique qui scandalise les positions privilégiées que ces œuvres ont occupées dans les canons de l'histoire de l'art. Cette série de peintures figuratives criardes qui frôlent le psychédélique représente l'intervention de Hogg dans ce canon, renversant l'image de l'artiste et du sujet. En fin de compte, son œuvre porte sur l'identité—rompant délibérément et effrontément le statu quo qui a renforcé le monde artistique comme étant un monde de masculinité héroïque. Qui plus est, son travail est hautement personnel, chaque œuvre donnant un aperçu de l'autobiographie du monde artistique, des aperçus de l'espace qui se trouve entre son expérience et sa perception et les représentations culturelles dominantes.



Politiques d'artiste ajoute une autre dimension à cette autobiographie. Lucy Hogg qui a grandi à Charlottetown est retournée à une image qui constituait un élément clé de l'environnement visuel de son enfance et qui a laissé une marque indélébile, « formant psychologiquement », comme elle le dit, « la trame sonore de ma compréhension de l'histoire, de l'art et de la politique ». Attestant de cette influence dans sa pratique, l'exposition inclut *Charlottetown revisitée* de Jean Paul Lemieux, une des murales de la Confédération commandées en 1964 par le Musée du Centre des arts

de la Confédération pour commémorer le contexte historique de la ville. Les images sombres et frappantes de plusieurs des Pères de la Confédération qui dominent le paysage incarnent les rôles déterminés par le genre qui font l'objet constant de sa critique féministe. L'exposition est, en quelque sorte, le propre « *Charlottetown revisitée* » de Hogg, son retour au contexte de ses premières observations de la puissance de l'image artistique et de ses premières expositions de ses propres œuvres, à la *Great George Street Gallery* en 1979 alors qu'elle étudiait les beaux-arts à l'Université Mount Allison, et au Musée des beaux-arts du Centre de la Confédération en 1981.

Durant toutes ses études de maîtrise en beaux-arts à l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique et son travail comme professeur au *Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design*, de 1999 à 2002, le fait de faire référence à sa propre expérience et à ses réactions a été au cœur même de la pratique artistique de Hogg. Cette dernière se sert de ce qui l'a précédée, retravaillant des images et des techniques pour mettre à jour l'inclusion de chaque représentation et chaque lecture de ces représentations au sein des concepts et conventions existants. Dans les œuvres de cette exposition, elle a choisi des images figuratives parce qu'elles incarnent certains stéréotypes et elle s'est servie de la couleur pour faire ressortir leur caractère particulier, défiant les notions romantiques de l'originalité, de la grandeur et de l'individualisme héroïque sous-jacents. Par ailleurs, en choisissant de travailler en respectant les traditions plutôt qu'en s'y opposant, sa peinture devient un acte de résistance en soi, se servant du langage visuel, de la couleur, du coup de pinceau pour attaquer les conventions visuelles. Faisant allusion aux politiques du monde artistique qui puisent dans sa perception de la pathologie de la domination masculine, Hogg bâtit une critique féministe qui soulève des questions d'auteur, d'authenticité et d'intertextualité.



Jean Paul Lemieux, R.C.A., *Charlottetown Revisited*, 1964, oil on canvas / huile sur toile, 197.2 x 380.4 cm.

LIST OF WORKS

Artist Dressed As a Girl
2001
oil on canvas
170 x 135 cm
after Thomas Gainsborough,
Master John Heathcote, 1770

Unidentified Nude
2000
oil on canvas
210 x 173 cm
after Théodore Géricault,
Study for a Male Nude
ca. 1800

New Artist
2000
oil on canvas
175 x 137 cm
after Sir Joshua Reynolds,
Lady Caroline Howard, 1778

Artist's Standard
2001
oil on canvas
127 x 102 cm
after George Stubbs,
White Poodle in a Print, 1780

Two More Boys
2001
oil on canvas
166 x 153 cm
after Sir Henry Raeburn,
The Binning Children, 1811

My Little Pony
2001
oil on canvas
207 x 172 cm
after Diego Velazquez,
Baltasar Carlos on Horseback,
1635

Charlottetown Revisited
Jean Paul Lemieux, R.C.A.
1964
oil on canvas
197.2 x 380.4 cm
permanent collection of the
Confederation Centre Art
Gallery, gift of Mr. and Mrs.
Samuel Bronfman, 1964

LISTE DES ŒUVRES

Artiste habillée en fille
2001
huile sur toile
170 x 135 cm
d'après « Maître John
Heathcote » de Thomas
Gainsborough, 1770

Nu non identifié
2000
huile sur toile
210 x 173 cm
d'après « Étude pour un nu
masculin » de Théodore
Géricault, années 1800

Nouvelle artiste
2000
huile sur toile
175 x 137 cm
d'après « Lady Caroline
Howard » de Sir Joshua
Reynolds, 1778

Norme d'artiste
2001
huile sur toile
127 x 102 cm
d'après « Caniche blanc
dans un bateau » de George
Stubbs
1780

Deux autres garçons
2001
huile sur toile
166 x 153 cm
d'après « Les enfants
Binning » de Sir Henry
Raeburn, 1811

Mon petit poney
2001
huile sur toile
207 x 172 cm
d'après « Baltasar Carlos à
cheval » de Diego
Velazquez, 1635

Charlottetown revisitée
Jean Paul Lemieux A.R.C.
1964
huile sur toile
197,2 x 380,4 cm
Collection permanente du
Musée des beaux-arts du
Centre de la Confédération
Don de M. et Mme Samuel
Bronfman, 1964

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OF THE CENTRE

Jean Paul Lemieux's *Charlottetown Revisited* mural at the Confederation Centre Art Gallery influenced the professional life of artist Lucy Hogg. As a student she passed by it each week on her way to art class. For Hogg, and for many other islanders who frequent the Confederation Centre, the painting represents the spirit of the institution more than any other work. Today it remains an icon of the Confederation Centre and, to Hogg, a reminder of the patriarchal system she has fought to infiltrate as a professional artist. It is also central to the theme of "Artist's Politic."

In this exhibition Hogg surrounds *Charlottetown Revisited* with large portraits of children and animals under-painted in blue, purple and green. The canvases appear garish and out of place beside the iconic mural, their vile green and vivid purple clashing with the harvest-gold background of the Lemieux piece as it once clashed with the rich earthy tones of Robert Harris's portraits of the Fathers of Confederation.

Hogg's canvases are individual scenes in a play, and the figures are characters in an elaborate melodrama that unfolds in a surreal half-finished world to which they are confined by their frames and visible enlarging grids. The works are daring in their lack of painterly pretense and in their rejection of a traditional colour palette and style of execution—yet their purpose is unclear.

The mystery is elucidated by Hogg's artist's statement, in which she refers to the "old boys' hierarchy" and shares her opinion of the male-oriented curatorial selection process that continues to permeate the Canadian art scene despite inroads made by female artists since the 1960s. Hogg's work in "Artist's Politic" questions these practices through the use of ironic visual symbolism and pictorial storytelling.

In *New Artist* a child holds her thumb up in the hackneyed artist's measuring stance. Hogg describes this figure as "siting (sic) her unique point of view with her thumb." In *Two More Boys* Hogg poses two young boys in a woodland setting reminiscent of a Renaissance landscape. The classical pose counteracts the sense of revulsion generated by the pink and blue in which the image is rendered, and the viewer is drawn to it in spite of its colour. Reading the story beyond the surface positioning is difficult, however; it seems as though Hogg uses this visual strategy to make a point. In her artist's statement she reveals that the boys represent the endless supply of new artists

trying to enter the museum-exhibition circuit. *Two More Boys* also looks like a bad attempt to copy the style of the masters in a way that just might gain entrance into the company of the few who are chosen to display their work on the walls of the Confederation Centre gallery.

Hogg's other works in the exhibition are executed in the same manner. Garish blues, greens and pinks define the figures and force the viewer to choose between further investigation or rejection. In *Artist's Standard* a green-and-purple dog precariously balances on a punt, forever in danger of falling off. In *My Little Pony* a child dressed in frills and velvet gestures with a riding crop as the pony beneath him jumps into the "future." In *Unidentified Nude* a purple faceless nude on a green ground turns its back on the world representing, in Hogg's words, "faceless artists." *Artist Dressed as a Girl* references the 18th-century practice of dressing little boys as girls and reflects Hogg's conviction that all artists should wear dresses in order to level the "museum competition" playing field.

All of these characters play out Hogg's vision of an endless scenario in which a constant stream of artists learn the established rules of exhibition and vie for meagre rewards, a process equally frustrating and doubly daunting for women artists trying to surmount traditional patriarchal attitudes.

One might think Hogg comes out ahead by being shown at this gallery. Her presence on the walls of the institution proves that she is among the lucky and astute artists who have managed to win the gallery game. Hogg's technique, chosen to emphasize her criticism of the old boys' curatorial protocol by juxtaposing traditional poses with avant-garde colour techniques, ironically makes her work desirable to those very people.

By accepting and promoting her criticism of the gallery process, the curatorial establishment undermines Hogg's premise that women don't have a chance in the museum-selection process. This perpetually accommodating curatorial landscape is no place for effective critical commentary, and the trend-driven environment may eventually drive Hogg to join other artists who move sideways, keep their day jobs and hope for grants.

—Jan Mollison

Artist's Politic

Lucy Hogg
Confederation Centre
Art Gallery

Charlottetown
June 27 to September 28, 2003



Lucy Hogg, *Two More Boys*, 2001, oil on canvas, 193.5cm x 153 cm.

image
is
backwards

Lucy Hogg

Anodyne Contemporary Art, Vancouver

For several years, Lucy Hogg has referred to her ongoing, non-figural works as "closet abstracts." This term reminds me of "Abstracts at Home," the title of the 1953 exhibition that introduced a corner of modernity to the Toronto public. In an exercise of creative marketing, a number of Toronto artists (who later formed the Painters Eleven group) displayed their abstract paintings alongside contemporary furniture in a storefront window of Simpsons, a downtown department store. Of course, the label "closet abstracts" is not clever historical recuperation, nor is it meant to indicate that these are paintings to hang your clothes up beside (even though Hogg's palette in these abstract paintings very often has to do with her take on the season's "colours"). The moniker relegates these paintings to a parenthetical position beside works that, since the mid 1980s, represent her more official style – the often large-scale paintings she makes based on grand manner, 18th- and 19th-century portraiture. The exhibition at Anodyne Contemporary Art is, in effect, a coming out for the closet abstracts; this, and the modest scale of Anodyne's space (in a former office) might lead one to see the exhibition as Hogg's Abstracts at Home.

Truth be told, Hogg has always been occupied with both figural and abstract painting. In the mid 1970s, while regularly working from the figure in drawing, her more public line of painting consisted of largish abstract works with a zigzag design that created a number of interlocking triangles. At the edges of the canvas the forms were feathered to reveal the unprimed cotton, in the manner of (Painters Eleven member) Jack Bush's paintings of the same period. Her paintings' feathered edges also disclosed the many layers of paint (all in a cheery pastel palette) that she methodically applied until an occult balance of chromatic tension was met. Ceaseless colour revision is common to all of Hogg's subsequent work; it provides evidence of the painting's manufacture and embodies a trailing sense of contingency.

The present exhibition of abstracts comprises five of Hogg's horizontally stretched oval canvases, each of which is based around a looping doodle that forms the picture's central element. She reiterates this motif in repeated parallel bands to create something resembling a Celtic knot. The repetition of lines creates striated hatching; this is the same technique she uses to chart out the three-dimensional figures in her grand-manner portraits. And all those years of wandering about the tenebrous visions of centuries past in European museums has resulted in her dedication to glazing and scumbling. She repeatedly glazes over her pictures in layers of transparent black, quinacridone violet, and dioxazine purple to mute and adjust her initial colours – a palette that Toronto critic Gary Michael Dault has described as resembling Pez candies. In the end, the loops slumber beneath a weight of glazed occlusion and the peek-a-boo, scumbled ground reasserts her initial buoyant palette.

These recent abstract paintings contain Hogg's figural works and her cycles of endless adjustment. Perhaps the grand-manner portraits are her points of departure, the loss leaders. The sticker value would lie with the closet abstracts and the figural works together in one exhibition, something the artist has yet to assay: Abstracts and Figuration (finally) at Home.

John Armstrong



Lucy Hogg – Abstract #34, 55 x 46 cm & Abstract #36 65 x 118 cm / both oil on canvas (2000), photos courtesy the artist

Reviews

Globe & Mail
12/26/00
Gary Michael Dault



Adamson in his Toronto studio: paintings that hover between abstraction and landscape.

Visual Arts: Three To Watch

Michael Adamson:
Art between real and abstract

To watch this young Toronto painter tend his burgeoning career is almost as much fun as looking at his paintings.

Unwilling to wait for dealers to catch up with him, Adamson rents temporary spaces in the city and mounts guerrilla shows of work so new it's often still wet. His paintings are gloriously rich in hue, with the pigment piled up and smeared about like icing on a cake.

Lucy Hogg:
Using art to address issues

Hogg is one of those cunning artists who manage to juggle issues and ambience without sacrificing either.

The Vancouver-based Hogg, better known on the West Coast than in the rest of the country (though surely not for long), makes paintings that deftly destabilize issues in the privileging of the male prerogatives in art history.

A typical Hogg reportrays a historically located male masterpainter, rendering him in such scorching, searing colour, the subject ends up being satirised by joy.



Szilasi: Her works are irresistible in their lyricism.

Andea Szilasi:
Poetically charged photography

This young Montreal-based Photographer, daughter of the veteran photographer Gabo Szilasi, makes highly ambitious and poetically charged photo-works, rather than photographs proper.

Much of Szilasi's work revolves around photographically assisted ruminations upon the nature of her own body - or of the world it moves through. It's technically demanding stuff, but always irresistible in its lyricism.

LUCY HOGG BY BAUDELAIRE



I shall not pay my friend Lucy Hogg the insult
of an exaggerated panegyric

for having so successfully mastered
the affect of her pigments, nor for having
placed her figures correctly upon
the canvas. Her talent is beyond these
representational niceties. I
am commenting above all upon the wit
of her painting. I should like to attempt
to express in prose the louche structures of
her collars for they communicate a
great and mordant intent; here simplicity,
forthrightness and selfless dedication
are seen marooned in ungrateful
modernity. What is it when the turn
of a lapel directs itself toward
the inevitability of genius,
when a crisp neck cloth articulates the
mortality of a concept? Yet her
wit glides beyond the sartorial, beyond
the transparent hatching of the balustrade
or urn. With sublimity it makes you

think of an extravagance of rivets
among the gilded domes; the cock
and the body and the thigh, the masses
of women in the invisible and
distant street, a density of intention
moving. It brings to life all the slow, frail
and unreliable memories through which
we display our civic charm: the slow turning
of escalators, the harmonized postures
of adolescents, the long-suffering
slope of sunlight on gentlemanly shoulders
call us into comradely if unwilling
being. Her description is too mortal
or it is not mortal. We must decide
and we giggle.

To complete this too-brief analysis

it remains for me to note one last quality
in Lucy Hogg - it is the expression
of a unique and persistent melancholy
become an ornament. Lucy Hogg has
a fondness for acts of disproportion
and spatial discomfort. Her useful
instruments of depiction show awkward
joints left undisguised, the rehearsed
spontaneities of genius, ambition
and anguish themselves become instruments,
so we may, upon her moot surfaces, embrace
something irreverently free blithe and
social. At the same time her surface insists
upon itself as the little poem born
of an interior, a studio, say,
all crammed and gleaming with the fragments
of a hundred utopian fantasies
and tools of one sort or another.

-Lisa Robertson



Lucy Hogg

Closet Paintings

At Anadyne Contemporary until June 20

• By **ROBIN LAURENCE**

In any review, the temptation to condense and categorize an artist's practice is enormous. Hell, it's more than a temptation, it's a habit, a well-beaten path between tired old synapses. If I hadn't just spoken to Lucy Hogg about the odd little paintings she calls Closet Abstracts, I'd have thrown this kind of lead at you: "Lucy Hogg is best-known as a feminist artist who appropriates and reworks historical paintings in order to critique the conventions by which patriarchal values are perpetuated in western culture." Something like that. I'd probably have added: "She employs visual language as an intervention of itself, deconstructing brush strokes and using unexpected colours and textures to undermine our complacency about visual conventions." Yeah, something like that, too.

SEE PAGE 84

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Christine and her two children, Danielle and Felix, derived assistance through several United Way funded agencies that provide programs ranging from parenting skills to overcoming serious health problems.

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Visual Arts

FROM PAGE 82

When I asked Hogg how and why she began to paint small abstractions—the other side of the moon, it seems to me, from her museum-scale figurative works—she gave me a brief history (started them in 1995 on a painting trip to Paris), then said she simply wanted to explore her medium, to play with its techniques and technologies. She was interested, too, in "the pure pleasure of painting". Then she added, "But I was also tired of the polemic that was following me around: 'Lucy Hogg: feminist historian-type artist'. I was starting to feel like a bumper sticker." Oops—here I am, in the business of bumper-sticker manufacture.

The Anadyne "outing" of these unusual paintings causes me to rethink critical strategies. (These works are "closet" abstracts in the sense of being hidden from public exposure, and of presenting quite a different image of Hogg's art practice from what was on view in her solo show at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1994.) It also causes me moments of quirky delight, unfettered by theory or cultural agenda. Well, unfettered for a while. As Hogg readily admits, an agenda inevitably adheres to the act of painting, even if the original impulse was pleasure and the work in question resembles a doodle. In an interview published in the September 1999 newsletter of Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design (where she teaches), Hogg said that "culture and gender affect even the simple act of putting a mark on a piece of paper." The brush stroke is loaded with more than paint; it carries the freight of social conditioning, signifying many, many conditions and hierarchies, from the heroic to the domestic.

The abstract motifs Hogg has invented here are the opposite of heroic. They make reference, instead, to smallness, banality, and undirected play. Overlapping loops, ribbons, tubes, and squiggles, they look like elaborate and sustained doodles. In their repetitive, scrolling

forms, they allude to the Spirographs we played with as children, but they also suggest likenesses to Celtic knots, obscure calligraphies, and the formlines of Northwest Coast Native art. Hogg spoke of their "cursive" nature, their relationship to handwriting. She was thinking, too, she said, of visual language and the significance of organic form to assumptions about a feminine approach to abstraction.

The organic appearance of Hogg's motifs also provokes thoughts about the body (some of her looping forms are suggestive of viscera); the oval shape and small size of her canvases also reference the artist's own body and the span of her writerly gestures. Like her large-scale figurative paintings, Hogg's small abstracts undermine conventions from within—that is, they quote what seem to be established and familiar forms and means, but subtly altered, subtly undermined. Another important connection between Hogg's figurative and abstract paintings is their palette: they share the same acidic violets, oranges, greens, and blues (painted light over dark) and the same reduced tonal range (what Hogg calls "close-toned diminished colour"). They also employ the same techniques of glazing and scumbling, the same layers of transparency and opacity, the same variegated surface, the same considered brushwork, and, in some instances, the same properties of illusionism.

Hogg is concerned that viewers not be able to apprehend her work instantly, that there be the potential for long looking in her work—and there is. The flip side of this dynamic, however, is that her abstract paintings are difficult to photograph and almost impossible to reproduce. They're unaccountably silly, too, which is a big part of their appeal. ■

Georgia Straight
June 15-22/2000



Lucy Hogg
Bitter Artist 2000
 Oil on linen
 53 x 45 cm
 Courtesy Pari Nadimi Gallery

generated by what Patrick Mahon so charmingly referred to, in *Parachute* (1998), as her “‘cross-dressing,’ where a woman artist identifies herself with the codes of patriarchy as a form of disguise in the name of achieving feminine agency.”

Hogg's tack in “The Complete Artist” is to abstract and thus isolate and examine her subjects by painting them in monochrome. Each painting is, in fact, duo-chromatic: her figures incarnated in one colour and her backgrounds in another. In *Amateur Artist*, for example (based apparently on Delacroix's *Portrait of Baron Von Bischoff*), the vertically elongated, lushly painted figure of the dandified baron is entirely the colour of glowing charcoal briquettes, while the background is a cold grey-green with dull orange highlights, as if it were slowly cooling down. For her *Two Boys* (a Van Dyck cited, with an almost callous lack of scholarship, only as a “portrait of two members of the English aristocracy”), the boy on the left is a searing electric blue, the boy on the right a livid green, while the background is a milky sort of pea-soup colour like something from a poorly-adjusted TV. Her cocky *Juvenile Artist* (Frans Hals, *The Itinerant Painter*) is a saucy Thrills-purple on a bilious green ground.

The artist's Pez-dispenser colours—irreverent, keyed-up, MTV versions of a traditional palette—are clearly both a critique and a homage, satisfyingly disrespectful as well as gorgeous. Furthermore, her painterly program provides her with a reason to swirl

her pigment brashly and joyfully in and around the furs, laces, bows and pleats of her hapless subjects, glorying in their grandeur, licking and probing with her brush at their dynamic calligraphic givens, both bringing to earth and valorizing her enlisted subjects and painters with her exuberant, risky retreading of their classicizing, romanticizing footsteps.

In the end, Hogg gets intriguingly close to a point in which the critical stance gives way to total hedonism: in *Bitter Artist* (her reworked Salvator Rosa self-portrait), for example, she obviously delights in the incendiary red in which she limns the painter (feral eyes glowing out at the viewer), and in the romantic cloud behind him, its edges ignited by the heat of her disdainful, imperious subject. The effect is fully as operatic and enlarging as it is levelling and severe—more cauterizing than caustic. ■

by GARY MICHAEL DAULT

Painting well is the best revenge. And if painting is seen historically to be a masculinist project, then for an avowedly feminist painter like Vancouver-based Lucy Hogg, bearding the lions of art history in their own lairs, repainting pictures by and of some of the great figures in (mostly) French painting—Delacroix, Géricault, David, Chardin, Fragonard, as well as Hals, Van Dyck and Salvator Rosa—and doing it with considerable panache, is both a noble and a rather naughty, puckish enterprise; a way of indicting your cake and eating it too.

Hogg's first solo exhibition in Toronto, at the Pari Nadimi Gallery last April, was called “The Complete Artist”—a title which was doubtless meant to render ironic both the presumed self-assurance and inviolate nature of her illustrious subjects, and at the same time, provide a little special pleading both for her obvious relishing of the painterly act, and for the aesthetic bravado

liberating changes in our perception of the world and could cybernetic tools themselves be used to break open systems which are "closed"? With their installation *The Furnace*, Alan Dunning and Paul Woodrow are suggesting that the process of adopting new ways of seeing also produces new forms of social organization. ■

The Furnace, "Einstein's Brain," "In/Here/Out/There," *The Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art* was on exhibition at the Glenbow Museum from September 5, 1998, to January 3, 1999; and at the Edmonton Art Gallery from January 30 to March 28, 1999.

Gerry Kisil contributes to *Border Crossings* from Edmonton.



VISUAL ART

Through a Glass Repetitively

by Sky Glabush

During the early 1990s the critical heat emanating from painting's corpse rose to an almost fevered pitch. People on both sides of the critical divide were hell-bent on either laying it permanently to rest or extolling its remarkable fortune. At the end of the 1990s—and I suppose the end of the 1990s—and I suppose the end of the millennium, history, time—the question concerning painting's vitality, or lack thereof, is "Who Cares?" Whether from a feminist perspective, as an ironic tool, as a theatrical gag, or whatever position you take standing on painting's scarified terrain, one thing is clear: many artists are choosing to express themselves through painting.

In Kent Archer's ambitious show, "Copycat: Adventures in Intertextuality," Reginald Baxter, Lucy Hogg, Damien Moppet, Brigitte Radecki and Monica Tap all use appropriation to tackle the question of whether painting (read male-dominated, modernist and exclusionary) can



yield something beyond its historically restrictive nature while preserving its sensuous physicality. If this work were simply another attempt to invest painting with new-found relevance or to rescue it from the limbo of obsolescence, then I say, "Job well done. Can I go now?"

Brigitte Radecki's installation tackles the issue of painting's relevance head on. With a slightly hubristic agenda, Radecki asks whether "the historically male-dominated field of abstract painting could be mined for new meaning." Her work consists of miniature, stylized versions of Franz Kline, Kazimir Malevich and Cy Twombly paintings. By inserting snippets of text from Nathaniel West's *Miss Lonelyhearts* alongside these modernist prototypes, Radecki tries



(left) Monica Tap, *Different times, different views IV*, 1998, oil on canvas, 46 x 46".

(left below) Brigitte Radecki, *Untitled*, oil on canvas, installation view.

(below) Lucy Hogg, *Gilles #1, 2, 3 (detail)*, 1996, oil on linen.



to contaminate their stoic certitude and subject them to a narrative inflection. In the same way that the protagonist in *Miss Lonelyhearts* becomes engrossed in the lives of his correspondents, Radecki becomes intimate with the nuances and character of her imaginary associates. In the case of Franz Kline, she mimicked the physical as well as

emotional dimensions of his methodology by getting drunk and working on her "homage" late into the night. While Radecki takes on the guise of the male protagonist in an effort to subvert the grandiose machismo of modernism's now limp virility, the reverence and seriousness with which she goes about replicating these

paintings (text notwithstanding) only seem to further entrench their fabled importance.

Lucy Hogg also uses the corrective lens of appropriation to explore the analytical and creative yield of painting. Her work consists of three overblown versions of Jean-Antoine Watteau's *Gilles*. In this piece Hogg responds to the legendary nature of Watteau's "master" piece using three distinct strategies: restricting the palette to monochrome; exaggerating gestural marks; and playing with scale. By restricting the overall colour of the paintings to a monochrome, Hogg has found a way to reinvest in the emotive and psychological elements weaned from modern disinterestedness. In her thoroughly tongue-in-cheek didacticism, green stands for envy, red for anger, blue for sadness, et cetera. She also plays with the notion of the monochrome as the teleological conclusion and thus the death of painting which, as she points out, has "always seemed to be a male prerogative." Hogg's use of exaggerated, albeit relatively tame, mark-making is a means of dandifying Watteau's beautiful (and, some might argue, already vulnerable) *Gilles*. The exaggerated flourishes and romanticized colour subversively eroticize *Gilles* in a manner that calls into question myths of the masculine, heroic individual. As for scale, these are large paintings, so big, in fact, that they had to be hung sideways, which, although a pragmatic solution to restrictions of space, is nonetheless a happy accident that Hogg uses to further destabilize



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and question the authority of the work. While Lucy Hogg's paintings succeed in testing preconceived responses to Watteau's story, I feel something less aggressive, less scrutinizing at play. Hogg is an artist who loves painting. All the critical tools at her disposal seem more like justifiers allowing her the freedom to do what she wants. To her credit, Hogg admits this, stating, "Of course, the other agenda is just to find a way to paint pictures I really love and encounter in museums." If only we all were so candid.

Alongside the obvious predilection for mimicry, another cohesive element in the show is the use of humour. To varying degrees each of these artists pokes fun at painting's stodgy conventionalism. Both Reginald Baxter (a.k.a. Mark Bell) and Damien Moppet use humour to great effect in their installations. Baxter addresses notions of artistic merit and intent by examining his experience as a professional painter working in the basement of a mid-town New York gallery, producing endless copies of the *King Charles' Cavalier Spaniel*. In the process of repeatedly painting this dog portrait and signing it Reginald Baxter, Mark Bell assumed the fictitious identity. Even after his stint as a "professional" painter, Baxter has continued producing versions of this painting at the rate of four or five a year since 1990. Looking at these 15 seemingly exact copies, you cannot help but marvel at their perfect mimesis, but with further reflection the viewer is made aware of minute, yet

significant, differences. This googly-eyed cur, painted with "old master" deftness and remarkable attention to nuance, is a substantial, yet entertaining, affront to the idea of originality and authorship.

Damien Moppet's series of drawings, "The Four Seasons and the Three Graces," also blends technical precocity with wry wit to have a little fun with the 18th-century (yet surprisingly contemporary) sensibility towards a genteel and aristocratic disposition in art. Interlaced between exquisitely rendered reproductions of François Boucher's pretty *fêtes galantes* are grotesques of the comic-book variety. Moppet uses the most excessively pleasure-loving of the Rococo painters to draw attention to the frivolous ebullience of what is seen as "great" art. His collation of adolescent, Pop aberrations with these rarefied drawings demonstrates that the exaggerated sensuousness of what we consider "high" art is just as conventional and prescribed as its "low," jocular counterpart.

While almost all the work in "Copycat" adheres to a strict sort of appropriation, Monica Tap's paintings are a little looser, a bit more generous. At first glance, Tap's work presents as moderately purist abstraction in the vein of Mark Tobey's "White Writing" series. Closer examination, however, reveals a complex layering of modular drawing. Her suite of paintings entitled "Different Times, different views I, III, IV" is an amalgamation of three, 17th-century landscape, pen-and-ink drawings. By assigning each drawing a particular

colour scheme and layering it in a specific order, Tap creates remarkably diverse paintings. She is thus able to describe a pictorial space that exists somewhere between Renaissance perspective and Modernist flatness. While Tap's work has much in common with that of the other artists in the show, it allows itself a degree of fluidity and chance that somehow makes the work more personal. In this way Tap's work stands as a bridge between sheer critical appropriation and a more personalized response to painting.

"Copycat" is a rigorous and coherent examination of the pitfalls and potential within the fraught territory of painting. The artists in the show approach their work with a rare and determined inquisitiveness, and thorough professionalism. The irony, however, is that while these artists share a concern for not only the scrutiny, but the celebration of the painterly language, the singular emphasis on appropriation results in an artificial or surrogate affirmation. These paintings are, for the most part, replicas. I believe in the inherent potential within painting, but after looking at this show my sense is that while appropriation is an effective tool for destabilizing grand narratives and subverting expectations, it is less successful in delivering the most important ingredient: heart. ■

"Copycat: Adventures in Intertextuality" was at the Kenderline Gallery, University of Saskatchewan, from October 30 to December 9, 1999.

Sky Glabush is a painter and writer who lives in Saskatoon.

Thib's sure hand maps the body

GALLERY GOING

GARY MICHAEL DAULT

Jeannie Thib has always taken very seriously the artist's imperative to Make It New. In Thib's case, the ongoing inventiveness of her work has resided, over the past decade, in the brave and cunning ways she has elegantly pushed the limits of printmaking to the breaking point. For her second solo exhibition at Toronto's Leo Kamen Gallery, Thib has once again deployed her continuing fascination with the mapping of the body and, more particularly, with detachable, almost fetishistically intense surrogates for the body — in this case gloves and (new with this show) purses. Also new in this latest exhibition, called *Token*, is the degree to which Thib's printmaking now vies for methodological supremacy with drawing. The purses, which come in five pairs under the title *Trappings*, are compact, indeed testicular, little handbags drawn in matte-black silhouette. She regally isolates them — as is her way — on huge, creamy sheets of paper, and then imposes upon them white, silkscreened imagery, landscapes on the left, pure pattern on the right. Like much of Thib's work, her previous sets of paper gloves, for example, the paired purses remind us of the *handedness* of the body, its doubleness (its paired and more or less symmetrical organs, its right-left polarities), the superimposed textures and patterns serving to impose a sort of restful order on the wild fact of our organic selves. Like the purses, Thib's glove-works are also paired — into male and female gloves. Again, the gloves are drawn as inked silhouettes and screened in white, with patterns of birds and branches and decorously sensuous fruit. You can tell the male gloves from the female gloves because the males are bigger and — as it is in the animal kingdom — showier and more ornate. *Gloves*, \$2,200 each. *Purses*, \$4,000 a pair. Until April 29, 80 Spadina Ave.,



One of Jeannie Thib's glove works at Leo Kamen: patterns impose order.

Suite 406, 416-504-3194.

Lucy Hogg at the Pari Nadimi Gallery

The first Toronto exhibition by Vancouver-based painter Lucy Hogg is rather wickedly titled *The Complete Artist*. Wickedly titled in that it's slyly unclear whether this completeness rests within the historically beatified self-assurance of Hogg's ostensible sources, paintings (many of them about making art) by Van Dyck, Delacroix, Géricault, David, Fragonard, Chardin, Frans Hals and Salvator Rosa. Or whether the completeness is an ironic, almost sarcastic bravado generated by a prodigiously gifted young feminist artist who clearly loves to paint, and is relying on her passion for pigment to carry her safely through the all-man's land that has been the province of Western painting. As critic Robin Laurence so succinctly put it, discussing Hogg in *Canadian Art* magazine a few years ago, the challenge to seriously feminist painters becomes "the construction of a

feminist critique from within a suspect medium." Hogg wields the suspect medium — oil paint — with great panache. Her monotonal revisitations of 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century paintings by some of the big boys of art history are very sumptuous critiques, strident, scab-picking homages to the swaggering painterly authority of her male predecessors. Hogg's palette is a chromatic critique all by itself, a sort of Pez-dispenser version of traditional colour. The figures in *Two Boys* (after Van Dyck) are either entirely searing blue (like the figure on the left) or all livid green (the figure at the right), both of them set against a milky pea-green background that looks like an under-adjusted TV. The burning-coal orange of her *Angry Artist* (after David) and the saucy Thrills-purple of her *Juvenile Artist* (after Frans Hals) are, for example, simultaneously gorgeous and satisfyingly disrespectful. Hogg's vivid electric adjustment of historical colour means that, by thus abstracting, distancing, and questioning the celestial status of

the (male) art icons of the past, she can both have her Old Masters and eat them too. \$1,800-\$7,000. Until April 29, 179 John St. 416-591-9251.

New British Drawing at the Pekao Gallery

Made Space: Contemporary British Drawing, organized by Scottish artists Fraser Staples and Gavin Morrison, is cool, smart and almost terminally elegant. Alan Johnston's vast but delicate graphite wall drawing gently but insistently reconfigures the gallery's airplane-hanger volume, while Charles Avery's persuasive crayon drawings of casually meaningful moments in the lives of a fictional family huddle over in the corner, keeping their dysfunctionality to themselves. Margarita Gluzberg's gigantic and exhaustingly labour-intensive line drawings of empty wigs are both weirdly off-putting and, at the same time, as glowingly inviting as haystacks in the moonlight. Claude Heath's map-like configurations of bright white points of light stencilled onto his deep black walls are

pieces. March 30 to April 23. *Art Gallery of York University, 4700 Keele St., Ross Building, 796-5169.*

L. M. Montgomery. At the age of 16, the creator of *Anne of Green Gables* bought her first camera and set up a darkroom at her grandparents' house. So began a lifelong (and prolific) passion; the 156 photos at the McMaster Museum of Art are part of a trove of 2,000 images by Montgomery in the University of Guelph archives. Most fascinating are Lucy Maud's carefully posed self-portraits. There she is, a feather boa-draped young woman, soignée beneath a black face veil, the picture of sophistication (albeit within the safe confines of her bedroom). There are also photos of her favourite houses (including the original Green Gables), friends both human and feline, and charming snapshots of her two sons. Montgomery's writerly penchant for the picturesque carries over into her landscape photos of winding roads, and tunnels of trees with a light at the end. And at times it carries her right over the top. Fiddling unabashedly for effect, Montgomery contrived glittering "snow" scenes in the darkroom: "Choose a scene with evergreens or trees with bare branches..." she advised in an article about amateur photography. More fascinating fodder for Montgomery groupies cannot be imagined. To April 9. Pay what you can. *McMaster Museum of Art, 1280 Main St. W., Hamilton, 905-525-9140, ext. 23081.*

KIDS' EVENTS

By Nora Underwood

Alice. Maristella Roca's adaptation of Lewis Carroll's much loved *Wonderland* and *Looking Glass* books continues its world premiere production on the Mainstage. Ages seven and up. To May 14. \$25. *Young Peoples Theatre, 165 Front St. E., 862-2222.*

The Last Drop. Carousel Players presents this final instalment in the Theatre for Young Audiences series—the environmental tale of how a single glass of water is essential to the lives of a man, a fish, a plant and even insects. Ages six and up. April 1. Pay what you can. *Auditorium, Metro Central YMCA, 20 Grosvenor St., 469-2878.*

Ontario Science Centre. Aside from *Timescape: Unearthing the Mysteries of Time*, a show with more than 30 interactive exhibits, the OSC presents a weekend family workshop about the mysteries of geologic age. Participants can learn, through hands-on activities and a slide show, how geologists and paleontologists determine just how old their finds are. \$6-\$10; children four and under are admitted free. 770 Don Mills Rd., 696-1000.

Solar Stage Children's Theatre. This month, *Munsch Delight* continues to spill out stories by the ever popular Robert Munsch, April 2, 9, 16 and 23. Then it's songs, jokes, yo-yo tricks and audience participation in *Spring Into Summer*, performed by the Stylamanders, Sundays from April 30 to May 28. \$8.50. *Solar Stage Children's Theatre, 4950 Yonge St., 368-8091.*

Sprockets. This is the third year for the Toronto International Film Festival for Children, a program of live-action, animated, documentary



MALE CHAUVINIST DIG Just as a yellow mylar sheet laid over a printed page can stabilize skewed letters for a dyslexic, Lucy Hogg's monochrome reproductions of famous paintings use colour to alter the relationships between their male subjects and the setting. A proud burgher or statesman looks less like the master of the universe when restated entirely in fluorescent red or acid green, and by irradiating these icons of privilege with one colour (or, more recently, one for the figure and one for the background), Hogg shows us the larger pathology of male dominance. Not content to stop there, she accentuates the sensual (feminine) folds of a garment or the lacy foliage of a Watteau landscape. As Hogg acknowledges, there's a love-hate relationship in these works. Her testy appropriations retain much of the high-art aura of the originals, hinting, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em"—but the red flag is also up. —Betty Ann Jordan

Portraits by Lucy Hogg are on view at the *Parl Nadimi Gallery, 179 John St., from April 8 to 29.* Call 591-6464 for more information.

and feature films from different countries. Among the selection at the weekend screenings (there is a school-only program as well): *Anna-häse and Anton*, a German film about two dissimilar families brought together by two young friends; *The Adventures of Aligermaa*, a Danish documentary about a Mongolian girl's dream to compete in the national horse race; *Tsatsiki*, a Scandinavian production about a son's dream to meet his father; and *Anne Frank's Diary*, an international co-production that tells, through animation, the tale of a young girl hiding from the Nazis. For more films, check the Sprockets Web site at www.bell.ca/filmfest. April 8, 9, 15

and 16. \$5-\$8. *Varsity Theatre, 55 Bloor St. W., 968-3456.*

Windows on Our World. A series of doors are distinguished by photos of older people (witnesses of what has been), children (who will discover the future) and such notables as Ed Mirvish, Libby Znamier and Rush's Geddy Lee. Behind each door is a box that, in turn, contains an object; a recorded message explains its significance to the witness. \$2. *Jewish Discovery Place Children's Museum, Bathurst Jewish Centre, 4588 Bathurst St., 636-1880, ext. 456.*

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

By Stuart Broomer

Jazz bookings are subject to change.

Call ahead to confirm engagements.

Nathaniel Dett Chorale, named for a Canadian-born pioneer of African-American concert music and directed by Brainerd Bryden-Taylor, devotes itself not only to classical but to the rich tradition of jazz and spirituals. Composer and pianist Joe Sealey, who mined the black Canadian experience for his moving *Africville Suite*, has created a new suite, *And Still We Sing*; his own quartet joins the choir for the performance. April 15. \$30. *Convocation Hall, 31 King's College Cir., University of Toronto, 340-7000.*

Oscar Peterson. The world premiere of Peterson's *Trail of Dreams Suite* is a major event in the Music Canada Musique 2000 series. Topically, the theme is an exploration of the Trans-Canada Trail, but musically the piece harks back to Peterson's *Canadiana Suite* of 1964. Composer Michel LeGrand conducts the Roy Thomson Hall Chamber Orchestra. April 11. \$35-\$125. *Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., 872-4255.*

CLUBS

Montreal Bistro. Leading a quintet rather than his jazz orchestra gives Dave McMurdo more leeway to demonstrate his prowess as a trombonist. April 4 to 8. Pianist Fred Hersch interprets Rodgers and Hammerstein and Thelonius Monk with equal grace, following the harmonically rich path of the late Bill Evans to create a personal, moving style. April 11 to 15. Vancouver vocalist Shannon Gunn returns for one night only with the superb accompaniment of guitarist Ed Bickert and bassist Neil Swainson. April 24. Gene DiNovi is a gently swinging pianist whose jazz background reaches back to the '40s. He appears with bassist Dave Young. April 25 to 29. \$8-\$15 cover. *65 Sherbourne St., 368-0179.*

Rex Jazz and Blues Bar. Vocalist Sharron McLeod possesses energy, range and a fresh approach to both the standards and original material. April 6. Del Dako plays baritone saxophone with passion, invention and unusual fluency. He appears with pianist Bernie Senensky. April 7. Marking the release of a new CD, Jennifer Ryan sings modern jazz with a lack of affectation and a promising group that includes pianist Craig Harley. April 14. Organist Daffyd Hughes explores the funky approach with the group Marvin Starr. April 19. Doug Riley's



Lucy Hogg

Lucy Hogg has a degree in Fine Arts from Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia. In addition to painting, she works as a critic and curator, and since 1988 has been teaching at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. For several years, she has been engaged in a project that re-examines assumptions about paint and painting. In a world that equates the role of painter with heroic masculinity, Hogg has audaciously carved out a territory that upends that notion and claims a place for feminist practice by systematically reinterpreting iconic images from the past. The scale of her images often matches or exceeds the original sources, but our reading of them is quite different. Where the nineteenth-century sources stressed action, three-dimensional volume and force of will, Hogg's images are more tentative, with fluid spatial definitions, and they leave us questioning the nature of both her images and their sources.

Warrior 1 is based on a dramatic composition, *An Officer of the Imperial Horse Guards Charging*, by the French painter Théodore Géricault. A canvas first shown at the Paris Salon of 1814, the Géricault depicts a splendidly uniformed mounted cuirassier about to charge into battle. By radically foreshortening the horse and cutting off the field of vision, Géricault has the horse and rider loom up over viewers. Hogg's work counteracts much of the drama of the Géricault by the application of the paint and by the palette, at once reduced and almost surrealistically enhanced. The dramatic smoke in the background of the Géricault is a strange mist in the Hogg canvas, and even the ground upon which horse and rider stand seems undermined.

Another reason for the deliberate lack of drama in Hogg's work is the use of colour. The Géricault painting attempts to suggest that the space of the mounted soldier is but an extension of our own, but in Hogg's canvas, this strangely coloured world is clearly not one that we can inhabit. Where the original source attempts to suggest smoke, flesh, fabric, skin and the cheetah skin of the horse blanket, Hogg treats all these elements with equanimity and a consistent application of the paint. What was heroic is parodied, and we are left in the unsettling condition of not really being able to engage in the subject of the painting.

In addition, Hogg replaces the assurance of the Géricault painting with questioning. We are asked to evaluate the reality of the Géricault image and to ask ourselves about the role of painting in the depiction of history. Géricault's work, which preceded the invention of photography by twenty-five years, is part of a world view that can no longer be maintained. In a similar fashion, Hogg proposes that our vision of painting must change. Long the prerogative of men, painting can be and is the province of women as well, and their presence can both support and undermine that of men. The creation of masculine space by artists such as Géricault and Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, another artist whom Hogg has used as a source, is challenged and subverted by images such as *Warrior 1*.

Ian Thom
Curator
Vancouver Art Gallery, 2000

Warrior 1 1992
oil on canvas, 304.0 x 233.0 cm
Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of the Artist
VAG 94.35

PARACHUTE

art contemporain
contemporary art

Qu'est-ce que peindre? Painting?



juillet,
août,
septembre
octobre
novembre
décembre



Patrick Mahon

Painting's Hurts

Modernist Scars and the Works of John Armstrong, Cora Cluett, Sara Hartland-Rowe and Lucy Hogg¹

During the time that Cora Cluett's paintings were displayed in a recent exhibition, the preparatory staff of the gallery reported having to occasionally "touch up" the walls surrounding several of the artist's densely built works. Periodically, a little of the material from her canvases would appear there, having moved from beneath the skin-like nodules of dried-over paint where it remained viscous and (one would have thought) trapped. Smudged onto the wall beside the work was the evidence that someone had not resisted the temptation to "pick the scab" of Cluett's work. Presumably a finger belonging to the guilty party, coloured with material that would not go away, was then dragged across the wall in an attempt to come clean. One imagines a cry of "Out! Out!" might have emerged from the lips of the violator of the canvas on realizing he or she had become marked by the ubiquitous coloured matter.

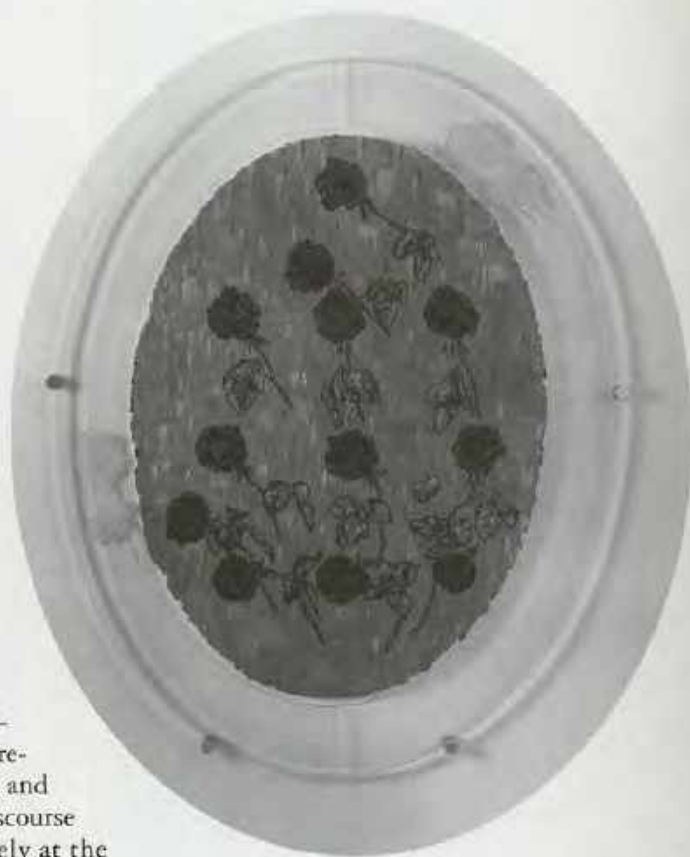
In the recent postmodern past it seems that many hands have got paint on them while finding painting blameworthy in some of the most fraught critical debates of the twentieth century. It is well known that the fault-finding was initiated in the name of those who were historically placed on the outside of a modernist canon that put painting at its centre and other practices and practitioners on the periphery. Yet even as the echoes of accusations about painting's culpability as the hegemonic medium of domination continue to hang in the air, *paintings* insist themselves everywhere within the contemporary visual field. Among them are paintings by women who might have considered the medium unfit within the framework of a feminist practice, paintings by artists seeming bent on revisiting modernist aesthetic projects once left for dead, and paint-

ings by those whose works seem to assert that, indeed, it's the *paint* that won't go away.

The apparent "resurgence" of painting on the contemporary scene appears as an invitation to revisit earlier modernist debates, including those that yielded to the reductive alliance of painting and "high modernism." Such discourse requires that one peer closely at the specificity of codes of production, and ask questions about the cultural values proposed through and as painterly representation. Johanna Drucker has usefully argued that this conversation, in fact, reiterates modernist problematics that have indeed been central preoccupations within postmodernism as well.²

To take up the problem of painting as representation here could arguably be an act of dressing the wounds of painting and mending its open sores. But if the discussion were to proceed in an amnesiac manner that attempted to restage painting as an autonomous discourse, then the many teeth that were chipped and the scars from the body-blows by the historical wielders of the medium might simply be forgotten. Painting's hurts – those it has dealt and received – need therefore to remain in evidence for an authentic address to the works of contemporary

JOHN ARMSTRONG,
PAGEANT, 1992, OIL
ON LINEN, SAND-
CARVED GLASS, 162
X 132 CM; PHOTO:
JEREMY JONES,
COURTESY THE
ARTIST.

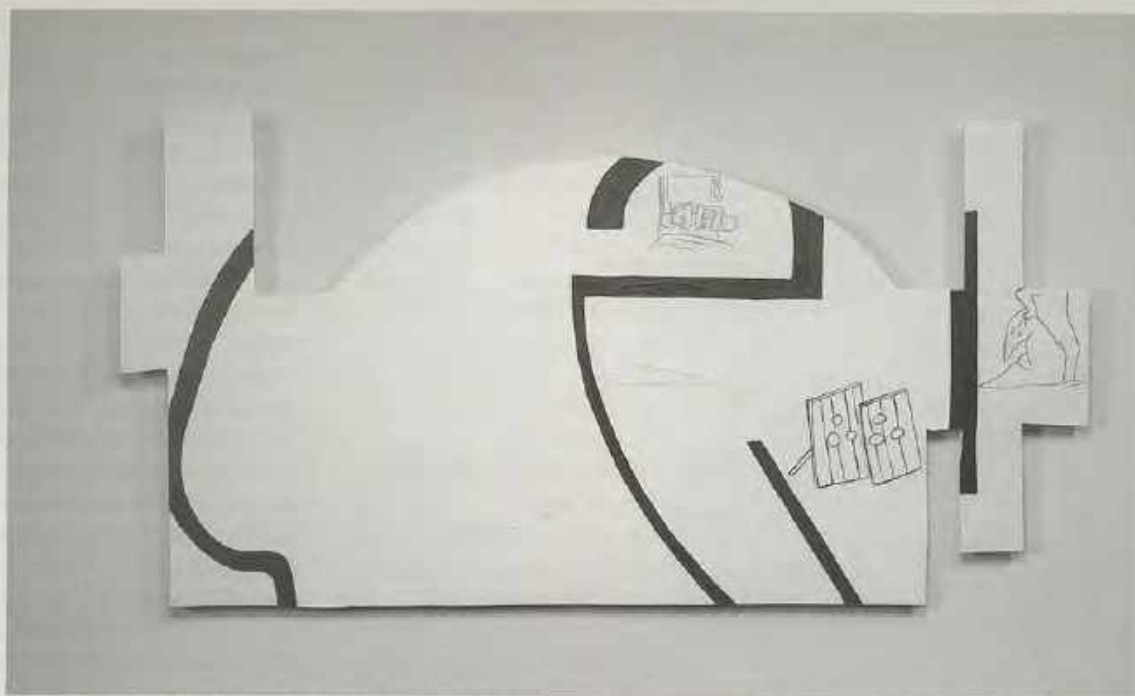


painters
to take place.

Those hurts, in fact, may be what invigorates the works of many current painters as they simultaneously resist a postmodern suspicion of their medium, while refusing the utopic "grandstanding" of the project of high modernism.

To develop a site of discourse, bounded by more than the material paint and notions of production, it becomes necessary to invigorate the term "representation" here, in relation to the concept of *space* within the frame of both painting and social life. Griselda Pollock's now familiar feminist analysis of space is useful because it provides a matrix where material and social discourses coalesce.³ In that regard space can be considered with respect to the author's notion of its three modern iterations: as location, as a product of spatial ordering within paintings,





SARA HARTLAND-ROWE, PALACE, 1997, OIL ON MASONITE; PHOTO: JOHN TAMBLYN, COURTESY THE ARTIST.

and in the correspondence between the social and pictorial spaces of representation. Specifically, space as "location" is the depictable site where gender, among other social inscriptions, is produced; arguably its presence, or absence, in painting is what invigorates its power to overproduce the viewing subject. The play of relations within the spatial order is the second notable iteration of "modernist space" according to Pollock; for the author, the spatial devices women painters experimented with worked to different ends than those of their male counterparts. Pollock identifies as a third modern spatial paradigm the link between the social space of the represented and the pictorial space of representation. In the tripartite program she describes, Pollock's main point is that the gender oppositions within the spaces of modernity are demonstrated in formal terms within the works of modernist painters (Cassatt and Morisot, among them).

Extending beyond this argument it is important to note, as Johanna Drucker does, that the space of modernism, and nineteenth-century modernist painting by association, represented a continuum between the private/domestic and the public/urban, which was experienced differently by gendered social subjects.⁴

It should of course be recalled that as modernism moved into the twentieth century an emphasis on depicted space in painting gave way to a preoccupation with the *espace* of the canvas, particularly in the works of male artists such as Seurat, Cézanne and Gau-

guin. In the present context, where social and painterly space are being "reproblematized," the question whether a differing link can be shown between the social space of the represented and the *espace* of the canvas in the works of contemporary painters becomes crucial.

A theoretical matrix has been constructed here: it includes "paint," "codes of production," and "the space of representation." The question of what force might allow this theoretical construct to coalesce with artworks yields several answers. Useful to this discussion and its preoccupation with a relation between modernism and postmodernism, is the response, "a dialogue with history"; art works and theoretical objects address and can be addressed by each other in relation to the social and painting histories that surround and inform them.

The paintings of the four artists of concern here, John Armstrong, Cora Cluett, Sara Hartland-Rowe and Lucy Hogg, all function in relationship to a rhetoric of space as representation. In the works of each, space is iterated so that there is an address to the question of a possible transition between social space and the *espace* of the canvas – the *space of painting*. These artists' reticent embraces of postmodern practice are further inflected by their interest in aesthetic problematics that can be conceived of in relation to history. That history is concerned with painting: *painting's hurts*. In the works of Armstrong, Cluett, Hartland-Rowe and Hogg painting's history is invoked via spaces

which never claim full autonomy, but refuse a direct engagement with the social world.

Toronto artist John Armstrong's *Pageant* (1992) presents viewers with a painting that operates as the sum of a series of painterly and linguistic codes; a rhetorical tapestry that begs one move through a syntactic check-list. Armstrong works within a large portrait oval which rather than bearing a visage upon it shows a series of twelve thickly painted red roses caught in states of arrested animation as they descend the oblong shape. Their states of arrest are heightened by the blue-grey ground that surrounds them; it is laid on with a knife to recall the stylized response of 1950s abstractionists to the plastic experiments that Cézanne had undertaken fifty years earlier. The edge of the canvas is roughened by the numerous layerings of impasto paint that have been dragged across it and left to form a palpable and visibly striated crust. Outside of this active perimeter, the work is surrounded by a heavy glass frame such as one might see propped on a dressing table with a photograph of a loved one in it (though here it is almost the height of a body); on this translucent halo images of roses have been sand-blasted.

The spatial and iconographic hybridity of *Pageant* is among the compelling aspects of Armstrong's work, reminding one that only after the advent of photography or more precisely film could such painterly bricolage have been conceived of. The artist's eighteenth-century decorative sensibilities cast themselves forward here to nod toward the pho-



CORA CLUETT, *A DELICATE DISORDER*, 1996, OIL ON CANVAS ON BOARD, 30.5 X 30.5 CM; PHOTO: COURTESY THE ARTIST.

tographic motion studies of Muybridge before turning a canny eye on late modernist abstraction. Such quotational strategies have been the stock in trade of postmodernist producers for well over a decade; in Armstrong's hands, though, their initial quality of aesthetic cacophony, which might easily be read as a surrealist juxtapositional strategy, yields to a spatially overdetermined iteration of class and domestic histories. As such, one is reminded of painting's relationship to the middle class in the context of the home, particularly in North America of the mid-twentieth century. Then the work's normatively encoded aesthetic assertions – "decorative arts signify good taste," "roses mean beauty," "painting equates with brushstrokes/knife marks," etc. – are set in motion to pose larger aesthetic questions: Can one make a painting that appears "beautiful" to both interested and disinterested viewers? Can a space of aesthetic engagement include the middle class? If one of painting's "hurts" is expressed here it is the suspicion that after high modernism the possibility of making an aesthetically compelling painting that is recognizable to interested and disinterested viewers alike may not exist.

In a work entitled *The Ideal Person or a Mixture of the Four: Blood, Pilegm, Choler and Melancholy* (1997-98), Armstrong stages a sculptural retort to himself and his audience that suggests that from painting's concerns may stem spatial constructions that are simultaneously social and aesthetic in nature. The work presents a tangle of thirty-five oversized porcelain and bronze (or porcelain and wood and wax) roses glazed in colours that correspond to the cardinal humours which

eighteenth-century Europeans considered were needed in equal measure for health; they fan out on the gallery floor to provide a painting-like "explosion" that invokes a decorative carpet such as Jackson Pollock might have orchestrated. Here, as in Armstrong's paintings, the work's artifice proclaims itself as "the real," and the question of presence hovers around it. But whereas in his paintings the evidence of the hand reminds one of the means of production, in Armstrong's sculptural installation the trace of the artist's making is embedded. Thus a viewer is invited to an experience where painterly strategies are a subtext rather than a proclamation. Furthermore, an invocation of the social space of the middle-class home has been displaced by the presence of gallery floor, suggesting the possibility of a poetic enunciation of *other* historically overdetermined sites – such as a European grave where one might regularly see porcelain roses strewn. With this ironic gesture, Armstrong proposes that from the space of painting (the *espace*) may proceed the possibility for one to reengage with the social world.

The work of Vancouver artist Lucy Hogg appears almost immediately to be overwritten by a schizophrenic engagement with painting history. The work *Fantasy Critic (after Fragonard)* (1998) reads simultaneously as both a monochrome and as an academic transcription of an "old master" work. Painted in a narrow range of orange tones with brushmarks that range between studied scumbles and restrained gestural flourishes, the work is both illusionistically convincing and flatly decorative. A viewer experiences a vertiginous sense of dis-ease on encountering

such a wholly ambivalent relationship between pictorial representation and pure abstraction.

Hogg's work, like Armstrong's, advances a rhetorical terrain in which historicized painting codes fold together to invent a space that is overcoded though it refuses mere didacticism. While Armstrong's works remember the social landscape of mid-century domesticity, Hogg's site of address appears at first to be within the museum, and later within the realm of feminist discourse. In this second regard, which depends on a relation with the earlier term, her work evidences gestures that compel an identification of painting with an historically "masculinist" project. Coupling references to the French Academic tradition through an appropriation of Fragonard with an invocation of the monochrome and its late-modern autonomic associations, Hogg's work initially reads as a double indictment of painting's role in the project of patriarchy. A secondary reading, where one attends to the artist's material engagement with virtuoso brushmarking to reproduce an image originated by a dead "master," and also to the compression of space via the use of a monochrome palette, the conclusion that this feminist project is a *self-reflexive* critique is rendered. Hogg, a feminist painter, necessarily inhabits two positions. One proposes painting as "cross-dressing," where a woman artist identifies herself with the codes of patriarchy as a form of disguise in the name of achieving feminine agency. The other acknowledges the long history of painters who have utilized their medium as a social language, and thus it mounts a critique of early feminism's disavowal of the potential efficacy of painting as a tool. Here the "hurts" that have made women the subjects of masculinist painting's dominating tactics and those that, in the name of feminist redress, have made the act of making paintings dismissable collide to form a complex space that is neither fully pictorial nor completely abstract. Hogg's project is one fraught with risk yet eminently important to both feminism and painting.

London, Ontario artist Sara Hartland-Rowe's paintings also betray a preoccupation with painting's history, but unlike Armstrong and Hogg who offer works based on unlikely permutations of elements seen before in the history, Hartland-Rowe's works are based on the "unseen" that has ostensibly always been there. In *Palace* (1997), a jagged geometric shape appears to mimic an unidentified architectural source that refuses a sense of structural coherence. The work bears heavy linear elements that resemble parts of letterforms or bits of information from street signage. Hovering within the indeterminate territories demarcated by the barrier-like

jags are cartoon-like drawings that fade in and out of the white ground, suggesting a literal "brush" with the Sunday comics or perhaps with a less populist source of hand-made illustration.

The shape of the work, one of several in a series, is reportedly derived from a photographic document of a scarred fresco, recalling an area of an original wall painting that went missing due to age or some form of accidental intervention.⁵ With this information, Rosalind Krauss' definition of the index as "that which substitutes physical presence for the more highly articulated language of aesthetic conventions (and the kind of history which they encode)," comes to mind.⁶ Then a viewer recognizes that the narrative traces in the work act as another form of index, referring to the ostensible "traditional" story within narrative painting. They read as fragments that both recall and undo the "grander" narratives that are lost to contemporary viewers. A further uncoding occurs as the letter-like forms advance the notion "sign" without offering themselves to signification.

With *Palace*, Hartland-Rowe makes an apparently postmodernist attempt at an overt displacement of the normative attributes of modernist painting: the ubiquitous rectangle has given way to a "shape" whose source is largely indeterminate, pictorial space appears not to be conceived of in relation to the problem of illusionism or its loss, and the relation between figure and ground, though always in contradictory flux, appears to result from a performative activity of adding and subtracting narrative information, rather than from a process-based activity. This set of refusals is as carefully staged as are the rhetorical iterations of Armstrong and Hogg, yet here they lead a viewer to recognize that as the previous works engaged in a *public* discourse (albeit one that both advances and problematizes the discourse), this painting proposes a *private* one. Hartland-Rowe refers to painterly syntax in order to suggest that the medium itself is a space of singular potential for individuated and personal expression. Her choice to utilize shapes that refer to damaged and hurt places from what might be some of the most conceptually important moments in painting's history – wall frescoes – in attempting to recover a space for visual storytelling, is uniquely resonant. The work also cannily acknowledges the inescapability of modernism's preoccupations by calling up the visual qualities of a simple fragment or chip of paint itself. With this complexity, Hartland-Rowe's work suggests that through excavating the layers of what was lost to painting, it becomes possible to imagine unique spaces that are not fully given to pictoriality or to abstraction.

Cora Cluett's paintings, including *A Delicate Disorder* (1996) and *In a Deferred Time* (1997), advance readable modernist traits that appear as if age and disease had relieved them of their utopic optimism. Each of Cluett's square canvases shows a grid stamped out with star-like shapes and circles that recall computer screen symbols (including a sign for a "kiss"), and also suggest the results of mishandled operations with cookie-cutters and other domestic markers. In these works Cluett has co-opted and abused painterly alchemy to produce surfaces that are ripe with the evidence of uneasy material marriages; they bubble and ooze to remind the viewer what a *live* medium is the paint which has plagued and ingratiated itself on Western art for over one thousand years. The colours of Cluett's works are a further means of insisting that paint is alive: through a pasty pink glows a shade of bruised violet, and out of the ridges of an intense orange field seeps a whitish yellow. These rapt material marriages produce surfaces where figure and ground assail one another, insisting themselves onto and into the other.

Cluett began these paintings several years ago as a result of working with some of her own photographic objects; she had begun puncturing polaroid photographs of mouths and noticed the viscous fluid that poured out of them. In response, Cluett set about producing similarly viscous paintings, and eventually came to view the works as more "real" than the images within her photographs.⁷ This curious recognition addresses what Michael Newman speaks of as the central problem for postmodernism in the visual arts:

[A]lthough we live in a culture of proliferating images, the future has no image. . . the shell of the computer and its circuitry does not represent its data processing and communicational capacities. The most difficult aspect [for] postmodernity to deal with is unprecedented, even more so. . . it is unrepresentable.⁸

Cluett's solution to the postmodern problem of the unrepresentability technology produces is to turn toward one of the ubiquitous tropes of modernist painting – the grid – and recast it to proclaim its agedness, even as it oozes fresh, still-wet matter. The works therefore thrust an historical moment in modernist painting forward showing it as scarred and sagging yet still recognizable in its technological overdetermination.

With this paradoxical gesture Cluett invokes the space of painting as "the real," showing its potential to be produced as an embodied site. Cluett inverts painting's relationship to representational space by utilizing the abstract *espace* to produce representation: painting itself becomes a body which breathes and spews, while reminding

the viewer of his/her own potential to become a corpse. An ironic sense of "sweep" accompanies this proposal of painting as the terrain where the problems postmodernism has identified (but remain unsolved) are reframed in relation to their modernist antecedents.

Cora Cluett, John Armstrong, Sara Hartland-Rowe and Lucy Hogg each clearly engage with painting to pose questions. The works of each are indeed themselves answers which, in a somewhat circular manner, make *paint* the active verb. Even so, viewers are reminded how fraught is the choice to reinvigorate a medium that has so violently hurt and so painfully been hurt within the history of art. Yet by *doing* painting these artists, like many on the contemporary landscape, propose a place of mourning, a site of redress and a space of recovery.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to a young Victoria artist, Gary Rice, for the title of this essay. In 1994, as a beginning art student, Rice produced a work entitled *Painting Hurt*, based on his grade three school portrait in which he was shown with a broken tooth. In speaking about the work, Rice explained that the source photograph had been taken just after he had tripped and fallen down the stairs of his parents' home. He was hurrying with excitement to see a new painting that had just been bought for the living room.
2. Johanna Drucker, *Theorizing Modernism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 4. Throughout much of the text Drucker draws out a complex argument for the necessity to recognize the legacy of postmodern thought within modernism.
3. Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, New York: Routledge, 1988, pp. 56-63.
4. Drucker, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
5. Interview with the author, February 6, 1998.
6. Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Part 1," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986, p. 209.
7. Interview with the author, February 21, 1998.
8. Michael Newman, "Revising Modernism, Representing Postmodernism" in *ICA Documents 4*, London: Institute for Contemporary Art, 1989, p. 149.

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Analysant le retour de la peinture dans le travail de jeunes artistes, l'auteur remarque que, tout en résistant aux réserves post-modernes envers le médium, ils en refusent le statut spécial lié au modernisme. Cette stratégie esthétique gravite autour d'une préoccupation caractérisée par les « blessures » de la peinture: ses points vulnérables, ses manques et ses failles.

Lucy Hogg



Lucy Hogg's large painting *Gilles* is red, before it is anything else. A sequence of smaller studies, each also keyed to a single colour—red or blue, green or yellow—repeats and multiplies the large work's content. Once past the vivid intensities of the different chromatic registers, a stable image is recognizable, common to all the pictures: it is Antoine Watteau's *Gilles* (or *Pierrot*, by its alternate title), painted almost three centuries ago in Paris. Watteau's work becomes Hogg's strong armature and one she takes great liberties in revising, overturning the gentility of his surface labour to foreground a mark-making that is regularly and deliberately sustained across the full surface of all her works.

Still, the double-naming—and Hogg's repeated doublings—of Watteau's picture do not allow us to finally decide the identity of the actor; but that is not the intention of either artist. Instead, what matters more—for Hogg as for Watteau—is the self-identification of the artist as *an actor*, an

actor who, in all these "curtain call" pictures, remains singularly in costume and purposely detached from the play. In all the images, strong claims are made by the scale of the figure for attention to be paid to the importance of the performative in life. It is artistry itself that is being celebrated. Following this reading, these artistic performances become alternative self-portraits that mimic the improvisational actor-generated performances of the *commedia dell'arte* tradition and a form of double proof that meditations on serious questions in art—especially in regard to painting—work better framed obliquely and ironically.

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Lucy Hogg

Gilles #3 (After Yves Klein)

1995-96

oil on canvas

293 x 234

collection of the artist





Lucy Hogg

Gilles #1 (After Monet)

1995-96


oil on canvas

293 x 234

collection of the artist

metaphorical level. Pervading the tape's imagery and the recollections of Oberlander's father is an intense sense of disjunction—between the urban culture left behind and the strangeness of the Canadian wilderness in which they were interned, and between the view from behind the barbed wire and the official image of Canada as a country of freedom and opportunity. The repetition of memories, gestures and details emphasizes the difficulty of articulating a loss that frames “a larger consciousness and memory of 20th century Jewish culture.”¹⁰

Within Oberlander's installation *Geography has flooded*, the viewer moves past a pile of dictionaries, in various languages, arranged in the form of a boat, as well as a series of legal texts and personal letters inscribed on the gallery wall, in order to pass through a narrow doorway that opens onto a small video projection with shifting images of water, hands, books and fire. *Geography has flooded*, like *Nothing to be written here*, is marked by a sense of travel, migration and displacement. The references root the piece in the VAG's site as a former courthouse and underscore its history as a site through which legislated discipline was enacted. Language appears as a tool by which to navigate, while the personal texts act as testimony to simultaneous loss and survival. Through these references, *Geography has flooded* emphasizes the desire to ground identity within cultural narratives, while at the same time acknowledging the continual negotiation of memory and place that marks the individual subject's engagement with the present.



The position of painting as a viable and relevant mode of artistic production has seemed somewhat tenuous at various moments during this century, especially over the past twenty years. The conceptions of bourgeois individualism and authenticity associated with the painterly gesture, the commodity status of paintings as singular objects and the patriarchal paradigms that have shaped the history of painting have been widely critiqued, to such an extent that it is not necessary to rerun the arguments here. Although they acknowledge and participate in these debates, a number of artists have continued to employ the materials of painting while attempting to reopen possibilities within a space that has been pronounced “dead” or at least “bankrupt” innumerable times.

Landon Mackenzie, Lucy Hogg and Robert Youds are among those who have maintained a long-standing commitment to painting while questioning and evaluating the medium's history, its underlying ideologies and its particular processes of signification, but their work is linked by more than the use of paint. Each of these artists has developed an overtly performative aspect to her or his activity, and each deploys a discernible set of parameters that shapes her or his production and underscores its investigative character. All three avoid the cynical artlessness and disposable aesthetic that informs certain genres of contemporary painting. At the same time, all three acknowledge what Hogg has described as “the critique of the loaded hairy stick,”¹¹ avoiding rhetorical grandness and the glorification of gesture associated with various forms of expressionism.

Landon Mackenzie's large-scale works *Gabriel's Crossing to Humboldt* (page 18) and *Interior Lowlands* (page 19) are from a series of *Saskatchewan* paintings, in which ideas of metaphorical and geographical space are investigated through a painting practice that grapples with the problem of articulating female experience within a discipline that has traditionally been associated with the masculine.

Saskatchewan is a place Mackenzie has studied and visited, but never lived in. Her journeys to the province were undertaken, in part, to gain anonymity—to become a kind of semirural *flâneuse* and move through physical and social spaces without the baggage one carries in environments where one is known and therefore defined. However, her interest in Saskatchewan goes beyond the opportunity for writing in solitude in Prairie cafes and bars. Saskatchewan is the only province in the country whose borders are entirely arbitrary, and the southern part of the province has literally been overlaid with a maplike grid of rural service roads. In viewing Mackenzie's paintings, it is difficult not to think of this process of systemization, in which order is projected onto the land, as a parallel to the projection of patriarchal anxiety onto the female body, an issue central to the writing of art historian Griselda Pollock, which has been a touchstone for Mackenzie's artmaking over the past decade. In addition, the history of Saskatchewan—with its moments of displacement, takeover, resistance and rebellion—offers up points of identification with defiance together with anxious moments in which complicity in domination can be recognized.

These paintings are the result of a labour-intensive, semisystematic working process. Stretched canvas is placed on the studio floor and meticulously covered with a painted cursive writing based on entries from Mackenzie's journals and historical documents describing episodes from Saskatchewan's past. Subsequently, fragments of grids, compass points and bits of cartography—some taken from archival documents—together with hazy atmospheric effects, bits of light and shadowy form are worked into a rich and varied surface. Each painting is marked with "gaps" in the overall composition: the black quatrefoils that flank the centre of the canvas in *Gabriel's Crossing to Humboldt*, the ovals of raw linen that seem to punch through the paint in *Interior Lowlands*. The effect is a kind of polymorphic density in which things are hidden as much as they are revealed, and what is omitted seems as significant as what is there.

While these paintings imply an understanding of the image as text and the body as writing that has informed feminist criticism over the past fifteen years, the theory Mackenzie draws upon doesn't fully encompass their interest. Their equivocation tends to thwart attempts to read them in any singular fashion—the paintings do not seem to be mute, yet it's impossible to determine if what is discernible is more important than what isn't, or if representational content should be given priority over process. What they do convey is a sense of struggle with the manner in which "language and prescription organize the spaces of the land and the heart and how we've internalized their forces."¹² They propose a "crossing [of] emotional territory with historical and geographical spaces" and, in this dual mapping, offer material evidence of the need to articulate



Landon Mackenzie

Gabriel's Crossing to Humboldt

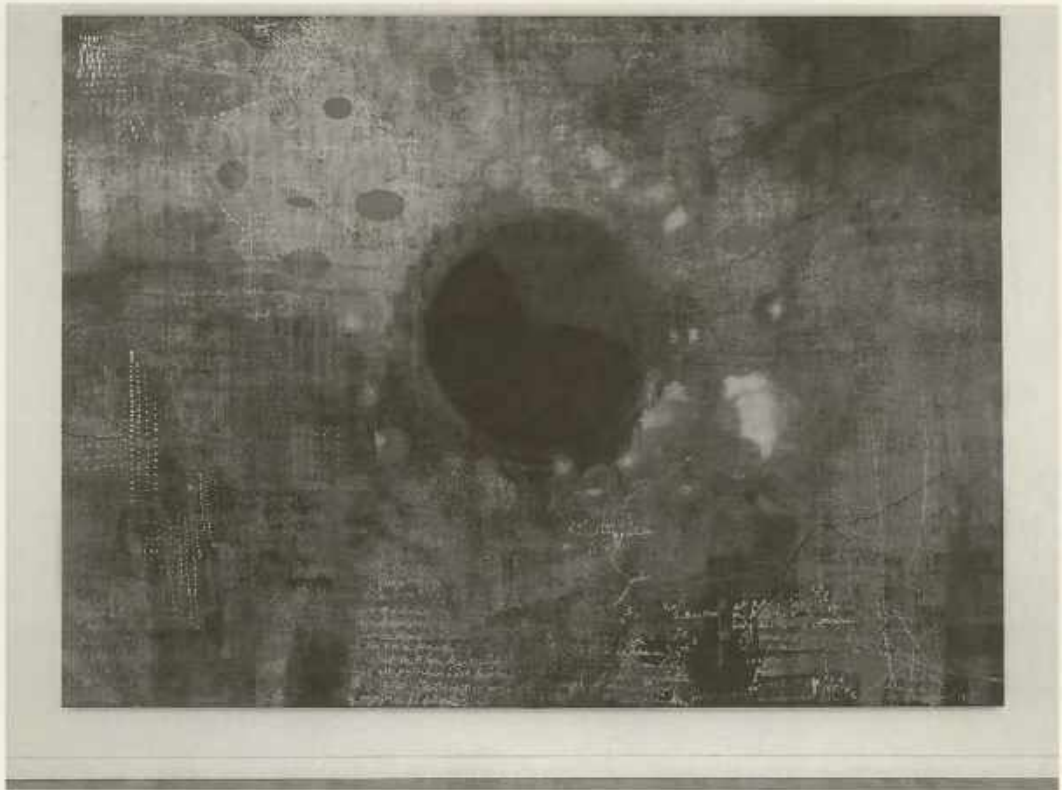
1995

acrylic on canvas

225 x 307.5

collection of the artist

photo: Robert Keziene



Landon Mackenzie
Interior Lowlands

1996
acrylic on linen
225 x 307.5
collection of the artist

experience outside of androcentric paradigms—to be “grounded in some individual shred of agency.”¹¹

The destabilization of the paradigms that have shaped painting—both in terms of its production and its reception—is a predominant concern in the work of Lucy Hogg. Over the past six years, she has focussed on reworking images of the heroic and erotic from nineteenth-century French painting. She has maintained an interest in visual sensuality while disrupting codes—especially the domination of figure over ground—that inform processes of viewing. Hogg draws upon strategies of appropriation that have become commonplace over the past fifteen years. However, while the compositions of her paintings precisely reprise those of her sources, her attention to formal qualities attaches a sense of singularity to a consciously unoriginal act.

The paintings in this exhibition look towards both the late baroque and modern eras for their sources. *Gilles #1 (After Monet)* (page 21) and *Gilles #3 (After Yves Klein)* (page 20) are monumental reworkings of Antoine Watteau’s painting from c. 1717, *Gilles and Four Other Characters from the Commedia dell’Arte*. Watteau’s painting was undertaken at a time when the rigidity of the French Academy was breaking down and its insistence on the primacy of well-defined line and balanced composition (which were seen to appeal to the intellect) over colour (which was seen to appeal to the senses) was losing currency. Watteau’s admission into the French Academy in 1717 required the creation of a new category, *fêtes galantes* (elegant entertainments), to accommodate his work. The appearance of Watteau’s *Gilles* at a moment in which the relationship between attributes traditionally associated with masculinity (the intellect) and femininity (the senses) was being renegotiated carries a certain resonance in relation to ongoing debates within contemporary culture. The blurring of the boundaries between theatre and real life that characterized the *fêtes galantes* also finds parallels in current investigations into the production of the real within representation.

The figure of Gilles is both comic and compelling. On an immediate level it is remarkable for the confusion of codes through which gender is traditionally signified. The theatrical setting emphasizes Gilles’s status as a role player whose actions occur within a predetermined scenario, while the excessive sleeves and too-short trousers of his costume suggest that the role isn’t an entirely comfortable fit. Historians have speculated that while *Gilles* may not have been an exact portrait of Watteau, the image did offer an opportunity for self-revelation. This positioning of the artist as a somewhat equivocal subject, who has entered the Academy but does not comfortably inhabit its traditions, holds out an unusual point of identification within a lineage of male masters for someone in Lucy Hogg’s position.

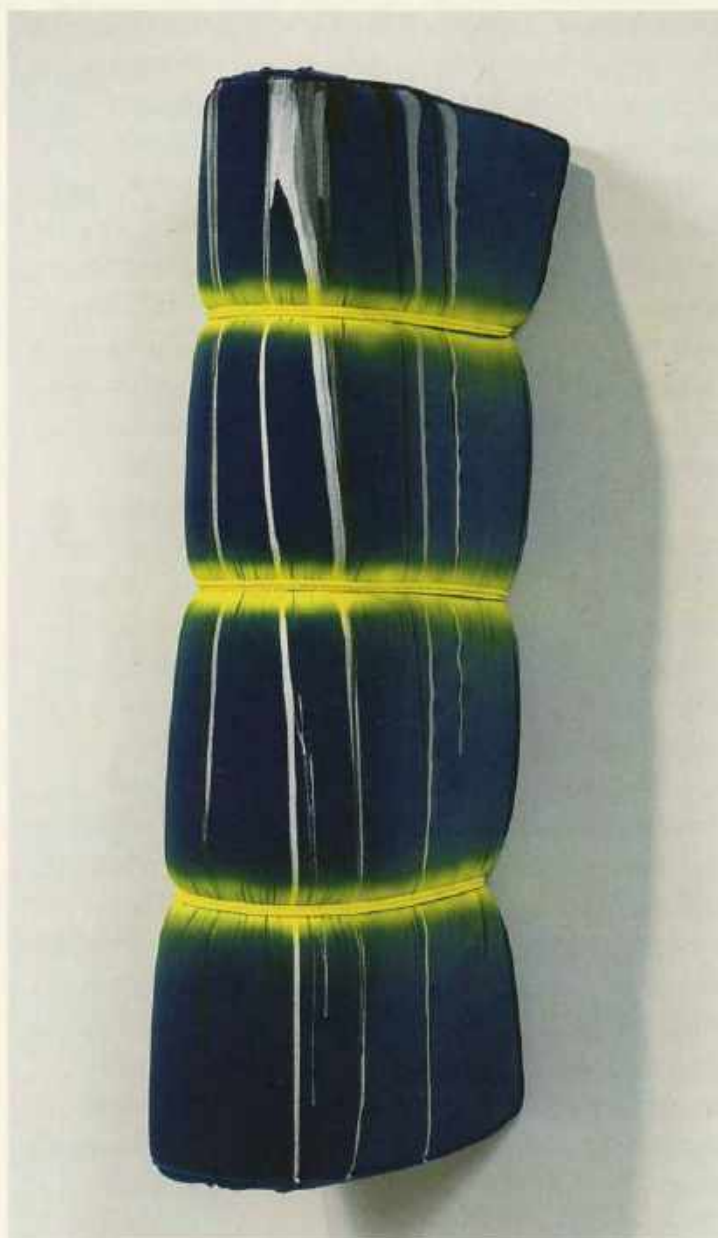
Hogg’s engagement with Watteau is filtered through Claude Monet’s paintings of Rouen Cathedral and Yves Klein’s monochromes, which have supplied the colour schemes for her versions of *Gilles*. Monet and Klein bracket a period—the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth—in which painting evolved from a practice conscious of its shifting public and its relationship to political events, to a self-referential

privatized discourse, relegated to the realm of "aesthetics." In bringing together these references, Hogg's work sets up a complex dialogue around the history of painting, the institutions it inhabits and the processes through which paintings are produced and viewed. Acknowledging the diminished role that painting occupies in contemporary culture, Hogg's paintings underscore those moments of flux, when the provisional nature of the categories that shape desire and identity becomes visible.

The paintings of Robert Youds draw upon a variety of sources, from the traditions of high modernism to the aesthetics of suburbia. His work has shifted substantially in its appearance over the past decade and a half. Youds has deliberately avoided developing a singular style, employing a range of pictorial strategies and technologies to produce paintings that are consistent in their examination of perception and the fragility of meaning, rather than in their appearance. Youds has usually produced work in series, with each respective body of work shaped by a set of formal and material parameters. For the series *Soft Works for Complicated Needs*, he had a set of foam cushions, each about five and a half feet square, commercially fabricated and covered in near-lurid hues of velvet. Paint was brushed, sprayed and poured onto the cushions, which were then bound into particular configurations and hung on the studio wall.

There is both audacity and humour in the execution of these works, allowing them to traverse spaces of contradiction that characterize the dilemmas and possibilities of contemporary painting. The physical intrusion of these paintings into the space of the viewer playfully calls up the tension between flatness and depth that has been a central preoccupation of high modernism. The poured paint that permeates the velvet of *Blue Rise/Soft Works for Complicated Needs* (page 24) suggests the post-painterly abstraction of Morris Louis, but the theatrical character of the work is at odds with the conceptual underpinnings of that moment in painting's history, and the relatively small scale of *Blue Rise* suggests a kind of modesty in relation to the ambition of Louis's immense canvases. While the paintings that make up *Soft Works for Complicated Needs* initially possess a sense of wholeness or integration, this tends to slip away upon extended viewing. Formal coherence—set up through combinations of colour and hints of luminescence—seems to dissipate, and the relationship between the painted cushions and the system of rope that binds them to the gallery wall is marked by disjunction rather than unity. The cushions themselves initially seem familiar, recalling sofas or foam mattresses; however, they are the wrong scale to be either, and the familiarity of their material and form is marked by an uncertainty in regard to their possible function.

These paintings vacillate between self-reflexive absorption in the process of their making and a polemic that implies a reordering of the conventions that traditionally divide high modernism and the rumpus room. In this respect, Youds acknowledges a debt to the traditions of modernist abstraction while underscoring the decay of the certainties upon which those traditions were based. Through this play between past and present, his work affords the viewer an opportunity to reflect on the processes of cognition without the certitude usually required for resolution.



Robert Youds

Blue Rise/Soft Works for Complicated Needs

1995

acrylic on velvet cushion

130 x 130

collection of the artist



Robert Youds

Red Dream/Soft Works for Complicated Needs

1995

acrylic on velvet cushion

130 x 130

collection of the artist

Gallery exhibits meet all tastes

A welcome new administrative policy from Confederation Centre offers free admission to the gallery on Sundays, 2-5 p.m. Try to take advantage of the opportunity. The exhibitions on view just now offer a variety of paintings, sculpture, video and drawings that appeal to every age and taste.

The latest exhibition includes the splendid *In Search of Medusa* by Rebecca Burke, reviewed in my last column. Also featured in the Lower West Gallery are recent acquisitions donated by Clarissa Inglis and Island native **Lucy Hogg**.

All these works complement each other, engendering layers of thought and private musings about the feminist point of view and about the way women have been traditionally portrayed in fine art.

What woman can fail to relate to the two Inglis sculptures, one composed of a series of white string mops; the other, an orderly collection of bars of Sunlight soap? Think of *La Sagouine*, made famous by Antonine Maillet's play, who measured out her life in bars of soap as she scrubbed the floors of affluent English townspeople.

Both sculptures share the same unifying image: a square steel table just the height of a kitchen counter. Suggestions of entrapment, routine, monotony, "women's work" rise up immediately. Such themes may well reflect the past for some modern women, but these themes definitely do not make you think of men.

Lucy Hogg, on the other hand, speaks eloquently of another familiar image.

This young woman, not yet 30, has clearly made a thorough study of the history of art. An accomplished painter, she challenges the traditional and stereotypical female nude found in all art museums. By far the most common subject in painting, the female nude has always been presented from a man's point of view for the enjoyment of men.



GALLERY VIEWS

By Julie Dowling

Aside from the fact that, historically, women artists were never considered skilled or mature enough to be exhibited in fine art museums, imagine the consternation if a woman had tried to interpret the female nude — or heaven forbid — the male.

Look at Hogg's paintings, then, with the same tongue-in-cheek sense of humor she uses so cleverly. She deliberately focuses attention on the skeletal framework of the body rather than on the sensual, curvilinear form. She emphasizes the usual opulent draperies, lush folds and grand backdrops to distract us from the female form. She confuses us with her choice of colors to further skew our reaction to these very traditional poses.

Once we realize that the artist is playing games here, these paintings are fascinating to examine and dissect. We will probably never look at a nude painting the same way again.

Knowing that Hogg is reworking the paintings of Ingres matters little, since we recognize the common styles and poses immediately. Even the grid lines used religiously by classical artists are satirized here. Note the square patterns in the floor designs and arrangement of furniture.

Now look again at *Medusa's* body, also given an ironic twist. The originality of this work invites us to gaze at the very goddess reputed to petrify any man who dared to look at her.

Such female parodies on traditional themes are both fun and provocative. "But why not get beyond that?" I asked of artist Cathy Miller as we toured the exhibition. "Why don't women artists get on with the job of interpreting life as they see it, instead of reacting to stereotypes?"

The answer was swift and blunt: "Because no one is ready for that. Women painters are being noticed precisely because of their bold statements. Give us time. We'll get there. Look at how long it took men to learn to paint?"

Don't miss this exhibit. Gaze thoughtfully. The images are stimulating.

And don't forget that the art appreciation group meets in the gallery Tuesday, Nov. 19 at 10 a.m.

Visiting artist, Gail Rutherford, will present and discuss examples of her work at Art Rental Tuesday, Nov. 26 at 10 a.m. Everyone welcome at both events. Use the Richmond St. entrance.

Julie Dowling is a member of the Friends of the Centre and a gallery volunteer. Her column appears bi-weekly in *The Guardian*. She may be reached at 892-0445.

The Guardian
Charles Hoggan
Prince Edward Island

a woman is a moving site

by Barbara Godard

"Crisscrossed subject," a subject-in-relation, is the theoretical intervention of Carol Laing's recent curatorial project *Picture Theory*. This concept sets in play many forms of crossaddressing, including the interface of picture making and theorizing, not as binary opposites, but as border crossings of two different temporal and spatial modalities. *Picture Theory* speaks to a complex event unfolding in pictorial images, in words and, significantly, in the in-between. Space, according to Laing, is a major axis for conceptualizing the world, for spatial forms configure social relations ordering the production and viewing of images. Such a "spatial turn" in the performance of identity, of identity as performance, is what *Picture Theory* invites us "to behold" (*theoria* Gk.).

"X marks the spot," so the cliché goes. As signature, though, X functions as shifter, an empty signifier available for any referent, any proper noun. Like "you" or "I," it is fixed contextually only in the instance of enunciation. Within this paradox, temporally marked as both situated and shifting — open to the fleeting, the local, the contingent — one interrogative line of *Picture Theory* is positioned, into a politics of representation within the double axes of identity and location. This entails, as Laing suggests, a shifting of figure/ground relationships to highlight not *whose* body signifiers represent but *where* this representation is produced and viewed.

As such, this line of questioning focuses on the function of the exhibition itself, specifically on the spatial/temporal relations between the hanging of images on walls for viewing and the production of an exhibition catalogue describing and/or justifying the images for reading later. Laing challenges the conventional hierarchy of original and representation, image-for-viewing and catalogue-for-remembering. "Picture" and "theory" are not autonomous but interactive, mutually constitutive signifi-

ing practices. Word and gallery provide different angles, different moments that multiply the potential meanings of images, giving a new twist to the term site-specific art, specific to the location of the viewer rather than of production.

The *Picture Theory* exhibition itself works against the closure of the curatorial position to create expanding angles on women's image making in Canada in the 1990s through the sequencing of the pictorial images. Heterogeneity is foregrounded. Though the seven artists included are women, the regional spread (from Vancouver to Halifax), the diversity of stances with regard to race and sexual orientation and the variety of mediums presented preclude generalizations. Except, possibly, this description of Lynn Hughes' work: "mixing binaries that historically have been opposed." In her *Inclusion différentielle*, women's bodies and mathematics are brought together, while in Jin-me Yoon's lightbox *Souvenirs of the Self: Lake Louise*, a portrait of an Asian woman pushes itself into the gap between the two mountains of a tourist-postcard image of Lake Louise, making visible the exclusion of Asian women from Canadian historiography at the site made accessible for viewing by the labour of (invisible) Chinese railroad workers. As well as a series of binaries — history/stasis, progress/reproduction, knowledge/feeling, culture/nature, male/female, art/theory — it is the principle of binarism itself which is in question here in the elaboration of a logic of series, of "and, and."

Laing applies disjunctive synthesis as the (dis)ordering principle of the show's installation. Yoon's lightbox faces out the gallery's storefront window onto the street. Overshadowing from behind, monumentally filling the gallery's back wall, is Lucy Hogg's oil painting *VI*, a reworking of Cabanel's *Birth of Venus*. Situated low on the canvas so that viewers hover above, the conventional pose

of the nude is mimed in colouration and brushwork that draws attention to itself, refusing the illusion of human flesh. Such contrasts in form and texture disturb the conventional categories and periodization of women's art making. Painting is not succeeded by photo and photo-text-based works: all these modalities of representation are co-terminous and frequently found in the same work. Hughes' installation is exemplary: a black-and-white photographic portrait of a woman is separated by a narrow band from a black painting on whose surface an organ-like vessel and a bone-like object are being measured by a surgical instrument. Above, framing, is a mathematical diagram painted in black on white. Across the gallery is another triptych of coloured photographs, unframed and held to the wall under glass, traces from Buseje Bailey's performance *Body Politic*. Fragments of verbal text run tattoo-like across body parts: only her skin-screen makes the words visible. On one side hang two monochromatic paintings in oil and rabbit-skin glue by Kika Thorne which also play with bodies, fragmentation, flesh, colour, desire, self-representation: the floating *Hands* point to the artist's self-inscription, while a Victorian fashion model's headless dress, *Decorum*, displays, on closer look in the skirt's folds, an articulated cunt. On the other side of Bailey's photos hang Judy Radul's grid of twenty-two photocopies of colour photographs wall-paper-pasted to the gallery wall, called *My Guy*, which stages closeups of urban places and situations wherein a woman mimes a "guy."

Motifs of traversing and transvesting are played out again in Allyson Clay's *Twitch* and *Cigar*, which combine acrylic, photograph and silkscreen images of two women meeting on a street, accompanied by a verbal text about being "recognized," and of an ambiguous figure depicted beneath a text describing a woman addressed as



PICTURE THEORY

group exhibition curated by Carol Laing
Buseje Bailey, Allyson Clay, Lucy Hogg, Lynne Hughes,
Judy Radul, Kika Thorne and Jin-me Yoon
YYZ Artists' Outlet, Toronto, Ontario, March 22–April 15, 1995

PICTURE THEORY

exhibition catalogue published by YYZ Books, 1995
ISBN: 0-920397-14-X, 48 pages, saddlestitched
Marginal Distribution

"Sir." Here the motility of the body, the crisscrossing between private and public, the blurring of gender in urban space, are foregrounded. These images, positioned directly across from Radul's work, frame Hogg's miming of the eighteenth-century monumental odalisque and mark the gap between then and now. Women are out and about, manipulators of the gaze in the public domain, ex-posing, putting (them)selves on display, mixing, reordering, to play out the paradoxical position of subject/object of the gaze in self-inscription that Laing's catalogue text marks as a "s/he." A reworking of Wittig's "j/e" for the split subject, s/he marks the provisionality and contingency of gender, a matter of perspectival location or "spatial turn" — the pragmatics of performance. As Clay's text concludes inconclusively, "She became used to being different people in different places." This foregrounds the disjunction between image and word where verbal signifier works to defer rather than fix meaning.

Laing takes up these issues within a larger frame when not just picture but exhibition becomes the site of *différance*, place of passage, of crossing, or interrogative shift. Meaning is constituted through the combinatory (assemblage of repeating elements) in a specific instance of enunciation, as a situated practice of collecting or arranging, viewing or reading. My reading of the show highlights the visual effect for the viewer of position within the gallery space as disjunctive inclusion, destabilizing the representative authority of the female nude physically dominating the room. Laing, though, maps the site as clockwise spiral. This is figured in two ways, as brief enumeration where the conventional catalogue "documentation" is reduced to a minimum: a verbal list of titles, sizes and mediums of the nine works exhibited, beginning with Yoon's self-portrait as landscape. It is repeated with a difference in Laing's curatorial

text made up of a lyrically phrased series of "word-paintings" which speak to the exhibited works both in the catalogue and in the gallery site itself, where they are pasted directly on the lobby wall. These prose poems perform a double narrative transformation of inside out which takes the viewer from the outward-directed gaze of the woman as interrupting "gap" in Yoon's *Souvenirs* through to the inside out of Thorne's skinned rabbits and invaginated dress — the "gap" ex-posed. This is also a narrative of the gap or slit within the picture, which works across the interval between the pictures, inverting subject/object, figure/ground, to twist the spiral.

Instead of the conventional reproduction of exhibited works common in exhibition catalogues, Laing's publication articulates a parallel narrative of texts — the "word-paintings" mentioned above — and presents another series of images in the history of the individual artist's production, hitherto unexhibited. With a double-page spread for each artist, these images feature the closeup, the detail, marking the catalogue as a performance of a more intimate kind than the exhibition. This cross-referencing foregrounds a principle of reworking prior images or parallax to make visible the invisible that is a feature of each individual picture.

In the catalogue, Laing's theoretical frame rewrites the assemblage through yet another lens to privilege connections between *Picture Theory* and specific curatorial projects in New York and Toronto that have traced notions of situation and duration in relation to identity and public space. She invokes continuities to elaborate differences in the gendering of spatial imaginaries. In another direction, *Picture Theory* points to a current curatorial interest in examining collecting and exhibition policies of institutions as these produce artistic meaning, as in Barbara Fischer's May 1995 pre-

sentation of *Toronto File: Alfred Barr, 1961* at the Art Gallery of York University.

Beyond these immediate curatorial intersections, *Picture Theory* resonates with a number of other theoretical contexts: with Irigaray's attentiveness to the ethics of difference in a privileging of the metonymic chain, the mechanics of fluids or the interval where one thing turns into another; with Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatics where lines of flight or proliferating variation are generative of differing intensities, producing transformative affects and effects; with Judith Butler's linking of such work of repetition and the enunciative instance to theories of the performative, to identity as performance; with Nicole Brossard's theorizing of reading/viewing as performance, a figure of incompleteness in a complex network of turns and counterturns which exposes in the enunciation the place and energy of a desiring subject. Brossard's own literary text *Picture Theory* reworks Wittgenstein whose formulation of the picture as "elements combined with one another in a definite way" underlines the importance of perspective in establishing a scale of relations for *showing* meaning. The intertexts of Laing's *Picture Theory* spiral. In its combination of sensory visual images and provocative theoretical notions, the exhibition catalogue richly performs its "picture theory," touching, bordering on, living on... Proliferating beyond the enclosure of the gallery. Inviting the viewer to inhabit the spatial imaginary differently.

Barbara Godard teaches Cultural Studies at York University. Her essay "Writing on the Wall" was in the *Culture Slash Nation* exhibit at TPW and was published in *Border/Lines*. She is the editor of *Collaboration in the Feminine: Writing on Women and Culture from Tessera* (1994) and *Intersections: Issues of Race and Gender in Canadian Women's Writing* (1996).

of the past—a sort of London Regional/London Life Pavilion to the Obsolescence of the Future.

The comedian Sandra Bernhard, once said, "People don't speak of pavilions anymore—and that saddens me."

topographies: aspects of recent BC art

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

by Charlotte Townsend-Gault

First come the baskets—black, white and red ochre vertical patterns of Rena Point Bolton's Tsimshian-type lidded basket pulling against horizontal coils of cedar root, then the decorum and extravagance of Isabel Rorick's *Haida Chief's Hat with Three Potlatch Rings*.

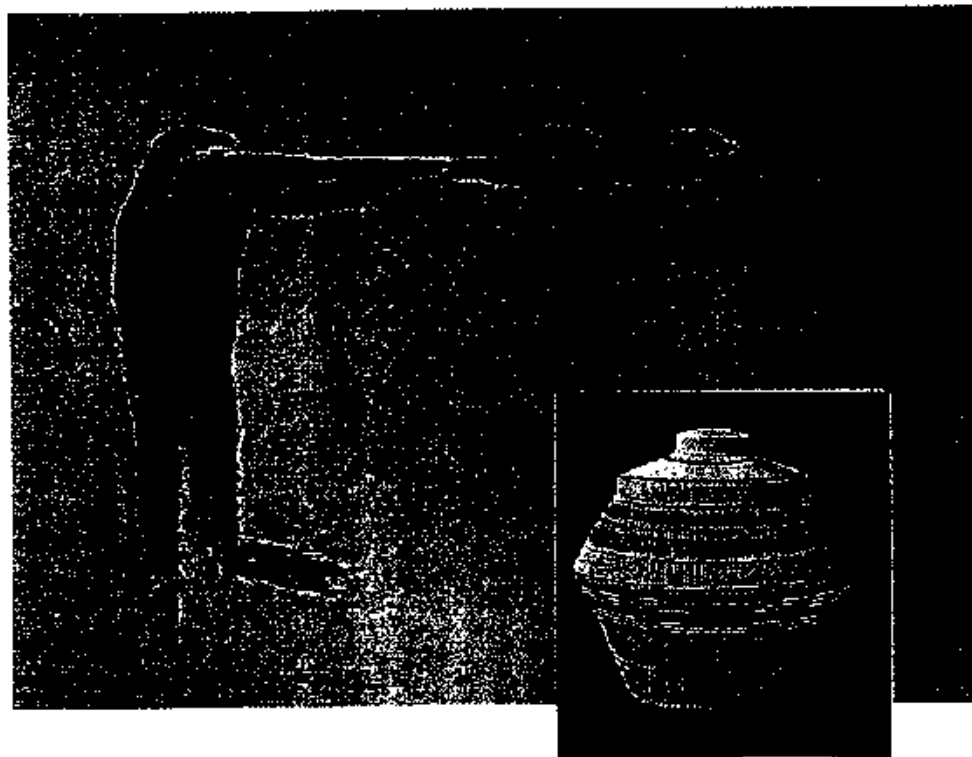
Baskets, exhibited as art at the Vancouver Art Gallery—an historic moment.

Topographies, which opened this September, involved eighty-three recent works by forty-one B.C. artists. Curators Grant Arnold, Monika Kin Gagnon and Doreen Jensen selected the works, a third each. The sponsor, Rogers Communications, publicized the exhibition widely, launching news of it into cyberspace and commissioning an engaging and helpful introductory video. The exhibition is out there in a way never before seen at the VAG. It remains to be seen if it will escape the hazards of these big, baggy shows—wildly uneven, somehow timorous in their diversity.

In fact, topographies is aesthetic pluralism in action. The exhibition shows how, if taken seriously, ideas about art specific to a culture are, when set side by side with other cultures, in danger of cancelling each other out. Thus, although Ki-ke-in (Ron Hamilton) declines to be an "artist," because there is no such concept in Nuu-chah-nulth culture, he has allowed Jensen to put him in a context where his huge painted ceremonial screen must either take its chances with the other coloured rectangles an art gallery habitually hangs or be judged as something else.

But then, hanging painted canvas rectangles in art galleries for the purpose of gazing at them has been problematized already—"the critique of the loaded hairy stick," Lucy Hogg says, speaking of her own deconstructed paintings of Watteau in the exhibition catalogue. Indeed, the post-conceptual aesthetic has problematized most aspects of looking at art: Daniel Congdon's *Form of an Optical Axis for Twisted Cinema*, for instance, expands on the contortions through which a cinematic image can be made to pass before it is seen. Cathi Charles Wherry does the same in *Grandmother Moon...she sings to me*, asking what we actually see looking at decontextualized objects—strands of hair and a vanity mirror in her case; and in *Halcion Sleep*, the dormant Rodney Graham is driven in the back of a van down the empty avenues of Coquitlam, through the city of dreadful night, into central Vancouver, seeing nothing.

So isn't pluralism triumphantly vindicated? In a work like *A Group of Sixty-Seven*, Jin-me Yoon shows just how much aesthetic hybridity an artist can allow herself if she wants to use her cultural difference to make a point and to make art. She deals severely with "classic" images of Canada by Lawren Harris and



Myfanwy MacLeod
Detail from *The Bedroom Series* 1995
Watercolour on paper,
16 works, each 17.5 x 25 cm

Rena Point Bolton
Round Tsimshian-type Basket
1991-94
Spruce root with cedar bark,
cornhusk trim 30 x 30.6 cm



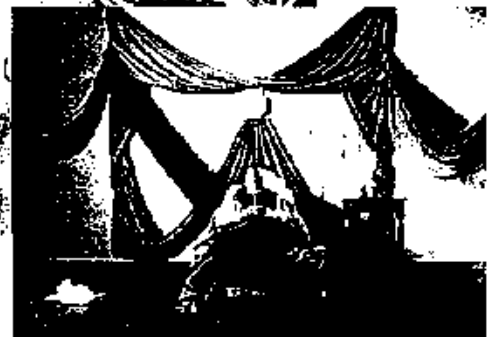
Walter Harris
Killer Whale (maquette) 1996
Carved cedar pole,
height approx. 310 cm



Kavin Madill
Thinking Photographer 1995
Reprint mural 303 x 229 cm

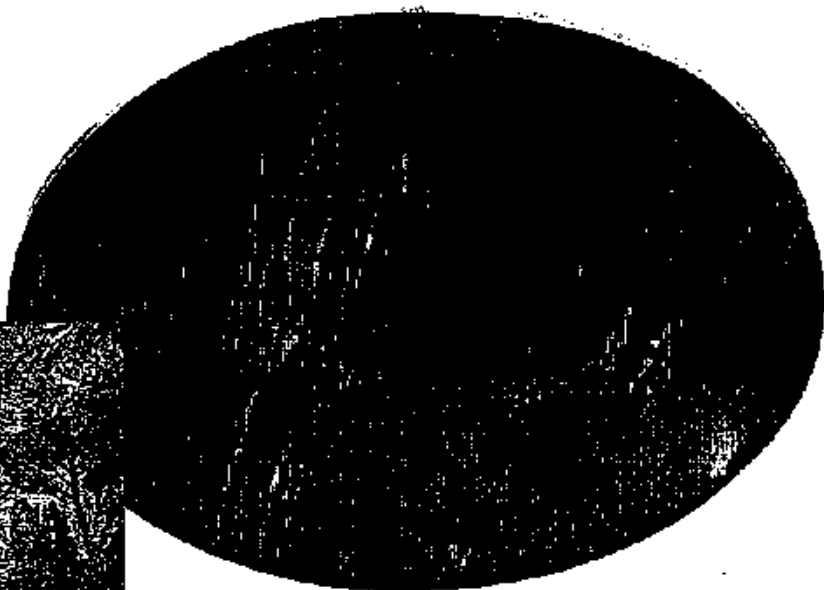
Rick James Rivet
Cosmic Zone Interface 1995
Acrylic on canvas 166 x 243.6 cm

Dana Claxton
The Red Paper
(production still) 1995
16-mm black-and-white film
installation with sound



Yoko Takashima
As If (detail) 1996
 Video installation

Lucy Hogg
Gilles #1 (After Manet) 1995-96
 Oil on canvas 293 x 234 cm



Emily Carr. Each becomes a backdrop for head-and-shoulder photographs of sixty-seven Korean Vancouverites, back and front respectively, arranged in a wall-sized grid. As she sagely remarks: "It's not the objects—it's the social relations—that's the work."

The Vancouver Art Gallery site itself has had an uneasy history of social relations—felled forests, uprooted cultures, law courts, a cultural institution searching for a mandate—and it is brought into focus here by a martyrdom. In the elegant central rotunda, a human-sized frog stands as if transfixed in a hail of assassin's bullets. *The Fountain heads*, by Myfanwy MacLeod, is a fountain inasmuch as water, lifeblood, is spurting from the frog's wounds. Frogs are the canaries of the environment. Their native representations have wide currency, not only in the work of Robert Davidson and Bill Reid, but in things like T-shirts. Ken Mowatt has a frog bowl in topographies. It also is transformed by holes, although presumably for different reasons. There is a sense in which curator Gagnon's words about MacLeod's frog fountain could be applied to the entire exhibition: "...a collision of strictly aesthetic and broadly cultural codes that creates a kind of controlled pandemonium...."

Topographies also raises the suspicion that aesthetic pandemonium, or hybridity, may be no more than a euphemism for unsuccessful art. Amongst a number of other troublesome works, Susan A. Point's *Captive Maiden* raises such a doubt. The work may be a tribute to the women who worked the Coast Salish spindle whorl, but it cannot evade other references (presumably unintentional): Jeff Koons meets Disney's Pocahontas on a lazy

Susan. Of course, if my pre-Vegas ideas of beauty are offended, I have only to move on.

Yoko Takashima's miniature video vignette, *As If*—an unframed nine-inch oval TV screen set flush into the wall—delivers more disturbing pleasure than is usually vouchsafed by video, erotic or otherwise. The repeated swirling and pressing of the much enlarged pink tongue against the screen is embarrassingly wanton, because, like the giggling on the soundtrack, it could be rapturous, or forced, or both.

Debra Sparrow, who, with Robyn Sparrow, made the Coast Salish weaving *In Fear and Faith*, writes of a connection felt with women that neither knew—when it is dark outside and the children are in bed and the house is quiet, they pick up and rediscover the old ways. Is this simply a truth about domesticity in many cultures? Or does it reintroduce something lost to art? Whatever the answer, it is immediately upset by the video *Guerita and Prieta*, by Shani Mootoo and Kathy High. A lesbian vacation romance, the video resists all cheesy conventions that might apply. So does Dana Claxton's *The Red Paper*. A filmed costume drama that turns narrative conventions around and puts sixteenth-century European costumes on the conquered and reverses languages of civility and barbarity. Teresa Marshall's *Band Stands* is a grouping of tables, pictures, briefcases and stereo speakers made into drums. It disposes its clever one-liners into a well-orchestrated, tragi-comic chorus of hybrids, commenting, like the exhibition itself, on conflicting meanings, witnessing the way an art gallery can at once make aesthetic history and neutralize it. ■

to rethink one of the bases of western civilization, and to open us up to a greater variety of responses. This can only be invigorating for artistic expression. ♦

Her Kind: Stories of Women from Greek Mythology

by Jane Cahill

Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1995

Softcover, 232 pp., \$18.95

Neal Davis Anderson is a fiction writer living in Winnipeg.

VISUAL ART

Air Winnipeg

by Alison Gillmor

In "Little Eden" Cathy Collins mines the rich history of the Winnipeg cityscape. Maybe it's just art historical musing, but works like *Doc Snyder's House* by Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald are thought to have risen out of a wonderfully Manitoban combination—the

impossibility of plein air painting in the winter and the fact that so many artists had studios in the spare bedrooms at the back of their houses.

Collins too, turns her artist's eye to her inner-city surroundings with a painting style that tends towards dry understatement. Depth, texture and motion seem flattened out and fixed by the directness of her gaze. The strength of her thematic concerns—the mostly undocumented death and life of affordable, high density, mixed-use core area neighbourhoods—seems at first to overwhelm form. But Collins often uses subtle stylistic quirks to make her points. In *The Nutty Club* (1995), for instance, the high, soaring vista suggests a god-like omniscience. But this isn't an ideal city unrolling before us in rational, measured splendour. Perspective is skewed, composition pleasantly haphazard. And even earnest "Ashcan Realism," the gritty 20th-century alternative to the New Jerusalem, is foiled by the blithe goofiness of the Nutty Club logo.

McDermot at Harriet contrasts boarded-up windows and the "For sale" sign of one house with the meticulously tended gardens next door. Again our viewpoint is improbably airy, and a strangely elegant sweep of road ends a little anti-climactically at the Balmoral Hotel. McDermot from the Garden evokes a similar mood. There's something completely matter-of-fact and everyday about the dirt strip of the foreground and the row of unremarkable buildings in the background. But the way shadows from unseen trees fall on the house facades is a little unsettling.

Collins, who is a founding member and president of the McDermot Sherbrook Residents' Association, draws on urban theory, particularly Jane Jacobs's eloquent defense of old, unplanned city neighbourhoods, with their character, diversity and human scale. But Collins works out these abstract ideas through a concrete experience of her own turf. Her observations could

apply to dozens of North American cities, but they're rooted in Winnipeg. One of the pleasures of this show is the (slightly self-satisfied) smile of recognition at the Little Eden Church on Logan, or the "last Chinese laundry" on Hargrave.

The one exception to the specificity of Collins's work is *The Parks and Lakes*, a satire on suburban interchangeability. The scene is necessarily generic—grass glowing green as astro-turf, pre-packaged houses lining streets without sidewalks, double garages pointing out the car-centered nature of the commuter neighbourhood. It's bland to the point of being sinister.

Sending up the smug suburbs is almost too easy and sometimes Collins reaches for a point. The first part of *Tight Shoe*, a 1994 diptych, depicts a little house slap-up against an old warehouse; in the second part the house is demolished and replaced by a billboard offering the "sneak-line" phone number to report welfare fraud. It's a funny visual narrative—and it might even be a factual one—but Collins's argument is most affecting when it relies on the careful observation of very small truths. ♦

"Catherine Collins: Little Eden," Gallery IC03, University of Winnipeg, January 1 to February 10, 1996.

Alison Gillmor regularly contributes to *Border Crossings* on the visual arts.

VISUAL ART

Beautiful Monsters

by Yvonne Owens

"A Critical Beauty," presented at Open Space Gallery in Victoria during the month of February, upheld the simple virtues of colour, texture, materials, process and form. It was expertly installed within the gallery space; striking casual symmetries and balances throughout. "A Critical Beauty's" coherence appeared to have been effortlessly achieved—a serendipitous meeting of linked expressions. In short, it was beautiful.

Despite its look, the show took a critical stance toward both the standards and



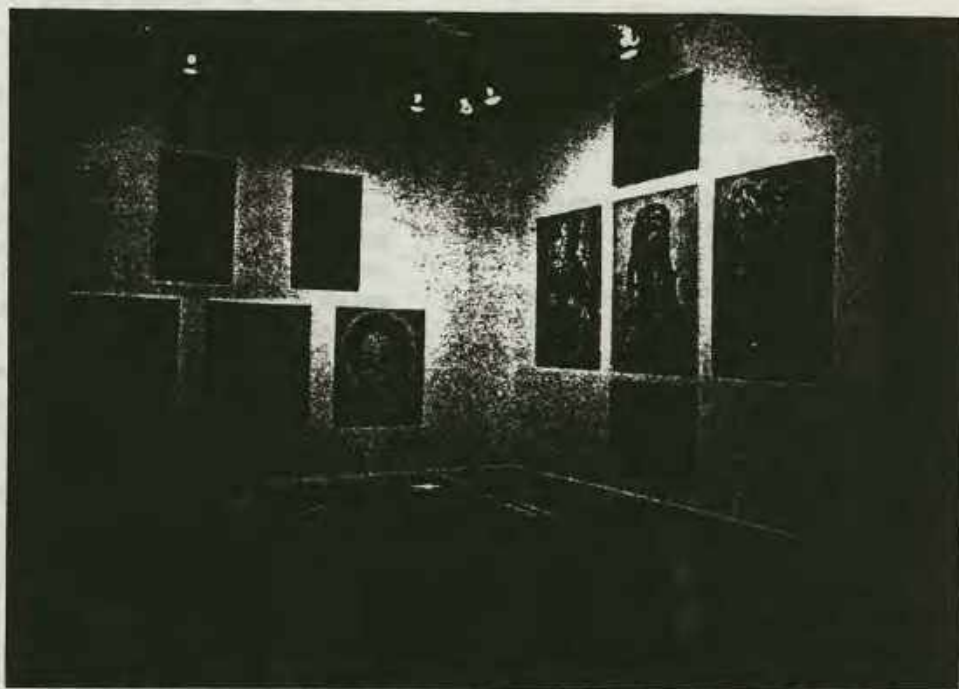
Cathy Collins, *The Last Chinese Laundry*, 1995, oil on canvas, 32 x 60", from "Little Eden Series."

cultural manipulations of perceived beauty. Patrick Mahon organized the exhibit to confront what he labelled, "the postmodern notion that 'beauty' cannot form part of contemporary art discourse." This is a complex and incendiary intention. The very concept of "beauty" is viewed with suspicion in the wake of roughly 1,000 years of cultural objectification aimed at reinforcing the value system of Europe's power elite. Ideals around the "sublime"—which privilege content, value and form, while they disregard context and eschew detail as "decadent"—appear in hindsight to have constituted a misogynistic, ascetic male standard. But as Mahon has written about his exhibition

the intention of "A Critical Beauty" is to posit a dialogue between the works of several artists who are linked in their interest in developing an aesthetic that retains 'beauty' as legitimate within the syntax of contemporary discourse.... Recovering the notion of objective beauty with regard to ideas of harmony and balance, or pleasure and sensuality, the artists advance works whose critical quality and aesthetic beauty are inextricably linked.

Mahon himself is one of the two artists in "A Critical Beauty" working with colour. He has fabricated images of domestic culture on grouped panels, using frottage, clothing, rubber stamping, graphite, canvas and wax. These seem to be an outgrowth of earlier work in which he examined domestic concerns through images of himself and his wife in casual circumstances (watching TV or sitting around in their underwear). The current works are frankly decorative, emphasizing what he calls "the pleasure of process" found in simple mark-making and fabrication. Sheets of frottaged surfaces are aligned in parallel stripes of colour, referencing late Modernist hard-edge painters while incorporating 19th-century wallpaper designs. Mahon's comments (both on the wall and in the artists' lecture series) comprised gently ironic spoofs of artistic conventions, past and present.

The only representational figures in his pieces are tiny. In *Parallel* miniature men, performing repetitive drills or exercises on the parallel bars, are rubber-stamped



Gu Xiong, right: "Back pack Series, left: "Smile Series", centre: *Camp Fire*, all 1995, installation, Open Space Gallery, Victoria.

along the tracks provided within the stripes. The sequences of movement are the sort that will ultimately get the small figures to their unspecified destinations, but due to their sameness they also have the illusion of going nowhere.

Gu Xiong employs a traditionally European representational style to comment on his and his family's experiences as émigrés from Communist China. Universal themes of displacement are addressed through a series of three large graphite portraits of family members with ubiquitous smiles, the all-purpose response of immigrants to the bewildering range of new situations confronting them. The interface of work and leisure is portrayed through another series of three graphite drawings of backpacks used variously for treks to work, school or for recreation. Each of the series is paired with two panels of text—white lettering on glossy, red paint—in English and Chinese versions. The texts—"I smile when I don't understand the words what people say to me"; "I smile when people yell at me"; "I smile when I finally can listen and speak"—articulate Xiong's reveries around issues such as labour and cultural assimilation.

The red panels, as well as delivering the textual meaning of the smiles and the backpacks, also provide a traditionally

Chinese design element in an otherwise monochromatic installation. The shapes in which they are grouped with the drawings suggest formal Chinese compositions. To further this East-West synthesis, Xiong has used the Eight Trigram Circle (the mandala-like seasonal pattern based on the I-Ching and Chinese medicine) as the shape for his *Camp Fire* video installation. He combines technology and Taoist ideology in a complementary statement. Xiong's placement of objects in *Camp Fire* synthesizes his Western experience of leisure (his family's first opportunity to put their experiences as immigrants into perspective was on a camping trip to the Rockies) with the traditional meaning of the "centre" in the Eight Trigram Circle—"mental tranquility and spiritual renewal."

Frances Grafton's reclamations of the gorgeous monsters of an earlier age, or Lucy Hogg's appropriations of the grotesque beauties of the Romanticists, are easily misconstrued. Their pirating of historic forms ready-to-hand, combined with references to contemporary critical views can appear facile, even opportunistic. But what seems apparent in these works is the intent to connect the viewer to an earlier European artistic consciousness. Both artists evince a deep level of involvement with their ritualistic process.

Each, in her way, makes reference to the communal artistic endeavours of the Middle Ages—the building of the great cathedrals or the epic narratives tapestried by households of sequestered women.

Frances Grafton's *Guardians* series (graphite, conte and charcoal on paper) brings the griffins, hippogryphs and gargoyles of Gothic architecture down from their lofty parapets and puts them on an intimate level with the viewer. The velvet black shadows of crevices and gaping mouths—fraught with Gothic possibilities—loom from the paper. Grafton combines classical academic drawing from sculpture and techniques of photo-realism to promote a visceral, textural immediacy in her drawings. You get a sense of both the stone of their making, and the living myths the creatures embody. In her artist's lecture for Open Space, Grafton spoke of her childhood tendency to feel "diminished" by the awe and mystery of the Cathedral dragons. Her fascination with the generational, collective process of Cathedral-building spurred her to "try to contact the process of the original artisan and the mediaeval sensibility."

The way Grafton draws her photographed sculptural subjects is consummately and sensually detailed. It stimulates a tactile response to the work; you feel the stone (marble or masonry) surfaces of the objects in her confrontational portraiture. The objective distance typically obtained by photography is obliterated. As for their content, they seem to urge contemporary art criticism to reconsider throwing the baby out with the bathwater. As Mahon wrote in his essay for Grafton's 1992 show "Stripped of Sense": "Some will see insistence on placing marks of beauty within a context that recalls violation and loss as merely problematic. Others will see this contradiction as a challenge to repair what is broken and to rebuild."

Lucy Hogg's grand thefts of Louvre "treasures" rework the original images so as to make them resemble large textile works. Flattening of perspectives by means of equalizing colour values, patterning the volumes and surfaces, and replacing naturalistic colours with bizarre combinations are techniques Hogg has used in the past to confuse the way in which the viewer relates to her purloined images. Their mythic subjects are no

longer focal or isolated; no particular figure or event is more important than its setting or context. The theatre of activity is, itself, as significant as the allegorical event. Female genital shapes, textures and hues, which have been used subliminally to both induct and exploit the so-called "decadence" of female sensuality, are incorporated within the holistic unity of the overall pattern.

Her paintings are subversive. She takes the mythical heroics and fetishes of male voyeurism, equalizes their values and

reweaves them. She lightly points up assumptions of sexual, cultural or political supremacy—with elements as simple and non-didactic as texture, dimension and depth. She then makes her point difficult to evade by presenting it on a grand scale. In *Gilles #1 (after Monet)* and *Gilles #3 (after Yves Klem)*, Hogg uses an heroic scale to overwhelm and defeat the perception of the heroic individual: she folds the huge figure into the overall composition. The figure no longer occupies the foreground

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or spotlight. She has used this device in the past to confound the objectification of the female nude in her appropriations of French 19th-century masters.

Hogg's large pokes at traditional, masculine, artistic conventions—and her reintegration of objectively beautiful elements such as composition, pattern and form—are funny. Because of their humour and (ironically) their beauty, it is difficult to resist their reprogramming. Their beauty is the joke and the punch line. It is also the substantive

validity of their combined message: beauty can be used not only to enforce oppressive codes, but also to undo them. ♦

"A Critical Beauty," Frances Grafton, Lucy Hogg, Patrick Mahon, Gu Xiong, Open Space Gallery, Victoria, B.C., February 8 to March 2, 1996.

Yvonne Owens is a freelance writer who lives in Victoria. This is her first contribution to Border Crossings.

R E P R E S E N T I N G



PHOTO BY DAVID McMILLAN

ARTISTS:

ALIANA AU
SUSAN BARTON TAIT
SHIRLEY BROWN
CAROLINE DUKES
CLIFF EYLAND
JEFF FUNNELL
TRUDY GOLLEY
STEVE GOUTHRO
BRUCE HEAD
TED HOWORTH
LOUISE JONASSON
WINSTON LEATHERS
TOM LOVATT
DAVID McMILLAN
GRANT MARSHALL
BRYAN NEMISH
KEITH OLIVER
BEV PIKE
WILLIAM PURA
DON REICHERT
ANN SMITH
SHEILA SPENCE
EVA STUBBS
TONY TASCONA
SUSAN TURNER
MYRON TURNER
ANDREW VALKO
ESTHER WARKOV
DIANE WHITEHOUSE
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Sister artists from sister city offer 12 perspectives

By ANGELA JEFFS

The 12 Canadian women now exhibiting on the lower two floors of the Yokohama Civic Art Gallery have much in common. All are in their 40s and have lived in Vancouver for at least 10 years. All are professors as well as practicing artists. All admit to greatly respecting one another's work. Most have children. Many are fanatic gardeners. A few even share working space.

I learned all this and a lot more from Greg Bellerby, the curator of the exhibition, who did not seem all unnerved by being the only man on the group trip. As the curator and director of the Charles H. Scott Gallery, which is part of the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, where he and many of the featured artists teach, he has known them all for years.

Their current exhibition, "Vancouver Perspective," which opened Oct. 31, is in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the sister-city affiliation between Yokohama and the capital of British Columbia.

"Last year 12 women artists currently active in Yokohama brought their work to show in Vancouver," Bellerby explained Oct. 30. "All were Japanese — excepting painter Liga Pang, who was born and lives here."

With "Vancouver Perspective," the exchange is complete.

The day before the exhibition was due to open, Elspeth Pratt was perched high on a ladder, knocking pegs into the wall in preparation for hang-



TEN OF THE VANCOUVER ARTISTS now showing their work at the Yokohama Civic Art Gallery share a joke with the exhibition's curator, Greg Bellerby. ANGELA JEFFS PHOTO

ing "Lucky Me" (made of wood, galvanized metal and felt) and "Scar" (plywood, corrugated cardboard and strapping).

"Elspeth's work explores the relationship between women and Western art history," Bellerby offered to explain. "She sets out to foil the myth of sculpture as a male tradition by using macho materials in a way that men never would."

Lucy Hogg, with one large

painting hung to her satisfaction, uses 19th century European painting as her field of reference.

"The piece you see here is one of a series painted over the last five years," she said. "I began by collecting images in Paris that I might work from, starting out with the idea of reconstituting the female body as a construct. I'm interested in the relationship of a nude to the ground, and psychoanalytic readings of

the phallic woman in relation to male anxiety."

Back in Vancouver she shares gallery space with Renee Van Halm. Though their techniques overlap, with a similar buildup of surfaces, Van Halm has a completely different agenda, often involving architectural constructions that frame small discreet icons. In "Speculation," for example, the centerpiece is what appears to be a monogram. In fact, the calligraphy reads as "anger," the surrounding installation managing to divert it of any emotive expression.

"I'm interested in the way words become clichés, how they are used in domestic architecture, and to elicit certain responses in women," she said.

Another theme that runs through many of the women's work is an exploration of cultural roots.

Anne Ramsden shows a group of chairs whose loose covers open up a world of foreign exotica. Everything comes from somewhere else; nothing is as clear as it seems at first glance.

Sharyn Yuen, who co-owns a shop, Paper-Ya, in Vancouver, was supervising the hanging of two enormous pieces of "washi" paper made by spraying pulp onto screens. From a series of five, one was photocopied with a group of young Chinese orphans; the other, a comb that her mother had brought with her from China.

"Around the end of last century, thousands of young Chinese girls were imported into

Canada for purposes of cheap labor and prostitution, no different to the way Southeast Asian girls are brought into Japan nowadays," she revealed. "I became very curious about this lost piece of women's history, my own cultural roots, and what is happening today in China, where orphanages are full of unwanted, expendable female babies."

Upstairs, Jin-me Yoon was trying to hang 137 photographs of Korean immigrants in two groups. In one, people stand before a painting by Lauren Harris, a member of the Group of Seven (founders of a Canadian style of landscape painting earlier this century); in the second they face a work by Emily Carr, one of the group's associate members.

But, Yoon reckons, they were very much observers. Emily Carr, for example, spent years padding up and down the West Coast painting Indian totem poles and villages, but never involving herself any further.

"I can't stand back in this way. As a second-generation Korean-Canadian, I strive to find a place in a multicultural society," she said. "I'm constantly asking, 'How can I create a national identity for myself?'"

The title of the piece now on view, "A Group of Sixty Seven," refers to the 1967 Immigration Act that allowed a far greater range of foreign nationals into Canada than had been allowed. One of the countries affected was South Korea.

Vicky Alexander, who has

shown in the U.S., Belgium and Switzerland, shows paradoxical photographs of trees and landscape framed in wood.

Alysson Clay has exhibited in London and lived in California. Her feelings about Los Angeles, where women feel unsafe and everyone travels by car, is reflected in "A Day Just Like the Day That Always Follows the Day Before," in which two light boxes are connected by a line of emotive writing.

The other artists are just as passionate, just as intense. But while Landon Mackenzie appears to dream in paint, Monique Fouquet celebrates her grandfather's career as an early engineer in Quebec.

With a hooded bed and a lacquered Japanese "tansu" filled with starched linen, Kati Campbell not only quite accidentally brings coals to Newcastle, but more importantly reminds women of the harsher realities of marriage.

Lorna Brown's installation questions how unborn children are being served by ultrasound techniques originally invented by the military.

Bellerby, who was due to start teaching within hours of touching down back in Vancouver when the group returned home last Monday, was originally a filmmaker.

Putting together an exhibition like this — which he and the "Group of Twelve" will be taking to Taipei next spring — is now his own personal form of creative expression.

"Vancouver Perspective," Oct. 31 to Nov. 24, Yokohama Civic Art Gallery, 1-1 Bando-cho, Nishi-ku, just across the road from the back side of Kanine Station. (Phone (045) 254-7300).

Synthetic Aesthetic

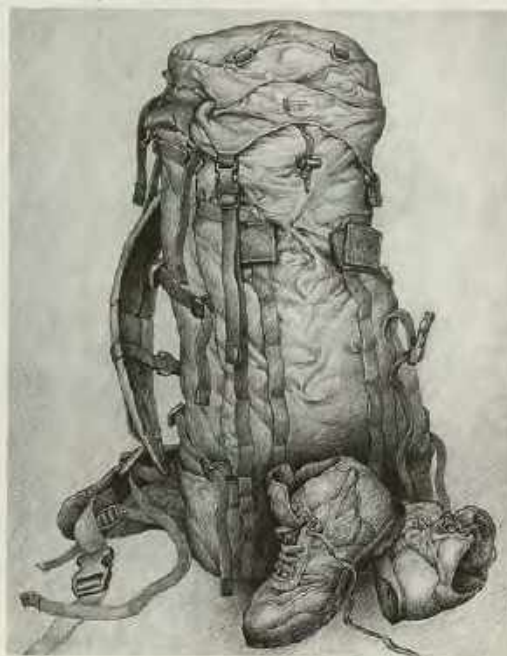
In considering the work of the four artists in this exhibition—Frances Grafton, Lucy Hogg, Patrick Mahon and Gu Xiong—one senses that their commingling will breed a rather startling organism. Walking into the gallery space, a viewer might have an experience similar to that of moving into a new home in which years of changing tenancy have infused the space with indiscriminate aesthetic conventions.

...in places the flocked floral wallpaper has given way to a more garish display of orange and brown geometrics reminiscent of the seventies. In the bedroom a motif of miniature football players has worn away revealing large pink and yellow neon coloured petals. The soot stained wall above the fireplace patterned with several empty rectangular spaces attests to a series of family portraits now removed...

The imagined archaeology of such a space would provide testimony to the changing economies of aesthetic desires. Unlike, however, the experience of entering into the space of a new home and declaring it to "have

potential," a declaration which generally commits the space to the homogenizing tendency of yet another overarching aesthetic, the artworks in this group exhibition revel in their lack of synchronicity. They are pointedly out of their time and place. There is no conceivable space in which the totality of these works will offer a tasteful coherency to the viewer. In fact, our field of vision is continually destabilized by the peripheral intrusion of one work into the space of another. It is this aspect of altered perception made possible through the collective process that speaks to the "potentiality" of this particular space—namely the gallery. To disrupt the site of aesthetic encounter in such a way, is to intervene into a domain of social presence that is typically characterized as a space of composure or contemplation.

Hike Bag, charcoal on canvas, 168 cm X 120 cm, Gu Xiong, 1995.



Smile – English Text, oil on canvas, 123 cm X 75 cm, Gu Xiong, 1995.

Smile – Chinese Text, oil on canvas, 123 cm X 75 cm, Gu Xiong, 1995.

Smile #1, charcoal on canvas, 123 cm X 108 cm, Gu Xiong, 1995.

Smile #2, charcoal on canvas, 123 cm X 108 cm, Gu Xiong, 1995.

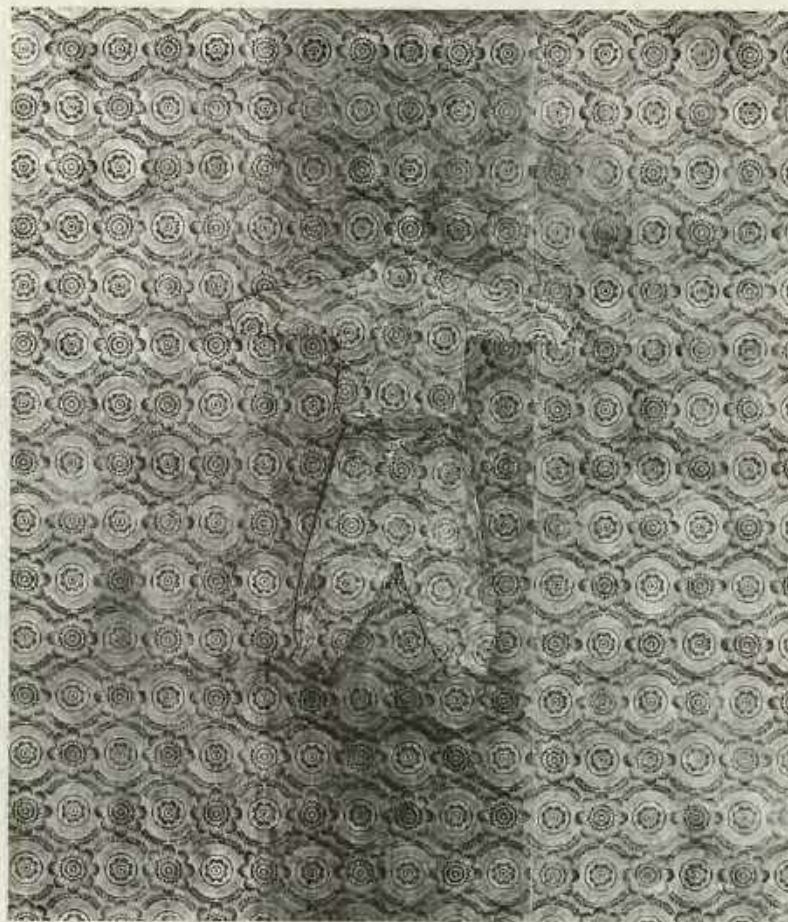
Smile #3, charcoal on canvas, 123 cm X 108 cm, Gu Xiong, 1995.



These works clash. They invite active comparison. They prevent undisturbed reverie. As a result they overturn any notion of beauty as transcendental or sublime.

To rethink the production of beauty as scrupulously conditioned by ideas that are historically and culturally situated is to acknowledge its inherently contingent status. Through the critical deployment of aesthetic strategies these four artists position beauty as "the subject" of contestation not merely the object of pleasurable distraction. Beauty thus becomes another important site of struggle because it constitutes a further struggle over meaning.

Within the context of this essay the question of "the individual" will be set aside. Individual programs of work, individual intentions and desires shall give way to a synthetic notion of collaborative production. Assuming that the consolidation of these individual artworks has produced a "new" hybrid form, the essay will now focus its attentions on the affects of this amalgamation. This strategy is one of imaginative conjecture on my part which may or may not align itself with the positions of the artists themselves. This is not to suggest that there are no points of commonality or shared interests that sustain the production of these artists. Re-contextualization merely encour-



ages us to readjust our observations and thinking about the relationship between individual and collective practice. By this means the essay also connects up with a larger problematic which asks how might one endeavour to transcend the conditions of particularity?

Men of Flowers,
frottage/clothing/canvas,
one of four panels,
180 cm X 98 cm each,
Patrick Mahon, 1994.

As a viewer or critic one often judges curatorial intention in terms of its efficacy in making sense of a given exhibition. The uneasy



Men of Flowers
(detail), frottage/clothing/
canvas, four panels,
180 cm X 98 cm each,
Patrick Mahon, 1994.

alliance of works in *A Critical Beauty* defy an explicit read. The point is not to provide viewers with a quick fix but to create a situation that is empowering to both the artist and viewer. I think we need to question our relationship to work that seems too simplistic or conspicuous—in short, too easy. Much contemporary art practice has become formulaic in its reliance upon theoretical conventions originally aimed at facilitating understanding. This, on the other hand, is complex work for a complex historical moment that

demands an equally complicated analysis. To consider these works thoughtfully as a viewer is to engage in an intellectual collaboration

with all those responsible for the production of meaning—this includes the artist, curator, writer and critic.

Our discussion began with a visual, perhaps even visceral reaction to being placed into a space of aesthetic agitation. Immense charcoal drawings of gargoyles, printed rope-climbers and over-printed items of male sleepwear in a range of muted tones, graphite drawings from family snapshots displayed with personal poetry and luridly painted canvases of the famous French clown Gilles. Beyond this immediate sensorial experience one inevitably seeks a logical explanation for this strange grouping. Throughout the preparations for this exhibition the artists have apparently worked in relative isolation. Their interactions with one another were limited. Collaboration usually suggests a close working relationship shaped by common ideas and shared agendas. The end product, if it materializes, would ideally embody the aspirations and labour of all of its participants. The logic of this exhibition refuses such conventional understandings of the term but engages actively in the critical dialogues around notions of collaboration.

Upon entry into the public arena, the individual works in this exhibition begin to have a

different relationship to themselves, a different affect because their identity is constructed in reference to each other and the external world. No longer exclusively concerned with their own particularities, the artworks now mediate between the individual and the collective—propelled into dialogue with ideas that are at times completely outside of their

The curator, in soliciting the participation of these four artists, has also assisted in constructing an identity for this group, one which he foregrounds in an intellectual and material concern with aesthetic practices. While all are highly skilled “mark makers,” it is the artists’ “programmatic” attention to this process that discloses the implicit artifice



own conceptual purview. The nature and extent to which these artists may have collaborated prior to exhibiting together ceases to be relevant when one comprehends that a radically different work is produced in the very act of going public. Thus the collective identity spawned by this body of work invites further speculation.

operating in their work. At the same time their use of “traditional” means—painting, drawing, and printmaking—are considered historical ones that lack the necessary contemporaneity to engage critically with current issues and ideas. The collective articulation of these means, however, insists that we recognize that mastery of a skill is

Guardian II, Guardian IV, Guardian V, graphite/conté/charcoal on paper, each 150 cm X 125 cm, Frances Grafton, 1995.

Gilles #5, study,
oil on linen, 56 cm X 46 cm,
Lucy Hogg, 1995.



knowledge and therefore also power. To dismiss these skills as no longer viable is to lose a potential political tool. Through sustained discursive production these artists have created a collective space, now facilitated by the curator, in which questions of a critical aesthetic and a critical orchestration of the means of production now constitute legitimate subjects of public discourse.

Another way that one might register the collective gesture of this project is to analyze the economies of scale that define an intersection between systems of representation and issues of alterity. Frances Grafton and Lucy Hogg have enlarged and distorted their images to such an extent that they bear little resemblance to their "origins" in French architecture and painting. As feminists engaged in the practices of drawing and painting, they are obviously conscious of the masculine privilege embodied in canons of Western art history. Their "grotesque" manipulations speak to the genre of history painting

which considered few subjects worthy of its elevated status. Gu Xiong, too, has theatricalized the scale of his drawings of

everyday objects and family snapshots (taken upon arrival in Canada from China) so that they also make a pointed reference to a history of art which selects certain subjects as appropriate and rejects others. Implicit in all of their works are questions about history. Who gets to choose? What history? How will it be recorded? By whom? In the case of Patrick Mahon, he reverses the usual figure/ground relationship in an attempt to dislodge the masculine subject from his place of centrality and privilege. His endlessly

repeating rope-climbers are so reduced in scale that they become benign pattern. The over-printing onto pyjamas also diffuses

a masculine encoding of power, as pyjamas locate the subject in a domestic space which is not typically the domain of the masculine.



Scale in this case is used to question rather than to valorize masculinity. The preoccupation with certain historical modes of

*Climbing Wall (detail),
frottage/clothing/canvas,
360 cm X 300 cm,
Patrick Mahon, 1994.*

production and representation brings the work of each artist into a discussion with a history of art that is neither sexually, racially nor culturally neutral.

The spatial orientation of their work further addresses relations of representation and difference. Risking accusations of essentialism

on my part, it would appear that the two male artists in the exhibition are preoccupied with the domestic realm as a potential site for the re-articulation of masculine desires and anxieties, while both of the female artists have positioned their work within the paradigm of fundamentally masculine spaces—the church and the museum. These are public spaces that have systematically denied or limited access to women. While this manoeuvre on the part of Grafton and Hogg can be read as a kind of revisionist intervention that finds its impulse in early feminist discourse, Mahon and Gu are not intruding into a space that has historically excluded them. On the contrary, “the domestic” continues to be framed by the authority of the patriarchal order within a Western model of social relations. Their project is therefore not about inserting the masculine into the discourse of domestic social space but about questioning the terms of their own engagement there. What all of these artists seem to be doing is “redistributing a narrative field” that aligns the masculine with the public sphere and the feminine with the private—a program of work that alerts the viewer to yet another contested space or site of struggle.

Ultimately, *A Critical Beauty* produces an intellectual coherency where none seemed to exist aesthetically.

Guardian II (detail),
graphite/conté/charcoal on
paper, 150 cm X 125 cm,
Frances Grafton, 1995.



To reclaim an earlier analogy... the unpacking of but a few of the many arguments folded into this exhibition has been akin to the process of moving to a new home, a new city. After the initial excitement of venturing into unknown spaces, certain anxieties arose, the unfamiliar posed risks. Negotiating these spaces proved challenging. There was always the possibility of taking a wrong turn, heading down a blind alley or towards a dead end. These wanderings were necessary detours, however, because they revealed other avenues of exploration—other ways of moving through and analyzing the work. As a result of this process one is once again reminded of the exceedingly provisional nature of the contract between the audience and the artwork. This exhibition makes no promises to secure a space of absolute certainty or knowledge for the viewer—a space that is safe. It does, however, pledge to continuously impel the viewer into spaces from which one might

come away with a renewed perspective or new insights.

Susan Schuppli



Gilles #3 (after Yves Klein)
(detail), oil on linen,
300 cm X 240 cm,
Lucy Hogg, 1995.

PICTURE THEORY



16. LA PRISE DE
Détail (vers 1628). M

Buseje Bailey

Allyson Clay

Exhibition curated by Carol Laing

Lucy Hogg

Lynn Hughes

Judy Radul

Kika Thorne

Jin-me Yoon

YYZ





THE TRACING OF AN IMAGE IS THE EFFACING OF AN IMAGE

Curatorially, this exhibition has initiated a theoretical search for new ground and different terms that might work like sets of metaphoric lenses, with differing focal distances, through which to view the whole enterprise of the crisscrossed subject as *s/he* appears in recent production. The choice of the seven artists included here has helped cue that search for a description of what remains constitutively unstable – because it is always somewhere in process, gathering and losing focus as experience accumulates and deepens, in force fields that influence always what can be shown. If there have often been serious attempts to close the categories of representation, representation has proved itself to be a remarkably elastic, even an eccentric, place off/for practice. More open than closed, complex and overfull of phantasmic sites, its residues track the body's traversals across histories and cultures. Patently mixed, representation is never the work of a single consciousness; and its signifiers – in surviving their origins and producers – float free of the contexts that first shaped them. Still, as orders of *evidence*, such signifiers leap easily to the eyes (the etymologies of “evidence” and “theory” point to *seeing* and *sight*), short-circuiting the linearity of language by materializing instantaneous and spatially full images whose meanings often exceed language's power to describe them. This does not mean

that any picture has the meanings of crisis are generated from the same form – can signify. But a capacity is never within any pictures to “disidentify” meaning, even as it the history of disidentifies informs subsequent pictures are repeated pictorial for production of the usages are braided in formative but not staged disloyally in acts what historically has and contesting of co that which has been “ness” of pictures which – the located *s/he* than other than local and

In recent representation the body takes on a different semiotic and referential gestures. It is pages and the capacity even as its theatrical image, re-proposing the body is never situated always carefully connecting axes for experience in the site of a context. Understood in this way the very histories of

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that any picture has the power to stabilize what it means. Like the meanings of crisscrossed subjects, the meanings of pictures are generated from their contexts. The "same" image – or the same form – can signify differently when locations and audience shift. But a capacity to identify with a picture's content or intent is never within any picture's absolute control. This availability of pictures to "disidentification" deepens their potential for making meaning, even as it complicates them as signifiers.¹ For unlike the history of discrete words, the history of pictures visibly informs subsequent picturings, even if the meanings of subsequent pictures are at odds with the earlier meanings of the repeated pictorial forms. This disidentification shadows the art production of the crisscrossed subject, where chains of prior usages are braided into "new" usages in a reworking that is performative but not strictly repetitive. What is repeated is repeated disloyally in acts of refiguration that insist on differentiating what historically has been constituted as the same. This invoking and contesting of conventional representations moves into view that which has been effaced, displacing the assumed "completeness" of pictures while refusing to reposition the shifted content – the located *s/he* that is the crisscrossed subject – as anything other than local and material, in transition and culturally specific.

In recent representation, and in the works in this exhibition, the body takes on a different status – at once constructed, "natural," semiotic and referential – performing transgressive and situational gestures. It is a body in process that plays with visual slip-pages and the capacity of the visual to "picture" ambiguities, even as its theatrical posturings refuse to be reduced to a single image, re-proposing that the detail is a category in itself. But the body is never situated nowhere. Instead, its spatial context is always carefully considered; space itself is one of the primary axes for experience and for conceptualizing the world, comprising the site of a crisscrossing of configured social relations. Understood in this way, spatial forms become capable of altering the very histories which have produced them when they are

mediated by the crisscrossed subject who visualizes the spaces between categories that have historically been set up as oppositional orders.

If this is a first attempt to say what *Picture Theory* might usefully name, theoretically it is already informed by work done elsewhere, especially by feminist, postcolonial and queer theorists. For it is in those zones of inquiry that the need for a multiple and relational subject has been most acutely felt, to contest the strict definitional lines that would proscribe a subject's right to self-definition, and self-description. The crisscrossed subject, like the recent subjects of feminisms and queer culture, traces itself through not only categories of gender and sexuality but all simultaneously inhabited "identity-constituting" and "identity-fracturing discourses" – race, ethnicity and class, to name just three. Taken together as a mixed group, all of the works in this exhibition call – as s/he also does – for the highly conscious undertaking of "particular, performative acts of experimental self-perception and filiation": acts that only make sense when attached to the first person,² and to *deliberate* acts in representation. Acts such as the image choice for the *Picture Theory* catalogue cover of a black-and-white detail taken from the reproduction of a seventeenth-century painting whose own subject is the "taking" of a "sacred" site. Here a single fragment reduces a dense crowd of subjects, all caught mid-gesture, to one hand and the half-sole of another's foot, and to the crisscross mark that pictorially locates and links the differently placed bodies.³

NOTES

1. This term is used by J. entiality and the categor *Bodies That Matter* (New
2. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick *Tendencies*, ed. M. Baral Sedgwick (Durham: Duke
3. The painting referred I would like to thank this and for his re-presentation the picture as a "new" w spirit of my curatorial ef

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t pictorially locates

NOTES

1. This term is used by Judith Butler in an extended discussion of referentiality and the category "women." See "Arguing with the Real," in *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 187-222.

2. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, from her essay "Queer and Now" in *Tendencies*, ed. M. Barale, J. Goldberg, M. Moon and E. Kosofsky Sedgwick (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 9.

3. The painting referred to is Nicolas Poussin's *The Taking of Jerusalem*. I would like to thank this catalogue's designer, Bryan Gee, for locating it; and for his re-presentation of a reproduction of the bottom left corner of the picture as a "new" work in itself. This act was delightfully in the spirit of my curatorial efforts in *Picture Theory*.

not seen from below

Behind this picture is another picture. Not literally, of course. And no, not the same picture at all; but, for the record, the structuring image is Cabanel's Birth of Venus in the Musée d'Orsay, in Paris. This painting claims the gallery's back wall, and there, s/he's bigger than all of us, stretched out languidly on her frothy ochre wave. s/he looks at no one: a limp hand crosses above her eyes. As viewers, we are level with the red cherubim that hover over her striped green flesh and green hair, in their green, green sky. Her title is a capital letter, V, and a Roman numeral, I. As if s/he were already a stock item in someone's inventory. s/he mimes the pose of the traditional female nude, but has lost the colouration and the invisible brushwork that built the illusion, that characterize the category. Hors de série – out of order – s/he drifts, suspended and immobile. Somewhere in the shadows is her shed skin.

out, and about

It's a setup. In fact, teen closeups turn tracks, the market, passersby, the façade ger on the tracks, fi park, pissing in the dering if they should spot after a while. A and goatee give her blue tattooed snake. "him." Dressing up versing, transvestin streets, a marker: t visible there, there colour-copied, align posterings, on the u

BIOGRAPHIES

BUSEJE BAILEY has worked intensively, and nationally, to explore and understand the diverse arguments and practices within the cultural politics of "difference," across a variety of media that includes painting, video and photo-installation work. She currently lives in Halifax.

ALLYSON CLAY is a painter whose solo exhibitions and chapbooks over a decade have addressed issues of female experience as a subject of, and in, representation. She lives in Vancouver where she teaches at the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University.

LUCY HOGG is a painter whose recent production has focused on the reworking of images of the heroic and the erotic found in nineteenth-century French paintings. She lives in Vancouver where she teaches painting at the Emily Carr College of Art and Design.

LYNN HUGHES is a painter interested in the histories of science and technology. Her recent mixed media project on women and mathematics situates science and art together, mixing binaries that historically have been opposed. She lives in Montréal, and teaches at Concordia University.

JUDY RADUL is a performance artist, and a producer of artists' books. Recently, she has been making installation works that situate her concerns on issues of gender and desire in gallery spaces. She lives in Vancouver where she oversees programming for the Front Gallery at Western Front.

KIKA THORNE is a Toronto-based artist whose work interrogates "femininity" and shifts conventional representations of female desire. Her current production is largely time-based; in her films, embodied subjects work to change notions of the sexed body, across a range of sexual orientations.

JIN-ME YOON's history of photo-based production has centred on preoccupations with memory, subjectivity, location/displacement and the continual process of (re)inventing identity. She lives in Vancouver, and teaches at the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University.

CAROL LAING (curator) is an artist/writer whose concerns in art production have focused on female experience and female desire. She writes critically for a range of art catalogues, magazines and anthologies. She lives in South Bay and Toronto, and teaches at the Ontario College of Art.

LIST OF WORKS IN

1. Jin-me Yoon
Souvenirs of the
lightbox version; du
65.5 x 75 cm
2. Lynn Hughes
Marlene Frigon
installation; black-a
275 x 225 cm
3. Allyson Clay
Twitch (1993)
acrylic, photograph
61 x 122 cm
4. Allyson Clay
Cigar (1993)
acrylic, photograph
61 x 122 cm
5. Lucy Hogg
VI (1993)
oil on canvas
234 x 404 cm
6. Judy Radul
My Guy (1992/93)
22 colour-copies; pho
directorial assistance
165 x 170 cm
7. Buseje Bailey
three details from *E*
colour photographs
60.8 x 40.5 cm (each)
8. Kika Thorne
Hands (1990)
oil and rabbit skin gl
71 x 71 cm
9. Kika Thorne
Decorum (1992)
oil and rabbit skin gl
142 x 66 cm

LIST OF WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

1. Jin-me Yoon
Souvenirs of the Self: Lake Louise (1991/95)
lightbox version: duratrans, metal, vinyl lettering
65.5 x 75 cm
2. Lynn Hughes
Marlene Frigon/Inclusion Differentielle (1992)
installation: black-and-white photograph, acrylic painting, black paint
275 x 225 cm
3. Allyson Clay
Twitch (1993)
acrylic, photograph and silkscreen on canvas
61 x 122 cm
4. Allyson Clay
Cigar (1993)
acrylic, photograph and silkscreen on canvas
61 x 122 cm
5. Lucy Hogg
VI (1993)
oil on canvas
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6. Judy Radul
My Guy (1992/93)
22 colour-copies; photo credits: Kathryne Cowie
directional assistance: Brice Canyon
165 x 170 cm
7. Buseje Bailey
three details from *Body Politics* (1992)
colour photographs and glass
60.8 x 40.5 cm (each)
8. Kika Thorne
Hands (1990)
oil and rabbit skin glue on canvas
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oil and rabbit skin glue on canvas
142 x 66 cm

Acknowledgements

I would first like to deeply thank the artists in the exhibition who, trustingly, gave me such a free hand in working with their work. Margaret Christakos – with her sensitive and suggestive editing – and Bryan Gee – through his fine design skills – have been indispensable contributors to the production of the *Picture Theory* catalogue. It was a joy to work with them both. Finally, I would like to thank YYZ for making this exhibition possible; the board, for their initial invitation to me to curate, and co-directors Jane Kidd and Milinda Sato, who were then very attentive to the myriad details that are part of the process of an exhibition. – C.L.

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LUCY HOGG

Vancouver Art Gallery

Lucy Hogg's installation of paintings at the VAG is an extravagant refiguration of the spectacle of the early- to mid-19th-century French academy as it may now be seen at the Louvre or the Musée d'Orsay. The exhibition occupies two rooms painted in a flat latex of bilious mint, alluding to the fabric-covered walls of salon galleries. The first and smaller room contains two pairs of paintings quoting Ingres's *The Bather of Valpinçon* and *La Grande Odalisque*. Hogg's reprises of these paintings are composites of the several versions of each that Ingres executed. The high-wall gallery continues Hogg's reiteration of 19th-century idealization in monumentally scaled versions of Cabanel's *Birth of Venus*, Géricault's *Charging Chasseur* and *Wounded Cuirassier* and Ingres's *La Source*. There

are also two intimately scaled renditions of a portrait excerpted from Delacroix's *Orphan at the Cemetery* and an enlarged copy of David's *Madame Récamier*.

The opening of the Louvre to the public at the end of the 18th century reflected the Revolution's and the Empire's notion that the museum would serve an educational function by providing for democratic access to humanity's achievements in art. The paintings that Hogg cites were produced with the notion that the proper place of art – in this case, official French art – was such an institution. To this day, learning how to paint at the Louvre involves the production of polite, just-off-scale copies done on site.

Hogg makes clear her reference to these historical paintings – and to the

devalued procedure of copying – by conspicuously outlining and gridding up her sources in bright vermillion; some of the grid's lines, along with un-



Above right:
LUCY HOGG
Warrior II
(1993, detail)
Oil on linen
114 x 96 in

Right:
LUCY HOGG
Rebuilds IV
(1991, detail)
Oil on canvas
60 x 84 in



Photo: French Ministry of Culture

finished passages, are visible in the finished work. Hogg copies the original artworks brushstroke by brushstroke, treating the xeroxed image from which she works as undifferentiated information. All of her paintings' elaborated surfaces are constructed of layers of scumble and glazing, which far exceed the requirements of a faithful copy. Hogg contradicts academic paintings' subordination of the ground to the figure through her use of arbitrary colours and complementary colour pairing. The bituminous chiaroscuro of Gericault or the cool of Ingres's enamelled polish are replaced by Hogg's own evident education in modernism's admission of the literal and formal constituents of painting.

The 19th-century paintings Hogg refers to stand as testimony to western art's interest in grandiloquent narratives of history and conquest in which

men are all-too-often heroically manly and women passive objects of desire. In Hogg's own paintings, Gericault's horsemen are no longer overbearing heroes/protagonists but appear overcome by their ostentatious military regalia – now recast in Rococo powder blue – and somehow diminished by their nervous, snorting, thoroughbred horses. Nineteenth-century paintings lovingly described luxurious fabric and costume; Hogg's treatment of Ingres's taffetas, silks and satins precludes the materialism of her sources to present a Byzantine interlace of sensually declarative paint held in lockstep position by a Cloisonnist underdrawing.

The female nude, a traditional bearer of the erotic, recedes (like the officers of the cavalry) into an advancing warm ground. The flesh of the women's bodies is described by a layered moiré pattern of cross-contour lines

that both didactically charts and confuses the position of the figure in space. Grant Arnold, in the essay that accompanies the exhibition, characterizes these bodies as exoskeletons that deflect the viewer's gaze. The erotic is displaced, referring us to the process of the painting's manufacture.

One of Gericault's dandified warriors carries a *non-finito* emasculated sabre; Venus and the symbolic figure of *La Source* play out both the vertical/active and horizontal/passive archetypes of gender as cool phosphorescent ciphers uneasily located in environments of the molten and sanguine. The protagonist in these paintings is Hogg's insistence on the paintings' facture. Through this insistence she evokes a modernist gesture of presence. The authority of the museum and the artist's hand are laid bare and then cross dressed.

John Armstrong

EDWARD "NED" A. BEAR

Art Centre, University of New Brunswick, FREDERICTON



Photo: Mark Bray

EDWARD "NED" A. BEAR, *Kikawi Matow* (1993); Installation; Detail showing marble sculpture

It is a traditional belief of the native culture that all things of creation possess a viable living spirit. The existence of a spirit within animate or inanimate objects is a concept that I feel deep within my soul to be true and is a notion that I cannot easily dismiss.

Ned Bear, from his artist's statement

In his installation *Kikawi matow* (Our Mother Cries), Edward "Ned" A. Bear has offered a glimpse into another world – that of Native-American culture and spirituality. In offering this insight he makes a plea to save the ground of all our worlds, the earth.

Kikawi matow incorporated sculpture, photographs and audio. The viewer entered the work in two stages. The first was a kind of mock interpretive centre of the kind one would find at the entrance to any of our national or provincial parks. On the walls were rough-hewn portrait masks and archival photographs of clear-cuts, pulp-and-paper plants, refineries and other heavy

List of Works

All works are oil on canvas; dimensions are in centimeters, height precedes width. Unless otherwise noted, works are from the collection of the artist.

- 1 *Mirror* 1990-91 diptych, each element: 47. x 47.
- 2 *Rebuilds I* 1991 152. x 213.
- 3 *Rebuilds II* 1991 213. x 152.
- 4 *Rebuilds III* 1991 213. x 152.
- 5 *Rebuilds IV* 1991 152. x 213.
- 6 *Untitled (After Madame Hécamier)* 1992 185.5 x 257. Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank/Collection de la Banque d'oeuvres d'art du Conseil des Arts du Canada.
- 7 *Warrior I* 1992 304 x 233.
- 8 *Warrior II* 1993 284 x 233.
- 9 *V I* 1993 234 x 404.
- 10 *V II* 1993-94 467 x 234.

Biography

BORN
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, 1957
EDUCATION
1986 - 88 M.F.A., University of British Columbia;
1975 - 80 B.F.A., Mount Allison University;
1978 - 79 University of Ottawa
(Studies in Fine Arts)

Cover: *V I* 1993 (detail)

Selected Exhibitions

- 1993 *Wounded Warriors*, Teck Gallery, Simon Fraser University: Harbour Centre (solo)
- Working Documents: Vancouver Drawings*, Artspeak, Vancouver (group)
- 1990 *Artropolis '90*, Vancouver (group)
- 1988 *Vancouver Painters*, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (group)
- Lucy Hogg: Recent Paintings*, Pitt International Gallery, Vancouver (solo)
- 1987 *Ravens and Other Paintings*, Community Arts Council of Vancouver (group)
- Artropolis*, Vancouver (group)
- 1984 *Contemporary Canadian Art: The Current Generation*, Edmonton Art Gallery (group)
- 1981 *Twelve Photographers*, Confederation Centre Art Gallery, Charlottetown (group)
- 1979 *Great George Street Gallery*, Charlottetown (solo)

Credits

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Design: Randall Watson
Computer production: Robert Wall



Lucy Hogg

FEBRUARY 5 - APRIL 4, 1994


VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

Lucy Hogg

Painting has occupied a tenuous position in relation to feminist discourse over the past two decades. The early 1970s saw the emergence of projects that sought to make visible the work of women artists neglected in the history of western art, without challenging the paradigms that shaped that tradition. The decade also saw the emergence of an influential body of criticism that positioned painting as both a site and an instrument for the subjugation of women's bodies. Painting, it was argued, was the paradigmatic medium within a high art tradition that repeatedly offered up the spectacularized female body for the scopophilic pleasure of a male audience. Drawing upon psychoanalytic and language theory, historians and critics, such as Griselda Pollock and Mary Kelly, mapped out painting's position within bourgeois culture's mythologies of genius and individualism — mythologies that are intertwined with a conception of the artist that is normatively male. It was not only the manner through which the female body has been depicted that rendered painting problematic. As Mary Kelly has asserted, the painterly gesture itself, "even the most minimal action, retains a certain residue of figuration" — a residue which permits the viewer to recognize the illusion of "an essential humanness, smoothly eliding the look of the artist... with his own, assuming in that image an essential creativity which authenticates his experience as aesthetic..."¹ The painterly gesture signified unmediated contact with an illusory conception of universal humanity. In so doing, it served to naturalize a historically constituted discourse around painting that emphasized concepts such as mastery, authenticity, originality, and purity. These concepts were (and are) central to a patriarchal formation within which the marginalization or exclusion of the enunciating female subject has been a central tenet.

Over the past two decades, feminist artists and critics have tended to work with "alternative" media: photography, video, film and performance. The means through which this work could be distributed facilitated the development of communities and audiences outside the traditional institutional framework of high culture — i.e. the art museum — and thus these media seemed to offer a greater potential for claiming an autonomous space that didn't carry the oppressive weight of painting's history.



Mirror 1990-91 (diptych)



Despite the privileged position of painting within high culture, a number of contemporary artists — including Canadians such as Mary Scott, Joanne Tod, Mina Totino, Carol Laing, Allyson Clay, Landon Mackenzie, and Lucy Hogg — have engaged with feminist discourse while maintaining an interest in painting's aesthetic resources. While some have acknowledged a historical moment when the temporary abandonment of painting was necessary,² wholesale rejections of painting as a site for feminist interventions into high culture have been countered by assertions that no particular media can lay claim to a set of resources that is more combative of patriarchy than any other. The past decade has seen the absorption of video and photographic work into the mainstream, to the extent that they now hold the same kind of official status once so closely associated with painting.³ As several critics have pointed out, to ascribe intrinsic attributes to a medium, independent of its historical context, is to reaffirm the tenets of high modernism.⁴ Furthermore, if one thinks of painting as a language, it has become clear that it is a language that is not going to disappear. It would, therefore, be a useful project to intervene in the practice

of painting, in order to displace dominant circuits of exchange, and open up a site in which pleasure need not be exclusively identified as male.

Lucy Hogg's practice addresses the traditions of European painting, and the linkage between its vocabulary and the position of the white bourgeois male as a normative subject within western culture. Central concerns within her work have been the disordering of traditional ways of viewing the painted image — breaking down the male-identified status of the viewer — while retaining a sense of visual pleasure associated with painting. Hogg's approach to painting does draw upon strategies of appropriation and allegory that have become a central feature of much photographically-based work over the past fifteen years. Her work, however, avoids the stylized irony that has become associated with appropriation through its careful attention to material qualities, and the sense of labour these call up. As Laura Lamb has pointed out, while these works engage historical constructions of identity, "they are very much Hogg's *paintings*"⁵ and they play within the contradictions between the rejection of originality attributed to appropriation, and the longing for authenticity that has become attached to such strategies.

The works that make up this exhibition draw upon well-known French paintings from the early to mid-nineteenth century — a period which saw the rise of bourgeois culture and its attendant understanding of individuality — by artists such as Ingres, Géricault and Cabanel. In referring to these images, Hogg's work calls up an era in which painting was evolving as a practice conscious of its public and its relationship to political events. Her re-working of this imagery, in paintings that claim a position within the public space of the museum through their content and scale, speaks both to the traditional exclusion of the female voice from museum space, and of the sharply diminished political function left to painting within particular manifestations of modernism.

Through their imagery, Hogg's paintings may initially evoke a sense of comfort in the viewer — they are the kind of image one expects to see in an art museum and they can be located within traditional categories of painting: the female nude and heroic portraiture. In this respect there is an element of risk in Hogg's project, particularly in relation to the female nudes,



Rebuilds IV 1992 (detail)

which are so closely linked to the projection of male desire. As Lynda Nead has argued, "the female body is dense with meaning in patriarchal culture and these connotations cannot be shaken off entirely . . . "6 While it may not be possible to locate the female body "as a neutral site for feminist meanings," Nead has also argued that, "signs and values can be transformed and different identities set in place" and the risks involved in representing the female body "have to be taken" to "modify and extend the

range of existing cultural categories . . . "7 While Hogg's work may initially call up familiar categories of painting, her material interventions into the image undercut this sense of familiarity, and disorder the content of the image in order to "suggest another kind of viewer than that for whom the original paintings were intended."8 Each painting incorporates transgressive shifts in colour that disrupt the traditional figure/ground relationship. Reds, greens, blues and yellows resonate with hallucinatory intensity; the grid used to map the image onto the canvas is clearly visible, and areas of the painting seem unfinished, visually melding the image and its support.

The compositions of Hogg's *Rebuilds* paintings were taken, without alteration, from the studies for Ingres' *Odalisque* paintings. Like Ingres' work, Hogg's paintings offer up a nude female body to the viewer's gaze, however the character of this body has shifted through the manner in which it is painted. The sumptuously painted body of Ingres' painting appears as a mass of flesh, contained within the bounds of an idealized female form. It does not seem to possess a skeleton; it is passive and incapable of resisting the penetration of the (male) viewer's gaze. Within Hogg's image, paint does not so easily stand in for flesh. The body is defined through a moiré pattern that suggests an armature, as if it had a kind of exoskeleton with which to deflect the viewer's gaze. It is a body that is all surface, all exterior. The negotiation between the body as a particular fact and as generalized sign, upon which Ingres' work relies, is broken down. The body Hogg presents is not easily contained within the projections of patriarchal anxiety that shape traditional constructions of femininity. This separation of the particular and the general is further emphasized through the repetition of identical bodies within the four *Rebuilds* paintings. This repetition, and the intensified colour, so overloads the elements Ingres used to exoticise the female body — draperies, incense burner, etc. — that they become absurd, and their meaning becomes destabilized in a kind of finely wrought practical joke.

In *VI*, the tradition of the reclining female nude is again called up in order to question the boundaries that traditionally define the female body. Reworking the colour scheme of Alexandre Cabanel's *La naissance de Venus*, Hogg has drastically shifted the figure/ground relationship so central to the reading of the original. Emphasized through these shifts in colour is the gaze of the red male cherubs who look down upon the larger-than-life green female body. The gaze of the cherubs parallels that of the viewer's, continually reminding the viewer of the position of his/her body in relation to the image, and undermining the anonymity central to male voyeurism. Further, the bizarre colouration makes the female body ambiguous and difficult to categorize; it creates a gap between received knowledge of that body — formed within the tradition of the reclining nude — and the immediate experience of the image.

These strategies are applied to the construction of heroic masculine identity in *Warrior I* and *Warrior II*. Again, the composition of these works is unaltered from the Géricault paintings upon which they are based. However, through Hogg's material interventions, the devices through which heroic masculinity is constructed become overdetermined, their meaning spills beyond traditional expectations, and the process through which gender is signified takes on comic



Warrior II 1993 (detail)

dimensions. The exaggerated colour intensifies the drama to ridiculous proportions, while imparting a precarious, vertiginous character to the pictorial space. "Expressive" distortions in perspective, used by Géricault to link the space of the viewer to the depicted drama, become unwound as "unfinished" elements visually merge with the canvas. In *Warrior I*, the charging chasseur's phallic sword melds with his horse's tail (which it is perhaps about to sever), while his headgear appears as a semi-abstract shape curiously detached from the kind of heroic glory it traditionally signified. The wounded cuirassier in *Warrior II* appears so burdened by the overwrought drama of his cloak, that he seems incapable of any action at all.

While the painterly gesture is not absent from Hogg's work, her paintings avoid the dramatic brushwork or sense of spontaneous release associated with the kind of "expressive" colour and content she deploys. The surfaces of her paintings are flat, and the images have been rendered with meticulous, repetitive strokes. The viewer is held in suspension between the emotional engagement suggested by the subject matter, and the sense of detachment set up by the rendering of the image.

Through these strategies, the process through which a viewer identifies with the image is disrupted. Signs and referents don't quite coalesce, and emphasis is placed upon the position of the depicted bodies within an economy of circulating signs that shape meaning in relation to

identity. In addition, Hogg's interventions defeat the sense of immediacy often associated with painting. Within her practice, painting is not an act marking the release of individual authentic



View of *V I, Warrior I and Warrior II* during installation

experience. Like the bodies she depicts, her practice is situated within a complex of cultural codes and received concepts. Hogg's paintings question the possibility of authentic experience, and oppose traditional understandings of autonomous individuality with a conception of identity that is culturally produced. Her work does not, however, suggest that identity is entirely subjected to culture. Deploying strategies of appropriation and intervention in works that retain a form of visual pleasure, these paintings engage the viewer in a dialogue concerning the possibility of transgressing the codes that culture impresses upon the body, and thereby renegotiating identity.

— Grant Arnold

Notes

- 1 Mary Kelly, "Reviewing Modernist Criticism" in *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York/Boston: New Museum of Contemporary Art and David R. Godine, 1984), p. 90.
- 2 See Carol Loring, "How Can We Speak To Painting?" *C Magazine*, No. 25, Spring 1990, p. 21.
- 3 The extent to which art production in Vancouver has come to be identified with photographically-based work is evident in an article by John Bentley Mays and Kate Taylor, entitled "Canadian art in letters," which appeared in the October 30, 1993 edition of the *Globe and Mail*. Under the letter V, Vancouver was described as "no place in particular until the photographic depictions of the city by hometown artist... Jeff Wall made it familiar turf to museum goers and art-world intelligentsia in the United States and Europe."
- 4 See Bruce Grenville, "Joanne Tod: The Space of Difference" in Joanne Tod (Saskatoon/Toronto: Menden Art Gallery and The Power Plant, 1991), p. 10.
- 5 Laura Lamh, "Wounded Warriors: Lucy Hogg," essay for broadsheet published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title at the Teek Gallery, Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre, September 1993.
- 6 Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London/New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 72.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 From notes provided to the author by the artist.



V / 1993 (detail)

VANCOUVER

Lucy Hogg Vancouver Art Gallery



Lucy Hogg
Rebuilds IV 1991
Oil on canvas
60 x 84 in.
Photo: Trevor Mills
Courtesy: Vancouver Art Gallery

Feminist arguments against the practice of painting include its luxury commodity status, its promotion of elitist aesthetics, its history of objectifying women and, more generally, its perpetuation of masculine ideals. Still, some feminist artists — like Lucy Hogg — are unwilling to abandon the language, or the pleasure, of paint. Their challenge then becomes the construction of a feminist critique from within a suspect medium.

Hogg makes huge museum-scale paintings which challenge our continuing investment in Romantic notions of originality, grandeur and heroic individualism. Her appropriations include works by French nineteenth-century masters David, Ingres, Géricault and Delacroix. For instance, the four paintings in her *Rebuilds* series are based upon two works of Ingres, *La Grande Odalisque* (1814) and *The Bather of Valpinçon* (1808). Hogg seeks to interrupt our complacent viewing by using non-naturalistic colour, areas of flat and repetitive patterning and fragments of the draughts-

man's grid. One of her favourite techniques is to paint the skin of her nudes in a moiré pattern, as if it were fabric on padded furniture, an effect intended to disrupt our voyeuristic relationship to the female model.

The enormous *VI* is a reconsideration of *The Birth of Venus*, a work by a now-obscure French Salon painter, Alexandre Cabanel. With its sprawling female nude floating on a frothy sea and hovered over by a gallery of fat, male cherubs, the original painting can have been little more than an excuse for clammy voyeurism. Even with Hogg's interjections of bizarre colour (Venus is painted a mossy green, the cherubs brick red) and moiré skin pattern, *VI* is still a work of spectacular titillation. Nineteenth-century eroticism simply overwhelms twentieth-century feminist interventions.

Far more successful is Hogg's

Reviews

Untitled (After Madame Récamier), based on David's *Madame Récamier*. Here, as nowhere else in this show, Hogg has eliminated the objectified female figure altogether, so that we are forced to con-

template an unoccupied divan. This is Hogg's most effective appropriation, consolidating in the space of its omissions a complex array of issues, outrages and pleasures.

Robin Laurence

VANCOUVER

Mina Totino

Contemporary Art Gallery/Simon Fraser University

For longer than anyone now living has been alive, painting has been on the gangplank of the pirate ship Art. But no matter how many times it has been fed to the sharks, artists still do it, insisting on its ability to narrate, represent and reform the real. An artist like Mina Totino must negotiate, if not ignore, the many admonitions levelled

against painting as a medium irretrievably fouled by its history as a repository of masculine, white, bourgeois European values, admonitions that have led more than one notable critic to issue the injunction not to paint at all.

These two recent exhibitions of Totino's work demonstrated just how far-reaching a



Mina Totino
Untitled 1993
Oil on canvas
96 x 76 in.

Courtesy: Contemporary Art Gallery

VISUAL ARTS

Waking up the 'undead'

By ROBIN LAURENCE

Representational painting in the 1990s is a beleaguered activity, bombarded by accusations and advocacies, circled round by critical discourse and cultural theory.

Not the least of painting's difficulties is its supposed state of non-being: painting, after all, was declared dead a couple of decades ago, which would make all that heavily pigmented, two-dimensional stuff currently showing in Vancouver galleries a kind of horror — a long, lucrative night of the living dead.

But if painting really is "undead" or "vampiric" (as phototableaux artist Jeff Wall once wittily remarked) why do highly informed young artists still call it up from the grave of art history? Why do they feel compelled by the act of smearing pigment across canvas or board in evocation of something else? Quite apart from art market considerations, what is the attraction about?

Lucy Hogg seems to use painting as a means of renegotiating its own critical demise. In a recent work, *Wounded Warriors I and II*, she engages in issues of representation, originality, masculinity and romantic "self-expression." Her huge canvases (on view at the Teck Gallery, 515 West Hastings St., until Sept. 25) are ambitious reworkings of two early 19th-century paintings by Théodore Géricault.

As essayist Laura Lamb points out, Hogg uses art historical appropriation ironically, not to further demolish the claims of expressive painting as a creative activity but to reinvest it with meaning, to re-legitimize it. Hogg's allusions to Géricault, it seems, are as much a critique of the recent art practice of appropriation as of the old art practice of painting.

Which is not to say that Hogg endorses the romantic style by which Géricault's military subject matter is realized — all the jabbing of paint brushes and waving of swords, all the rearing of horses and stampeding of sensibilities, all the feverishly imagined clamor and tumult of war.

Hogg's work asks us to consider painting's relationship to the construction of "heroic" masculine identity and, at the same time, deconstructs both mark-making and mimeticism.

Working from photocopies of reproductions, Hogg flattens and mottles her brush strokes, drops out realistic details, realigns gesture into pattern, acidifies colors and paints up red and blue lines of gridwork. In her deft application of paint she subverts her own skill, undermining illusions of



WOUNDED WARRIOR I: detail from Lucy Hogg's current work



KEEFER STREET: Robert Linsley, evokes historical comparison

three-dimensionality and skewering notions of painterly grandeur.

Robert Linsley also evokes aspects of 19th-century painting, his practice being inspired by the social realism of Gustave Courbet and the landscapes of Camille Corot. (An exhibition of his recent work is on at Simon Fraser Gallery, SFU, Burnaby, until Oct. 1.)

Although acutely aware of all the critical and conceptual arguments against painting, Linsley still chooses to exercise his ideologies in oil on canvas. As is noted in the show's catalogue, Linsley's ideologies aren't that far off those of all the photo-conceptual Jeff Wallites in town. And although their clarity, scale and impact are not as great, Linsley's paintings often bring Wall's backlit Cibachrome transparencies to mind. For instance, Linsley's 1992 painting *Fraser River Landscape I*, with its horizontal format, bright blue sky and industrial erosion of the natural landscape, is immediately suggestive of Wall's 1987 work *The Old Prison*.

Given the intense and complex interaction between painting and photography over the past 150 years, and the easy access to visual information that photography affords painters, it is amazing that Linsley's realism is not directly

mediated or aided by photographs.

Process is a purposefully antiquated kind of declaration in his work: landscapes are painted on site, and figurative works are painted from models, with working drawings and notations developed in pencil, charcoal and oil sketches. It's not clear, however, if Linsley's embrace of 19th-century techniques is entirely successful.

Although impelled by contemporary political and economic concerns, including depiction of cultural interfaces and generational conflicts, Linsley's large paintings, *Keefer Street* and *The Wedge*, don't really come off. They're too

labored — the paint doesn't sing.

Brian Kipping's paintings (at the Bau-Xi Gallery, 3045 Granville St., until Sept. 25) seems, on the whole, innocent of much of the theory in which Hogg and Linsley engage. Based in Toronto, but often travelling across Canada as a rock musician, Kipping makes small, intimate paintings of urban and industrial scenes encountered in places as farflung as Montreal, Thunder Bay, Kamloops and Vancouver. His deserted streets and commercial interiors, executed in a simple, literal yet atmospheric style, are extremely reminiscent of the work of Edward Hopper, filtered through a melancholy, Impressionist lens. A lonely nostalgia seems to prevail: Kipping's fondness for old buildings is paralleled by his rejection of modernist and post-modernist art practice.

In works like *Storefront Windows in Sunlight and Sunlight and Shadow from Overpass*, one has the sense of sad redundancy, of brutal progress encroaching upon the more amiable past.

However, equally effective is *Drive in Tombstones*, a scene of snow-covered eeriness, set in some indistinct, present-future time. An anonymous drive-in station, circled by tombstones awaiting sale, is lit by huge fluorescent lights (you can almost hear them buzzing in the frozen night air), the whole scene swathed in snow and cold and accented by a strip of excremental sky. It's a hellishly effective little painting, and seems to exemplify what might be the

real (and entirely uncritical) reasons artists continue to paint. The medium can be at once so immediate and so evocative, can wield such physical as well as emotional power. Relinquishing its sensuousness and physicality to the more austere remove of text or photo-technology may be more than many artists can bear.

Also recommended:

Paul Kuhn: Silks: these elegant formal exercises by the Calgary-based Kuhn are less about painting than about paint, suggesting that Alberta may be the last bastion of post-painterly abstraction. At Diane Farris Gallery, 1565 West Seventh Ave., until Sept. 28. ♦

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Wounded Warriors: Lucy Hogg

An Essay by Laura Lamb

Appropriation as a strategy for painters has taken a number of turns since Sherrie Levine exhibited replicas of famous modernist paintings in the early 1980's. As the practice has evolved and then solidified into a tasteful but somewhat listless academic genre, appropriation has become a kind of borrowing which attempts to maintain the Duchampian suggestion that there is nothing to repay while at the same time slyly hinting at homage. Unfortunately it often falls short of even that and becomes a petty crime with all the finesse of a mugging, and all the purpose of vandalism, but without the romance of either.

Romance, in fact is exactly what most artists dealing with appropriation are trying to avoid, as well as other related qualities such as sensuality, luxury and heroic scale, which made painting the dominant western art form up to and including Modernism. The romantic notion of originality — with its baggage of masculine heroic individualism and its connection to art as the production of rare luxury commodities — is of course the very thing that has been so thoroughly challenged by Levine and others. The ideological gears of romanticism have been exposed and its qualities can no longer be regarded as natural attributes of art.

By choosing to exhibit reproductions and copies of artists such as Kandinsky and Egon Schiele, Levine singled out expressionism for attack. This made explicit an implicit position of much post-conceptual art — art which deliber-

ately says nothing about the artist as a sensing corporal being (and very little about the artist as a thinking being either). Rather than celebrating the artist either as a unique individual or as an entity who is merely being written or drawn by culture, this art is mostly concerned with educating (and sometimes perhaps amusing) the audience.

The Romanticism of Gericault was in part a reaction to an earlier version of this very role for art. The pre-eminent theorist of Romantic literature, M.H. Abrams, named the primarily audience-centred role for baroque and neo-classical art of the 18th century the "pragmatic". Art's purpose was to "teach and delight". In contrast, the romantic idea of the "expressive" function of art — to express the thoughts, feelings and "vegetable genius" of the artist — began to dominate in the nineteenth century and, in spite of the efforts of conceptualists, has never completely let go of the public imagination.

In practice, originality is still an important value even within the art institutions where Levine has prospered. Her work and her individuality are celebrat-



ed by contemporary art magazines, books, museums and markets. She made her mark against the cult of individuality by doing something different first. Her act, and her "unoriginal" product as a relic of that act, still gain value by virtue of their uniqueness. While many artists have become bogged down beneath these contradictions, it is within them that Lucy Hogg's work plays. The wounded warriors are not just Hogg's painted commentary on current cultural problems and art historical issues, they are very much Hogg's *paintings*.

Gericault's style is still dimly visible too, to about the same degree as it would be to those of us who cannot visit his paintings in the Louvre, and who know such works only through books or slides. Hogg painted from xerox copies of reproductions; between her original and Gericault's lie two distancing layers. Reminiscent of the crude reproductive effects of xerox machines, Hogg has built up the pictures in little bits of rather jarring colour, each brushstroke sitting on top of the dark underpainting separate and equal. This egalitarian patterning has various effects. It limits the feeling of depth and pictorial space which in turn diminishes the drama of the narrative. The reconstructions are no longer primarily the romantic stories of soldiery which Gericault constructed, but instead another kind of romance — the act of painting.

One of the most important signifiers of expressivity in painting has been the artist's activity made evident on the surface of the work. Hogg's gesture, a meticulous, repetitive stroking, compared to the violent paint flinging of most artists labeled expressionist, appears subdued. Hogg's very act of copying both dispels and rejects the



notion of freedom which has been attached to the various expressionisms. She has clearly absorbed the post-modern understanding of the individual as someone upon whom culture is writing itself. The patterning, combined with colour contrasts which vibrate well beyond tastefulness, and scale larger than domestic comfort, lead to a feeling of psychedelic vertigo, a transcendental sensation of patterned connectedness between elements usually considered separate or opposing, in this case between subject/background, flesh/fabric, painter/painting, original/copy, horse/rider.

Like Levine, Hogg has chosen as her subject an artist who is emblematic of expressivity and romanticism. The connection between these art historical values and patriarchal codes is highlighted in Hogg's work through her choice of images which refer directly within their narratives to male heroism, violence, domination of nature and imperialism. But Hogg's pictures are neither repeating Levine's eviscerating ironic procedure, nor are they appropriations. Instead they are reconstructions, and through the corporal activity of reconstruction they are also *re-expressions*.

*This broadsheet accompanies the exhibition **Wounded Warriors** by Lucy Hogg held at the Teck Gallery, Simon Fraser University, August 23 to September 25, 1993.*