

grunt at a Glance

FALL/WINTER 2006/2007

Installation:

Joseph Kohnke

September 7 – October 21, 2006

Opening: Thursday, September 7th at 8pm

Artist Talk: Saturday, September 9th at 2pm

In conjunction with **Swarm**

grunt gallery

Group Exhibition/Installation:

GIVE HER A FACE

Joi Arcand, Felicia Gay, Chrystal Kruszelnicki

October 20 – November 25, 2006

Opening: Friday, October 20th at 8pm

Artist Talk: Saturday, October 21st at 2pm

grunt gallery

grunt is a non profit society (The Visible Arts Society) run by a board of working artists. Our mandate is to maintain a space accessible to artists and audiences. We focus on work that would otherwise not be seen in Vancouver. Our programming is a mix of emerging and senior artists and a selection of local, national and international work.

grunt's history and programming can be interpreted as a variety of initiatives around evolving concepts of community. Our role has been to act as an intersection between various cultural groups based on aesthetics, medium, or identity. **grunt** also has a long term mandate in the First Nations Contemporary art that is reflected in our programming, our staff and on our board.

grunt gallery

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*Sick and Tired, Installation grunt gallery Feb. 2006,
Adrian Stimson. Photograph: Claude Latour, 2006*

grunt

brunt

welcome

Editorial: Tania Willard, Secwepemc Nation

Noun

brunt: main force of a blow etc; “bore the brunt of the attack” forcefulness, strength, force—physical energy or intensity; “he hit with all the force he could muster”; “it was destroyed by the strength of the gale”; “a government has not the vitality and forcefulness of a living man” 2. The main burden: bore the brunt of the household chores.

Related Words

appulse, bulldozing, bulling, bump, burden, cannon, carambole, carom, clash, collision, concussion, crack-up, crash, crump, crunch, encounter, full force, hammering, impingement, mauling, meeting, onslaught, onus, percussion, ramming, sideswipe, sledgehammering, smash, smash-up, smashing, stress, thrusting, violence, weight, whomp.

So what is brunt magazine?

it is a crack-up sledgehammering smash-up,
a thrusting whomp,
a full force cultural collision,
an art mauling?

Showcasing the artists exhibiting at **grunt** gallery, **brunt** magazine is a complement to the exhibitions and a closer look at the artists themselves, their processes, and the ideas that inspire their work. I have borne the brunt of **brunt** magazine for a few months now, and journeyed with the writers and artists in understanding and discovering the stories of the art and the artist. The stories are here for you to read; they are here in: a percussion of colours
a bulldozing of strength
and a hammering of truth.

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Sick and Tired Installation grunt gallery Feb. 2006,
Adrian Stimson. Photograph: Claude Latour, 2006

Lizard Jones (Mirificus curator) is a Vancouver artist, writer, performer and curator. Her recent work deals with apocalypse, and disability issues.

Hadley and Maxwell live in Vancouver where they recently exhibited a new body of work at the Contemporary Art Gallery entitled Deleted Scenes. They have been living and working together since 1997, learned to snowboard in 2002, co-wrote their Masters’ thesis in 2004, received a VIVA award in 2005, and are envious of painters.

Warren Arcan is a Vancouver based performance artist and writer.

Daina Warren is from the Montana Slavey Cree nation, in Hobbema, Alberta. She is a contemporary artist, curator and an administrator for **grunt** gallery. She graduated ECIAD with a BFA in the visual arts program, and has been curating multidisciplinary arts projects with **grunt** and the local Vancouver Arts community and organizations since 2000.

Todd A. Davis has been working in the Vancouver since 1979 as an artist, curator, writer and administrator within and through many institutions. After eight years as the Executive Director of Open Space, Victoria he has taken the same position with LIVE Biennial of Performance Art, Vancouver.

Kamala Todd is a mother, filmmaker, writer and community planner. She is creator and director of Storyscapes, a community arts project that’s creating opportunities for Aboriginal people to tell their own stories of Vancouver. She is nearing completion of My Urban Eyes, her first personal narrative documentary, and she’s in production for a short video, Indigenous City.

Ryan Mitchell Morrison is a Mig’mag from Listug’uj Quebec. He currently resides in Vancouver BC where he is a musician/video artist by night and Video editor/maker, graphic designer by afternoon. He enjoys long bike rides and walks on the beach. He has no pets.



by Kamala Todd

Jeff Thomas

*The Bear Portraits: FBI, 1994,
gelatin silver print, Jeff Thomas*

Where are the Indians?

He “stood in the silent solitude of the primeval forest” and began to “measure an empty land into the streets of Vancouver.” A plaque in Vancouver’s downtown commemorates land commissioner Hamilton, who surveyed the city’s first streets, erasing indigenous roots. I’m a Metis-Cree in Coast Salish territory, and I’ve grown up surrounded by the stories of dominant culture writ large on the urban landscape.

Other Canadian cities similarly flaunt their colonial histories, concealing their indigenous roots and reflecting little of their vibrant Aboriginal communities.

Canadian cities conceal resonant Aboriginal communities. What does this mean for the more than 50 percent of Aboriginal people who now live in cities? We need to see ourselves reflected. We need to rewrite the myth of empty land and inscribe ourselves back onto the (urbanized) land.

Iroquois photographer Jeff Thomas is doing just that. Born in Buffalo, New York, and now living in Ottawa, Thomas has turned his lens onto his concrete built-up world. His show “A Study of Indian-ness”, at the **grunt** this past January, gets us thinking about the signs of Indian-ness visible in the world around us, what they reveal about the stereotypes and exclusions of Aboriginal people, and the need for self-made images.

talking back

Looking for representations of Indian-ness that non-Aboriginal people had made was a way to call them into question and to say, “We don’t all look like that.” And we have to take into consideration how we see ourselves today.

In the gallery Thomas’s own photographs, self-representations of contemporary Aboriginal people, are placed in active conversation with colonial misrepresentations through the display of notable texts: stoic Indians in Edward Curtis photographs, frightful/noble savages in 19th Century illustrations, brawny Bucks on romance novel covers. By referencing the colonial lens Thomas reminds us of dominant culture’s power to fix its fantasies as reality—and how crucial it is that we, as Aboriginal people, talk back to those images and produce our own.

“We are here. And, in fact, we have always been here. Aboriginal people have always been in cities, and have helped to shape the very foundation of our cities. We’ve just been written out of the story.”

Indians in the city

I think for a lot of Aboriginal people growing up in a city... there’s this real kind of sense of invisibility, because if you don’t look like a particular type of Indian, then people don’t believe that you are.

In his search for Indian-ness in the city, Thomas finds the usual stereotypes, statues of buckskin Indians in urban monuments, cigar

store Indians and Indian faces carved into the doorways of buildings. He works with static images, shaking them out of their bronzed silence to expose the problems with this imagined

past—and reveal how alive and diverse Aboriginal people really are. In his photographs we see contemporary Aboriginal people alongside these statues, enlivening their urban space, and writing themselves into the story. We see Thomas’s son Bear very much at home in his urban environment—very far from the chiseled half-nude warriors of the sculptors’ fantasies, but just as Indian.

we have a place here

Well what do all of these photographs of all these different sites mean? I think for me it’s the stories that go along with each one. And then how do we insert ourselves into that story, because certainly our history has been marginalized and pushed to the border.

We see Thomas’s son Bear very much at home in his urban environment—very far from the chiseled half-nude warriors of the sculptors’ fantasies, but just as Indian.

In one series of photographs Thomas places toy Indian figures in front of city skylines and other urban scenes, exposing and challenging dominant culture’s

incessant desire to fix Indians as these voiceless long-ago figures, and thereby maintaining its hold on shaping and defining public culture and urban life.

Thomas’s photographs of Aboriginal people in the city overwrite the myth that the city is a non-Native place. We can talk back, reinterpret, insert ourselves in all of our diverse identities and experiences. We are here. And, in fact, we have always been here. Aboriginal people have always been in cities, and have helped to shape the very foundation of our cities. We’ve just been written out of the story. Thomas shows us ways we can write ourselves back onto the land and into the narratives of the city. ❧



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A Sick and Tired/Paper Bag Princess,
Installation grant gallery Feb. 2006 Adrian Stimson

by Daina Warren

Terrance Houle & Adrian Stimson

"A Sick and Tired/Paper Bag Princess"

Half of the gallery space is converted into a historical residential school bedroom.

"It [Adrian's installation] is an homage to colonial history; Its elements are three Old Sun Residential School windows, filled with feathers and back lit, an old infirmary bed from the same school with a bison robe folded into a human shape placed on its springs. The bed is illuminated from the top to create a shadow beneath similar to a stretched hide"
– Adrian Stimson, 2006

The whole gallery space is imbued with the very spiritual and heavy presence of the bison robe

In the other half of the space an elementary school desk and chalkboard evoke institutional experience. Dictionaries display colonial phrases heavy with the history of racism.

Terrance Houle and Adrian Stimson—two emerging artists—have grandparents and relatives who have, as they have, experienced the residential school system. It is through the stories of their experiences that this installation of incredible relevance and powerful presence exists.

The Blackfoot Confederacy is made up of the Siksika, Kainai, Pikuni, and Tsu'tina, the three Morley tribes Nakota, Chiniki and Bears Paw, and the Blackfeet in Montana. Adrian Stimson is from the Siksika Nation, and now lives and works in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Terrance Houle is a visual, film & video, and performance artist whose nation is most commonly referred to as the Blood Tribe or Kainai. He is currently living and working in Calgary, Alberta, making films and art. Both artists attended the Alberta College of Art where they met and started discussing the politics of Aboriginal art and their First Nations background.

Adrian was originally working from an abstract painting background; it was after art school that he started exploring new art practices and began working with live performance and installation. Through those new experiences he began delving into the basis of his background and using the new disciplines to illustrate ideas and concepts about identity politics, post colonial issues, and cultural genocide.

For the installation Adrian collected pieces of the institutional furniture from the Old Sun Residential School that was located on his reserve.

"...Old Sun or Natusapi was a chief of the Blackfoot in the late 1800's and a distant relative. My family has told me that he was a respected leader and distrusted the newcomers greatly. He did not want to sign Treaty 7, preferring war to what at the time he



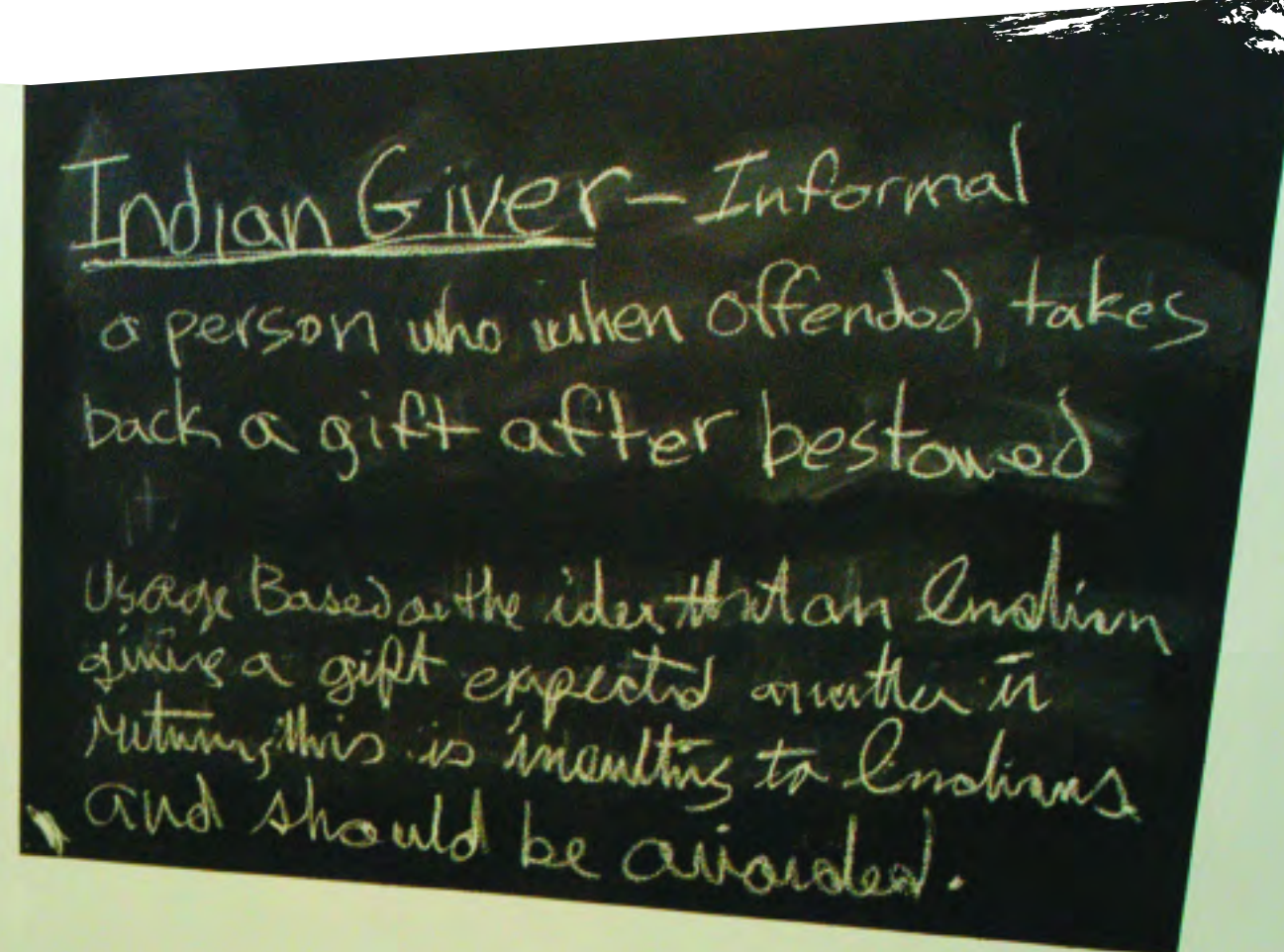
considered the end of our way of life. The Blackfoot Reserve #149, or today called the Siksika Nation, was divided in half for conversion; the east went to the Catholics and the west went to the Anglicans. The school that was built in the west was named Chief Old Sun Residential School. I see the irony that the school was named for him as the institution ensured the end of a way of life for many of his descendants—my family members.” – Adrian Stimson, 2006

In response to Adrian’s installation, Terrance’s half of the installation looks at a more contemporary experience. He places an elementary school desk and chalkboard in the space, creating an allusion to the institutional experience. A paper cast of a young girl sits in the school desk in what appears to be a dejected pose, head leaning on arm, looking down.

Around her are scattered dictionaries that are opened to pages describing the phrase “Indian Giver”. On the chalkboard “Indian Giver” is written in large letters with the dictionary definition underneath.

The whole gallery space is imbued with the very spiritual and heavy presence of the bison robe and the cast of the young girl looking as if she is about to move at any time, creating feelings of distress.

In association with the installation at the **grunt** gallery Terrance and Adrian created a solo performance each, as well as a collaborative piece as part of Margo Kane’s 2006 Talking Stick Festival. The performance work expressed our ability to laugh at ourselves, our histories, our culture, and use jokes or light teasing as a way to heal.



Terrance created a monologue about elementary school comparing his lived Aboriginal experience with the “Indians” he learned about in his school studies. One

such annual event at school was to create Aboriginal Pow-Wow regalia from brown paper grocery bags. Terrance recreates this exercise in

its absurdity and insensitivity. At the end of his performance, he puts on the ill-fitting and ridiculous paper bag regalia, both laughing at himself and laughing back at colonial history.

At the end of his performance, he puts on the ill-fitting and ridiculous paper bag regalia, both laughing at himself and laughing back at colonial history.

In Adrian’s piece “Buffalo Boy” he is a whip-lashing, disco-looking, two-spirited Indian cowboy, doing a monologue about the colonizing of the west.

The third collaborative performance spoofs the film “Brokeback Mountain”.

These performances were the balance to the disturbing visual installation at **grunt**, balancing laughter and trauma, celebrating survival that we—Indigenous people—have witnessed and shared. ■





Sacrartic, acrylic on canvas, Suzo Hickey, 2006

Minimal

by Lizard Jones



Saint Dymphna, mixed media, Persimmon Blackridge, 2006

Mirificus

mi`ri`fi`cus

causing wonder or admiration, wonderful, marvellous, extraordinary, singular, strange

I'll start with the name: mirificus.

It's Latin. I found it on the Internet, in the English/Latin dictionary. I was looking for a name for a group show with Persimmon Blackbridge, Suzo Hickey, and Elaine Savoie that might mean some of the inscrutable wonder that I feel when I see their art. A name that might prepare you for how this art works together.

It doesn't hurt that Latin evokes a cultural association of higher knowledge, of legal truth, religious ritual, and scientific terminology. Overtly, this show referenced the religious inference of Latin, but the other usages hover. I wanted the name to have layers of understanding, like the art does.

Mirificus was about the often literally awesome experience of art pieces resonating with each other, building layers of relationship in a surrounding whole.

At the **grunt**, Mirificus was an intense physical experience, a cataclysm of colour and meaning. As you entered the gallery, to the left and right were walls of art mounted salon style, often three pieces high. Facing you was a triptych like no other: three tall panels, one by each artist. And then, as you moved closer to the walls, complicated narratives emerged.

On the left end of the triptych was Elaine's work "St. Jude, Patron Saint of Lost Causes"—a tightly painted, robed figure with the head of an annoyed chicken, surrounded by Latin chalk writing, perched on bottle caps and shotgun shells, alluding to a personal story of child abuse, alcoholism, Catholicism, and the wild ways of a girl fighting back.

In the middle, "Red Dad", from Persimmon, held away frightening paternal memories behind scratched plexiglas, mixed skeleton and flesh, while three babies insist on life at his feet.

On the right was "Space, Time, and Spacetime", drawing a line of light from earth and rocks to space and stars, through a sacred heart twined with Christmas lights, as Suzo Hickey imagined new life for her son Marlon.



Saint Riel I, Patron Saint of Metis, Elaine Savoie, acrylic on wood, 2006

Mirificus.

Though the work is individual, the exhibit was a collaboration, and being part of the process was an honour.

Mirificus was about the often literally awesome experience of art pieces resonating with each other, building layers of relationship in a surrounding whole.

One might be taken deeper and deeper into one artist's work before taking a reckless leap across medium and subject to weave a thread with someone else. I watched as people walked around the gallery again and again, discovering.

Sometimes connections revealed themselves without asking.

For Mirificus, Persimmon started with family photos and drew out their stories in a series of mixed media wall-mounted sculptures. Tough girls brandish toy guns. Men and women

cradle bottles. Angels fly, boys hide. She says, "As these stories revealed themselves in art, they were not always what I might have expected. They were not about the pain of children as much as the strength. They were not about anger as much as some kind of redemption. The fires are not hell but transformation."

Persimmon's three-dimensional worlds float easily across time; their strength is often an anchor, and sometimes a wing.

Suzo Hickey's work in this show charts some of her journey in the aftermath of the sudden death of her son Marlon, aged 24. He suffered an aortic dissection related to Marfan Syndrome.

Acrylic paint is Suzo's primary medium, but the works in Mirificus build on the surface with wood, wire, photos, plaster, cartoons, and poetry. The starting point of hearts and paint becomes a startling revelation of a story of personal tragedy woven with memory, colour, anger, and grief.

"My paintings for this show are intense devotional art, fueled by shock, anger at the medical system, grief, and an overwhelming belief that Marlon is somewhere, safe and happy. The imagery is borrowed from Catholic iconography, medical texts, Marlon's cartoons, the autopsy report, and my head."

Elaine Savoie starts with paint too, in a style bounded by formal stricture. She embraces and challenges this formalism from the inside to make impossibly heretical iconic objects. Her personal history—descent from the family that built the first Catholic church on Hornby Island, where she still lives—bursts from the work.

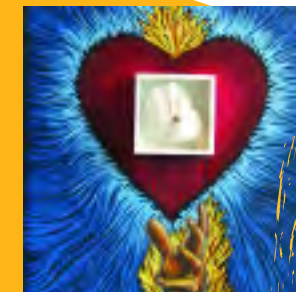
"My icons, while celebrating the richness and beauty of Catholicism, also intend to offer comic relief from the hierarchy, hurt, and shame that accompany this culture. My work incorporates personal symbols, like the small white church, which is the church Louis Riel held siege, and where later my grandmother was baptized.

"Louis Riel was a hero of my grandmother's, and the history she told me when I was young was my first concrete thread to my past and culture. I am still trying to understand what it is to be mixed heritage—a little lost in either world, a bridge to both."

The starting point of hearts and paint becomes a startling revelation of a story of personal tragedy woven with memory, colour, anger, and grief.

Each of these artists explodes the form she has chosen. The subject matter is all wrong—too personal, too historical, too irreverent, too funny. These pieces take a deceptively accessible approach to heavy subject matter, pulling the viewer in easily, then refusing to shy away from difficult things. The result can be joyous, and sometimes heart-stopping. The devotional format becomes a way to look at difficult issues in depth, and acknowledges the profundity of the shadows in each of our lives. Sometimes the religious archetype lies before us in pieces.

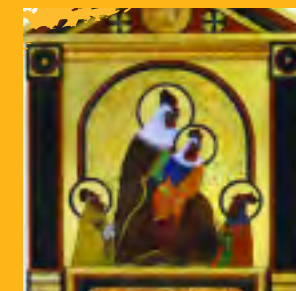
Speaking its own truth, the power of this show—the pieces in it, and the way it was installed—went deeper than style, deeper too than the guns, hearts, family and flames in much of the work. Deeper than the iconography or resistance to it. From three directions, each artist looked at something that art can articulate even if words can't: Shimmering transcendent space. 🍷



Ascension, Suzo Hickey, 2006



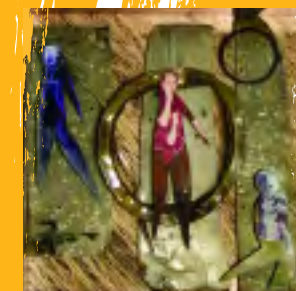
Ascension, Persimmon Blackbridge, 2006



Divine Women, Elaine Savoie, 2006



Fault Lines (detail), Suzo Hickey, 2006



3 children, Persimmon Blackbridge, 2006



Viva Dali, mixed media on canvas, 90x60 inches, Sadko Hadzihasanovic, 2005

Authorship Set Adrift in Painting

It feels violent, or at least presumptuous, to attempt to contextualize works of art that go to great lengths neither to assert a primacy of figure over ground in painting, nor to set forth a specific idea against a discourse. If it weren't for a very particular syntax in the choice of materials upon which to paint and objects to figure or render, we might be inclined to drown out the call of these works and instead write biographies or situate Geoff Carter and Sadko Hadzihasanovic historically in regional or international painting traditions—et voila! But there is a primacy of the image operating in these works that languishes in the heat of

the rigours of art discourse. Historicity hangs over the work in a teasing manner, poking fun at interpretation that tries to glue together a set of facts as if it were enough to conjure the spirit, to provide fertile soil, to affix photo-sensitive paste to a film, or to offer up the womb in which the artwork is born. We would prefer our figurative reading here to be more pornographic.

These artists evoke histories without concern for historical facts. Citations of advertising images, caricatures of people, of frigates, of gestures go right down to the material choices of raw canvas, recycled wood panels, wallpaper, collage, and montage. As Sontag notes in regard to Camp: “Any sensibility is almost, but not quite ineffable. Any sensibility that can be crammed into the mold of a system, or handled with the rough tools of proof, is no longer a sensibility at all. It has hardened into an idea...” Although one may be tempted to declare that these works display certain traits such as a seriousness, which is also vital to “Camp”, the notion is too heroic for these tentative, perhaps even timid works. A meandering sensibility navigates the materiality of these works, leaving the images open toward, but shy of, ideas; citations are recycled in an authorial fatigue.

There is a tenuous relation to authority, particularly in the case of Carter’s works. The grounds are arrived at, not built. An old panel, previously worked over with heavy paint, is resurfaced, or trans-grounded, with the awkward affixing of an off-cut piece of wallpaper. The ready-made, mass-produced, printed surface of decorative botanicals is cross-sectioned by an ad hoc system of lines that playfully fleshes out the figure of Victorian sea-frigates. These both dominate the available space of the re-gifted picture plane and, in spite of the wind burgeoning the sails, they become trapped, frozen, imprisoned therein.

But there is another set of movements in Carter’s paintings that gathers the aforementioned elements and draws out an image. Each piece comes together in the tensions between the bricolage of the substrates—recycled paintings, collage elements, drawings of faces, and appropriated wallpapers—and the rigid framing of the sea-frigates that, by virtue of their sharp profile, imply an

#5 – Office, caseine and ink on wallpaper on panels, 16"x20", Geoff Carter, 2006



Geoff Carter & Sadko Hadzihasanovic

by Hadley & Maxwell



#11 – Den, caseine and ink on wallpaper on panels, 16"x20", Geoff Carter, 2006

absent horizon in the endless vertical grid of the repeated decoration. We are presented a provisional ground with a resemblance of a ship that combines to make an image of trade—everywhere and nowhere at once. Frigates that made a world of trade possible are now horribly trapped—nowhere else to adventure, nowhere left to bring home something unseen, exotic, or bizarre from distant shores. This network of relations encourages a proliferation of interpretations.

Carter's ships, like his portraits, are resemblances inasmuch as they are inhabited by dissimilarity. As with his earlier car series, he looked for a subject that was familiar but that he didn't know how to draw. Anything would do in order to have material for an image—something generic, iconic, where the difference between the model and the drawing that imagines it is palpable.

Frigates that made a world of trade possible are now horribly trapped—nowhere else to adventure, nowhere left to bring home something unseen, exotic, or bizarre from distant shores.

Hadzihasanovic's resemblances differ from Carter's. His models are photographic and they hover like disrespected authorities accusing the incomplete renderings of dissimilarity. This sets up a rebellious refusal of authority, of mastery, which is present and seems possible but is never assertively claimed. In this case the artist challenges the authority of a symbolic order, mis-spelling "Diary" ice-cream to produce an abbreviated "Ceci n'est pas une pipe," thus dropping representation in favour of resemblance and shrugging off discursive interpretation. "I don't want to be deep in meaning," says Hadzihasanovic, "There are many smaller stories circulating around the main story and so you have to pay close attention to the surface." Rather than resisting interpretation, this work is indifferent to it. The painting's dominant logic is that its heterogeneous resemblances are held together visually on a shared ground, so inasmuch as the collection calls us to make a continuity of its contiguities, it also never affirms or denies our probing. Each image refuses to make an order of significations but is nonetheless sensible.

Hadzihasanovic, in contrast to Carter's claustrophobic occupation of spaces, has painted on an expanse of raw canvas, drifting over the surface like a day-tripper in a dinghy, dropping renderings off to see if they sink or float. The experience of viewing these works is not unlike noticing the way our eyes move, perhaps

against our will, over a sea of products at London Drugs, especially the impulse-items by the cash register where celebrity faces fight for attention with Nestle products. A rope of interpretive reasoning may link the painted resemblances together but it hovers below the surface, allowing the images to drift lackadaisically in a field of canvas. When Robert Enright asked Hadzihasanovic why he painted a banana on a particular work, the artist replied, "It was just a visual reason. I needed to put it in to hold the painting together." Visual reasoning is the dominant sensibility at work, as the viewer's eye floats like another piece of jetsam in the flow over the painting's surface.

The experience of viewing these works is not unlike noticing the way our eyes move, perhaps against our will, over a sea of products at London Drugs, especially the impulse items by the cash register where celebrity faces fight for attention with Nestle products.

We are faced with one artist marooned and the other drifting, both of them having abandoned the authority of their authorial positions. Subjected to the processes of painting, these artists barely survive. They position their marks on the grounds of somewhere and nowhere, drawing just enough subject matter from the world of resemblances to build a couple of bailing buckets, to keep painting afloat. What is fascinating are the movements that gather together these images, altogether different in the case of each artist, yet leaving us wondering at the dissimilarities of resemblances that painting alone can employ.



Trans Food Party, mixed media and collage on unstretched canvas, approx. 90" x 60", Sadko Hadzihasanovic, 2005



Klein Performance, Johannes Zits, grunt gallery, May 19th, 2006



Klein Performance, Johannes Zits, grunt gallery, May 19th, 2006

by Warren Arcan

Johannes Zits

Body Prints

“Everything had broken down and new things had to be made out of the pieces. Collage was like an image of the revolution within me—not as it was but as it might have been.”
– Kurt Schwitters

Johannes Zits (JZ) brings to the **grunt** another in his series of international performances called “Body Prints.”

As people enter the gallery a model is seen sitting and browsing through a collection of magazines (interior design, men’s health, fashion, porn and others), occasionally tearing out a page and setting it in a pile. People with video cameras roam about and their live feeds are projected on a wall through a video projector. A VJ mixes video images while a DJ spins; the people drink and settle in for the performance. The model disrobes, and is instructed to browse through the pile of magazines. One by one, a succession of models present their chosen images to JZ. As they do, he paints the front of their bodies (chest to knees including the genitals) with acrylic glue. JZ is semi-nude as well (“Never

ask anybody to do anything you wouldn’t do yourself”) as he interacts with them, talking and laughing, creating a bubble of intimacy, a private space within the public. He then presses them against prepared canvas (toes to the wall first) to transfer the glue: “Body Print.”

The models leave for the shower at the back of the gallery. One of the live feeds includes a shower cam and the showering model becomes part of the VJ’s mix. JZ improvises a collage with the images the models selected, affixing them to the body print. The models all undergo this process. Lastly, one of the models paints JZ. He presses himself against the canvas and applies his own choice of collage material. After JZ showers, he finishes by tearing the stray pieces of paper to conform to the shape left by the model: a row of squashed shapes, irregular rounded forms that evoke wetness, filled in with images from mass media. The projection, the collages, the DJ, and the gallery audience are videotaped and an edited version of the performance will be projected as part of the installation.

JZ’s interests include collage, intimacy, identity and meaning-making; he examines and provokes the borders between the public and the private, creating instabilities and spaces for questioning.

The collage method reflects and utilizes mass media images in gestures of violence: tearing, breaking, rupture, and fracture, remodelling, reconstruction, representation, and re-representation. In “Body Prints”, JZ shows breakage and fracture lines that are already in the images as images of desired and desirable selves. Collage highlights the cheapness of mass media: The model browses in the magazine environment, looking for images that can speak for his identity and that can represent him for the purposes of JZ’s re-representations. The images are found, then ripped from their context and transformed under the “Body Prints” process.

JZ’s interests include collage, intimacy, identity and meaning-making; he examines and provokes the borders between the public and the private, creating instabilities and spaces for questioning.

The images chosen by the models are contained within an image of their bodies. The images are a dialogue with mass media. From across the room, we take in the series of Body Prints; the hundreds of small choices made by the models and JZ are resolved in the irregular

yet human forms that have about them a sense of care and compassion.

When desire is defined as lack, this

is a method of hijacking desire itself: desire is never fulfilled, never satisfied; it’s an infinite consumption or hunger. But desire is more than this infinite failure: it is productive. It creates relations and exchanges and is inexhaustive. So, I observe in JZ’s process a working at freeing desire and play: grade school glue and pictures, being messy and having fun. The DJ plays, the video plays, thoughts play over our face, JZ plays. 📺

The following pages preview three web sites produced through support from Heritage Canada Gateway Project.

To view sites, log on through www.grunt.bc.ca.

Canada

First Visions

Traveling on Our Breath

by Daina Warren

The world we carry around in our heads is a world that is connected to experiences, information, words, auditory & sensory stimulants, visual and emotional thoughts. The information that is held within ourselves gives us lessons on living, the patterning of our lives, our people, our communities—each person carrying a story that is held in each memory or experience—creating a communication web between the individual and the collective. Through these lines of connection we relay information, which can change with each retelling or narrative, adapting meaning to a specific situation.

This curatorial project looks at a survey of exhibitions by Kerriann Cardinal, Cheli Nighttraveller, David Neel, Keith Langergraber, and Sammy Sammy (aka George dePape) and also features a creative writing piece from Peter Morin. This overview of performance and exhibition works has taken place throughout the history of **grunt** gallery's programming, projects that exemplify contemporary art practices using story or narrative information to create stimulating visual and performance art pieces. This online project is also a collection of works from Native artists that base the work on Aboriginal stories and how story directs First Nations culture and life experience whether it is determined through traditional or contemporary tales. These projects are then contrasted with those art processes of not only First Nations artists, but also with the urban and non-Native communities that carry information through an oral or visual process. In passing on information of events and experiences, each artist chooses to tell their story in largely distinct ways by touching on various aspects of human experience. ■

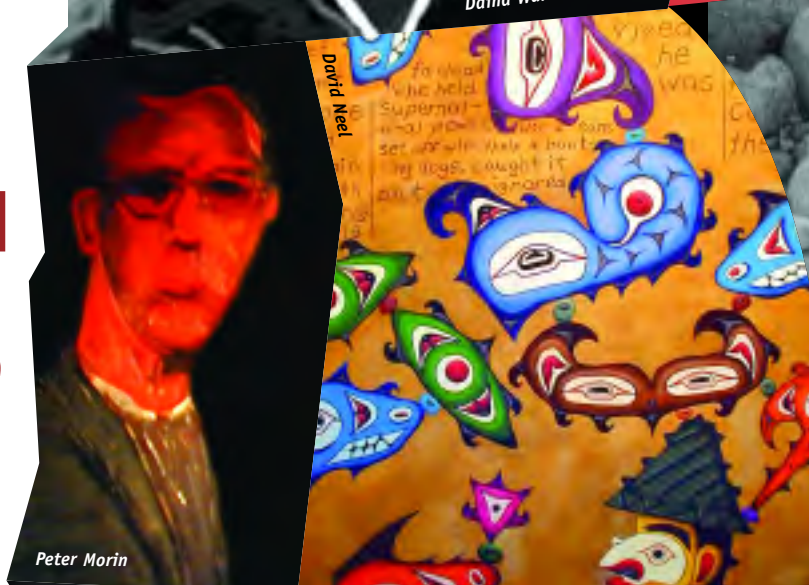
grunt gallery Orbital Curatorial



Daina Warren



Keith Langergraber



David Neel

Peter Morin



Kerriann Cardinal
(photo documented by Daina Warren)



Cheli Nighttraveller



Sammy Sammy (photo documented by Garry Ross)



First Visions

Guts by Archer Pechawis

Performance is not for the faint of heart. Performance Art intensifies this truism: it takes guts to be a performance artist. Perhaps the most marginalized art form, Performance Art attracts an odd collection of rebels, misfits and geniuses, who act as both viewer and practitioner (it is commonly observed that the demographic constitution of a “performance art crowd” or audience are other performance artists).

Preaching to the converted? More like choir practice. So why bother? There’s no money in it, and even less chance of becoming “famous”.

Being an Indian is not for the faint of heart either. “First Nations Performance Artist” is a singular category: we are studying a rare breed. Native performance artists are messengers of truth unencumbered by commercial considerations of form or content—they lay it out bare, take it or leave it. In this process of frank examination moments of transcendent beauty and truth occur.

This site showcases the work of three female First Nations artists: Reona Brass, Delores Dallas and Cheryl L’Hirondelle. Aesthetically these artists share little in common, yet all three mine the same earth: a point of view from Canada’s most oppressed class, the perspective of a woman who is unafraid of her own voice and unconcerned with the reactions of those who hear it.

“Guts” is a celebration of three artists united by race, gender and medium. It is my sincere desire to see their work disseminated as broadly as possible, and it is my hope that young Aboriginal women and men will find the inspiration here and in the rest of the First Visions site to delve into the world of art production.

I would like to extend my thanks to Glenn Alteen, **grunt** gallery and Heritage Canada for the opportunity to showcase the work of these remarkable women. ❖

All my relations,
Archer Pechawis
Spring 2006

Footnotes

1. The term “apple” is a dire insult in Indian country, denoting a person that is “red on the outside and white on the inside”. 2. Ahasiw Maskegon-Iskwew: “waynohtēw and the āpihtawikosisān Infiltration of Deep Structure”, Caught in the Act edited by Johanna Householder and Tanya Mars. 3. Candice Hopkins: “Interventions in Traditional Territories: ‘Cistemaw Iyiniw Ohci’ A Performance by Cheryl L’Hirondelle”: e-misférica – http://hemisphericinstitute.org/journal/2_1/hopkins.html

Burn, Reona Brass

ekayapahkaci, Cheryl L’Hirondelle

Grandmother Drum, Dolores Dallas

Lady H, Dolores Dallas

awa ka-amaciwet piwapisko waciya/climbing the iron mountains, Cheryl L’Hirondelle

Belonging, Reona Brass

Two Worlds
by Tania Willard

First Visions

My great grandfather was a half-breed. He was also one of the few in his day who still lived in a traditional winter home and trained for power. He always said he lived in “Two Worlds”—the white one and the Indian one. Indians who make art, live in the city, or who are mixed blood live here too—in contradiction, in parallel, in spite of, and in between.

Two Worlds is about showing the beauty, the anger, the confusion and the protest of living in between these two worlds. We live in worlds occupied by spirits and remembering, by McDonald’s and television, by our ancestors’ bones and popular culture. What we take with us and what we leave behind are our survival—our interpretation of this world where our home reservations are steeped in poverty yet the city is alive in wealth, where we crave the influence of cities, diversity and opportunity but we sacrifice our homes, our cultures, and our languages to survive. This work is as much about reclaiming as it is about loss. In protest to this pressure we express ourselves through our ancestors’ ways, exploring today’s issues.

Sacrifice is part of our cultures, part of our way of maintaining balance in our worlds. Living in these two worlds we are products of sacrifice and survival, we negotiate sacrifice and survival in our daily lives. The artists in this collection all evoke this balance, this tension—sacrifice and survival in their work. Lori Blondeau’s performance gorging on McDonald’s hamburgers while berries are pounded and fish are gutted as cinema backdrop is a painfully beautiful experience of these two worlds. ■

Buffalo Soldiers, moose/caribou hair tufting and beadwork, Judy Chartrand



Metis Soup Cans, ceramics, Judy Chartrand



Cow Girl, Lori Blondeau



2 Worlds

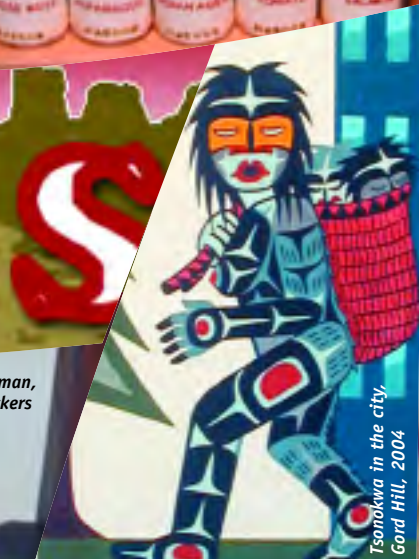
Paper Bag Princess, Terrence Houle



Tahltan Forever, Peter Morin



Kokanee Woman, Charlene Vickers

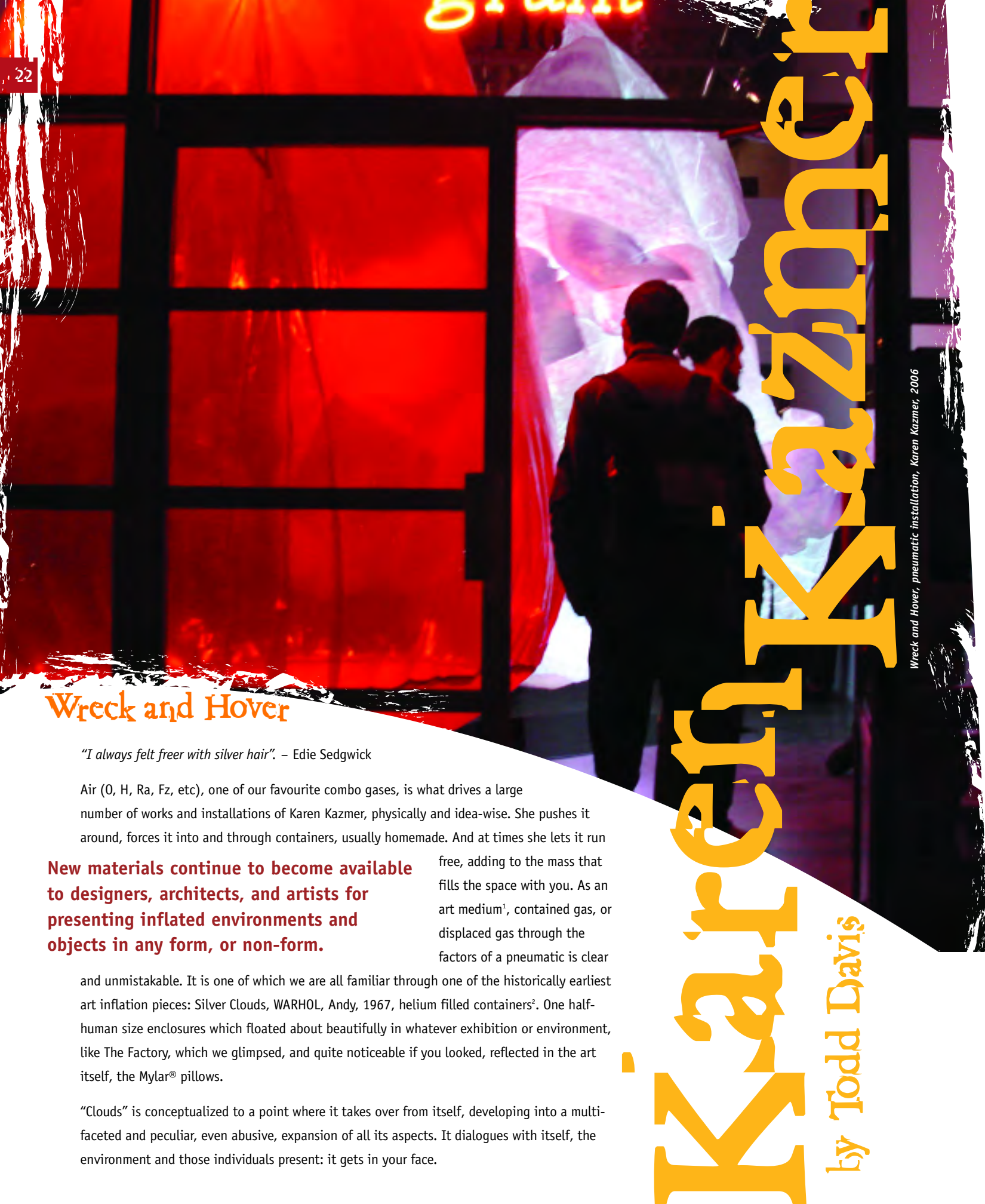


Mask Performance, Skeena Reece, grunt gallery, 2004



500 years of Indigenous Resistance, Gord Hill, 2004





Wreck and Hover

“I always felt freer with silver hair”. – Edie Sedgwick

New materials continue to become available to designers, architects, and artists for presenting inflated environments and objects in any form, or non-form.

free, adding to the mass that fills the space with you. As an art medium¹, contained gas, or displaced gas through the factors of a pneumatic is clear

and unmistakable. It is one of which we are all familiar through one of the historically earliest art inflation pieces: Silver Clouds, WARHOL, Andy, 1967, helium filled containers². One half-human size enclosures which floated about beautifully in whatever exhibition or environment, like The Factory, which we glimpsed, and quite noticeable if you looked, reflected in the art itself, the Mylar® pillows.

“Clouds” is conceptualized to a point where it takes over from itself, developing into a multi-faceted and peculiar, even abusive, expansion of all its aspects. It dialogues with itself, the environment and those individuals present: it gets in your face.

Wreck and Hover, pneumatic installation, Karen Kazmer, 2006

by Todd Davis

Edie’s sister: *“That pillow thing was always one of Edie’s faves. She thought it was cool; I saw it and said, ‘Rad!’ I asked Edie once if she could get Mr. W to make me a purse outta that stuff. He never did.”*

Other artworks utilizing gas, helium, hydrogen, oxygen, neon, radon, krypton, etc. can create sculpture, environments, displacement (sound, pneumatics), light and its remnants (x-rays, neon), art, architecture, furniture and clothing. New materials are fabulous for presenting inflated environments in any form, or non-form, imaginable in almost any colour one desires, in any size. You can cover it with an image through print and, now, projection.

The 1950s saw the world’s service sector outgrow that of manufacturing, developing “R & D” systems unsurpassed in human nature. These “laboratories” were supported by manufacturing which ringed the Great Lakes regions of Canada and the U.S. that had been built originally for the WWII “machine”. Among those that dealt in rubber and plastics were Firestone, Goodyear and subsidiaries, Corning with fiberglass® and plexiglass® among many other plastics, 3M (Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing), DOW Chemical and the über corporation—DuPont 3—creating phenomenal materials and services which became available to everyone.

Karen Kazmer grew up in this environment in the Midwest of the U.S. and Canada. She works from this R&D p.o.v. in materials and ideology, seeking concepts like “interstitial space” or multiple “transition or translation factors”: gas to liquid to light as an example. A laboratory environment can even become the installation, sometimes developing a “Frankensteinian” feel, with maybe a chair provided for your comfort and pleasure so that you can experience another favorite of Kazmer: Time. Much can be said about time; we all have our viewpoint. The artist utilizes her systems for providing the viewer an awareness of demarcated time.

Kazmer typically works with form as well, sometimes recognizable as shelter, sometimes a generic such as a bladder or a tube. Large amorphous shapes will enter the fray and the work starts then to demarcate its own space. Many times the materials she chooses to work with are identifiable because they are pre-manufactured. But, we will also witness those military complex materials, overbuilt to specifications that are

As viewers, we move through created environments in a continuous osmotic exchange with the artistic expressions of Kazmer.

demanding by the industrial environments creating ambiguous characteristics in the work.

Edie’s sister: *“Edie was so gorgeous in silver. Silver boots, silver hats and matching skirts. Silver earrings. Half her jewellery was silver. She even had silver lipstick to go with the silver mascara and silver hair. Mr. W called her ‘The Silver Girl’. Every time. All the time. She became it.”*

The German artist Hans Hemmert is another whose work utilizes materials that border on the invasive, that present shifting characteristics of humour, discomfort, even peril, which the artist pushes by including himself inside the inflatable skin to participate in everyday tasks such as entertaining the baby in play, riding a motorized scooter or driving to work as the skin is manipulated conceptually through its physical capabilities. The titles are provided in the endnotes and inform the attitudes of another generation that works with Fluxus tenets.⁴

Fluxus does not necessarily describe a specific style of art, but relates more to the attitude with which the work is conceived and executed. It continually crosses over and through most media and utilizes many aspects of the art vernacular.⁵ Kazmer interacts with her materials with the same respect and deviousness, and the same needs. If the need is necessary, she draws on the multitude of aspects inherent in materials, moving between somber and odd to magpie-intense, covering all corners.

Edie’s sister: *“Edie was more than Edie”* ❧

NOTES

1. Kuoni, Carol. *Thin Skin: The Fickle Nature of Bubbles, Spheres and Inflatable Structures*. 2002. Essays by Barbara Clausen and Carin Kuoni, with a text by Donald Barthelme, pages 2-7.
2. Although a very strong argument should be directed towards the second and third, quickly successive waves of French balloonists due to MONTGOLFIER and the initial designs of his early design of inflatables in the 17thc. Most certainly, I consider the morphing of the balloon itself through its imagery stages as art through design.
3. First exhibition of non-functional inflatable art objects was “Air Art”, a Willoughby Sharp curated exhibition in Philadelphia at the Arts Council galleries in late 1967, which included works by L. Levine, Slip Cover II; H. Haacke, Sky Line; A. Warhol, Silver Clouds. This coincided with an inflatable object d’art exhibit, March of 1968, mounted by the French student architects J. Aubert, J.P. Jungmann, and A. Stinco, who were founding members of the Utopie Groupe just prior to the French student revolt.
4. Phenomenology is the school of philosophy that claims to begin its analysis of existence with a careful study of human experience. Its founder, Edmund Husserl, and its most famous exponent, Martin Heidegger, laid its groundwork with studies of the epistemological foundations of science and the nature of “being”. Gaston Bachelard applies their methods to architecture, basing his analysis not on purported origins—as was the trend in Enlightenment concerning thought about architecture—but on a lived experience of architecture. Bachelard, Gaston. *La Poétique de l’espace*. 1958. foreward, English translation.
5. Fluxus artists I have followed over the years include Yoko Ono [Japanese-born Internationalist, musician and performance, born in 1933] and Nam June Paik [Korean-born composer, musician, video, who resided in America, 1932-2006] originally from the Far East. I also include Marcel Broodthaers [Belgian, 1924-1976,] originally a poet who decided one day to bury all of his printed word at the seashore and then moved over to objet d’art, and serene installations, and a friend of Pierro Manzoni, [Italian 1933-1963] whose work includes *Artist’s Breath* (1960, Balloon, wood and lead seals, 35 x 180 x 185 mm). When I first saw this work in print, it surprised me, because it seemed such a slight, almost invisible thing. Manzoni had monumentalized the very fundamental act of breathing, annexing it as art.

Maurice Spira

peeing under the Stars

Maurice Spira's art and inspiration

Born in the county of Kent, England in 1944, Maurice Spira drew and “scribbled like most kids do” at a very early age. By the age of 14 he was plucked out of Secondary Modern school to enter an art school where he was introduced to typography, painting, and all the printing mediums—silkscreen, lithography, etching, and wood engraving—forming the creative scaffolding for the rest of his life in art.

A friendship he developed with school mate Dick Taylor, early bassist for the Rolling Stones and the founder of the Psychedelic Rock group “The Pretty Things”, would turn him on to new types of music from American Blues such as Delta Blues, Little Richard, and Leadbelly. Maurice would watch early Rolling Stones shows, which developed his taste for countercultural elements. Also during this time, Maurice opened up to the canonical Beat Generation authors William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Henry Miller, and other work strongly influencing the cultural transformations of the ‘60s.

I got really caught up in all the activities between, say '67 to '74...There was art, revolution and lots of drugs

Fresh out of art school with portfolio in hand, Maurice hit the streets for work at design firms, eventually landing work “here and there along the way” around London. By ‘66 he moved to Montreal. After a few false starts in different fields such as the business world as guided by his brother-in-law, he found himself doing drawings for window displays for women’s department stores around town. Later, his big breakthrough came when he answered an ad for a silkscreen print shop call Handcraft Publishing. He quickly befriended the owners with whom he shared a rapport on independent political views, countercultural art aesthetics, and a bohemian lifestyle. “I got really caught up in all the activities between, say ‘67 to ‘74...There was art, revolution and lots of drugs, like LSD and hashish, which was big on me.”



By ‘75, he came out to the West Coast and during this time he started to take print-making more seriously. Maurice eventually moved to the Sunshine Coast in a humble cabin by the beach where he presently lives.

“I think of my paintings as rooted in drawing...I’m not really ever producing anything that might be termed as naturalism or realism...I’m not aiming at much of a polish. I want an expressive, somewhat rougher painterly manner.”

To describe Maurice Spira’s work and only draw comparisons to surrealist Salvador Dali, or the expressionist hand of Otto Dix, is to look only at the surface style and not the aesthetic structure within. But looking more closely at his painting, you’ll find the same rawness and “drawing from the inside out” that you can find in the work of Philip



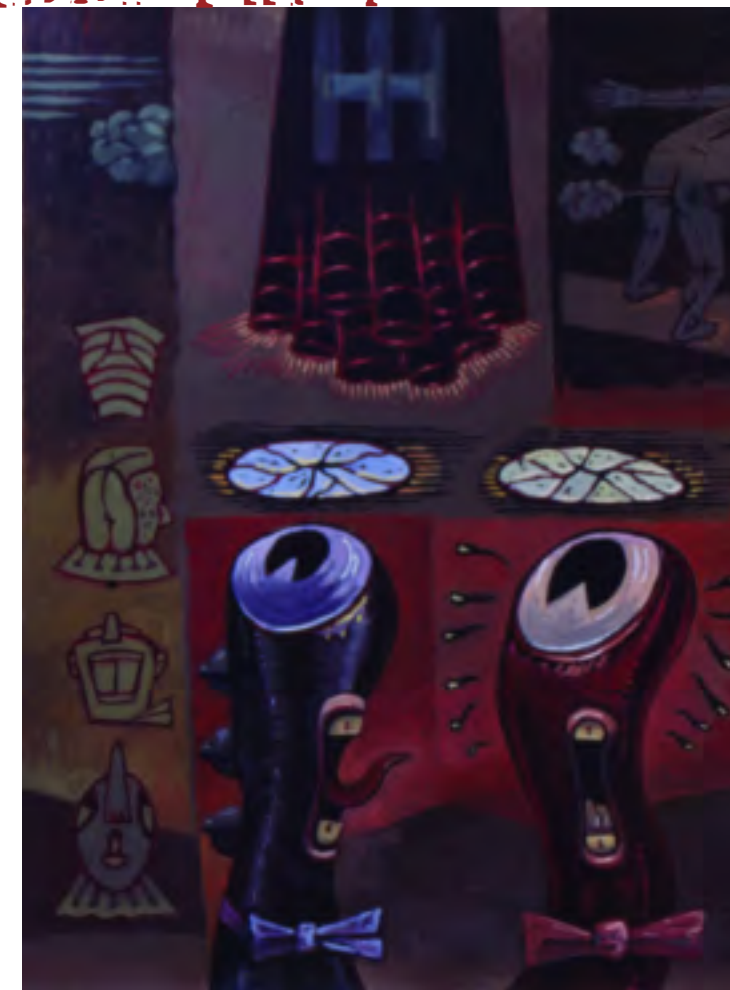
Guston’s later work such as the “Head” series, or the caricatures of the “Old Dick” Nixon works.

Maurice considers his work to have an ambiguity for the viewer. Much of it comes out when I ask him about his investigations into the human body and the human condition:

“It comes from my fascination with the natural world. I’ve done many studies of insects and nature landscapes.”

Probing further reveals how much of his process involves drawing inspiration from his “Idea books”, a series of sketchbooks filled with “drawings and scribbles in a stream of consciousness approach. They certainly reveal a lot of dark and turgid material in me that I just allow to come out.” Through these “scribbles” Maurice will

by Ryan Mitchell Morrison



Maquerade, triptych 50" x 116", Maurice Spira, 2005

“perceive a value in them and develop it further into these paintings.”

Much of his work reveals this process to be the key to understanding and experiencing his art. Through his inward investigations and outward observations of our world, he

manages to bring us closer to the personal truths of his imagination and conjure wonder in everyday objects.

Maurice has been prolifically creating artworks in diverse mediums from sculptural masks to linoleum prints. He finds all the inspiration he needs, nestled in the Pacific North Western Forest by the ocean.

mr rmm

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