

The Drawers - Headbones Gallery

Contemporary Drawing, Sculpture and Works on Paper

Headbones Anthology
2009

Commentaries by Julie Oakes
or otherwise acknowledged

RICH FOG



Micro Publishing
Toronto, 2009

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Layout and Design, Richard Fogarty

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ISBN: 978-1-926605-25-8

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Headbones Gallery, The Drawers - 2009

Contemporary Drawing, Sculpture and Works on Paper

A gallery, much like a child, fleshes out with time. The bones grow stronger to support the growth. The mind develops to encompass new concepts and abilities. The fledgling change as the energy matures to become more of a relatable entity. Conversations ensue. Mutual goals are formed as the vision of the gallerist changes in sync with the body of artists. Headbones Gallery was primarily concentrating on contemporary drawings and works on paper. Beginning anew in Toronto, after a hiatus in New York and the original Headbones Gallery's sojourn in BC before that, this model enabled an inclusion and exploration of works available as we learned of new artists and were able to introduce them through our scheduling of primarily group shows.

When NeoPriest came into being with the Headbones exhibition identifying the trend towards New Pop Realism Intellectually Engaged in Story Telling, we expanded to include the more substantial art works of the artists included within this group. Each artist from NeoPriest will have been featured in a solo, duo or trio exhibition by the end of the season. From this acceptance of paintings, sculptures and performance work, other tangential artists, core to the historical scheduling began to appear more often in the theme exhibitions – the Meraji's, father Mahmoud and son Mehrad, Christian Bernard Singer, Charles Bronson, Donna Kriekle, Ortansa Moraru and Robin Tewes from New York. The third abstract exhibition brought new artists forward as some from the first exhibitions showed new work – Heidi Thompson, Steve Rockwell and Khaled Mansur. With the Miniature show we were able to include a lot of works - because they were so tiny of course – so that Daniel Hanequand, Katia Santibanez and Ruth Waldman who have shown with Headbones before, were given more attention. Two drawing performances by Ram Samocha and Aleks Bartosik brought the energy up and turned gallery into studio.

Headbones Gallery showed at TIAF and ventured into the global art market with Art Now, Miami and the Bridge Art Fair, New York. The Cross Country Tour was once again met with eagerness as it presented the travelling drawer across Canada, introducing the works of Charles Bronson (*Prison Drawings*) and a selection from NeoPriest. The summer was hot as the Terrace Mountain Fire was fought from in front of our summer studio while in Headbones Gallery, Toronto, our resident artist, film maker Sepp Brudermann and his assistant, Anabel Rodriguez Rios, recruited for Brudermann's documentary film *The ARK Experiment*.

The original inclusive mandate that Headbones Gallery proposed when it opened in Toronto, however, remained in tact, the flat files working as intended with works of the artists featured within the years still accessible to collectors. The Paper Salon gave a historical overview of the works held within the drawers and was a great exhibition of the diversity and excellence of the flat file holdings while Scott Ellis' recent work pulsed to the syncopated beat of RX videos. Congratulations to Ashley Johnson (2008) and Mahmoud Meraji (2009) for receiving Headbones Awards!

The 2008 Headbones Award Winner - Ashley Johnson

The annual Headbones Award, created by the previous year's winner, is a unique cast bronze sculpture generously co-sponsored by Artcast Inc. All of the artists who have been featured at in a Headbones Gallery exhibition is called upon to select their three favorite artists from the year's exhibition schedule. The artist with the most nominations receives the award. The 2008 Headbones Award was announced at 8PM during the opening reception of The Dark Side and Snow Saturday, January 3, 2009.

Congratulations to Ashley Johnson for receiving the most-votes-by peers and being selected the 2008 Headbones Award recipient.



2008 Headbones Award - Cast bronze created by Srdjan Segan, 7.5x1.5x1.3 inches

The Dark Side and Snow, January 3 - February 11, 2009

As the depth of winter plays havoc with our perceptions, Headbones Gallery serves it right back with *The Dark Side*. This exhibition of drawings and works on paper, along with sculpture by John Farrugia, features artists working primarily in black & white with macabre subject matter augmenting the brew.

The annual 2008 Headbones Award, made by last year's winner, Srdjan Segan, the 2008 Headbones Award is a unique cast bronze sculpture, sponsored by Artcast Inc. The winner is announced at 8PM during the opening reception on Saturday, January 3, 2009.



The Dark Side & Snow - Headbones Gallery

The Dark Side and Snow

On the winter solstice when the day is the darkest, the mind can follow suit and then the transition begins to happen. Having worked through the darkness, the light begins to dawn and hope is renewed. But it is only through the perception of the dark and the relative coming to the light that the epiphany can occur.

Both philosophy and religion has acknowledged the dark side. In some instances the dark side is associated with evil as in the Christian hell of fire and brimstone. The religions that recognise the existence of destruction as a part of the cycle of life incorporate maleficent deities (such as the Buddhist Mahakala) as protectors of the good or avengers of the righteous. The life giving properties of the sun and light exist both metaphorically and allegorically in most religions, with the ways of acknowledging these forces taken to greater or lesser fundamental extremes.

Philosophers as well have pondered the effects of darkness, working the acknowledgement of the dark force into holistic recognition or as with the more radical philosophers such as Machiavelli, Heidegger, Nietzsche, or Foucault; building a case for the necessity of knowing The Dark One in order to attain a realistic perception of life.

The modern dilemma has created a new range of dark sides and Headbones Gallery is exploring just a few. And in order to justify and balance the lessening of the light, it has also brought forth a curatorial analogy to the winter existence we know in Canada. Snow is offered as a contrast for the dark; snow with the capacity to reflect the light from a darkened sky. Nancy E. Watt's *Snow Prints* with their recognisable winter subject matter—the shape of snowshoes, the impressions of birds' feet in snow, the wide arcs of plough prints or pathways, refresh the white walls where black currently blooms. Watt's practice, based in abstraction, brings forth pristine configurations derived from the natural world and transforms them into formalist stylised minimalism. With Bauhaus concentration of imagery into the smallest possible amount of variables, the essence of snow yielding to the marks of the animal world is a reminder of the varying ecological footprints upon the earth. The bare feet of the bird stands in contrast to the snowshoes upon which man spreads his weight or the even heavier pathways pressed into the soft pliable snow by industrialisation.

Cut paper silhouettes by Jack Butler loom large. Grace Jones leans forward with her eyes looking back, the white cut-outs perfectly defining her glance. The surface is a patch work of rusty images on black Japanese paper. The image, super-sized but with the intrinsic fragility of



Jack Butler, *Grace Jones* - 1988, Gouache Soaked Okawara Paper, 138x160 inches

paper is surprisingly durable, pinned to the wall with silver pins like the no-longer-fluttering wings of a dead butterfly. That Grace Jones, whose blue-black, unisex image became as famous as her vocals, should reign in splendour on the walls of Headbones Gallery during the inauguration of the first black American president, is a poignant example of art's piercing prescience.

Paris Haircut, struts dark humour with eyes and mouth cut from the hair on the back of a male head like a second bristly visage dramatically poised as resilient as hip-ness. The image was originally a by-product of the beauty business. Butler has creatively elevated the commercial advertisement with a new and impressive magnitude that manages to still retain a lacy and airy quality as the white wall is seen through the snippets.

Butler has a history of exploration in the nether realms. His imaging of the development of sex in the embryological and fetal stages broke ground for medicine and science as he made visual the growth of genitalia, hitherto unseen. The initial identification as to male or female was found to be not as black and white as it was believed to be. By shining the light of seeing upon the dark and undiscovered, he advanced man's knowledge of his humanity. He has also known the dark side in his forays into the land of the midnight sun. One of the pioneers for the advancement of the awareness of Inuit art, he has furthered the flowering of the art of indigenous peoples.

From dark matt shadow boxes, suspended by surgical clips, chains, pins and needles, Scott Jensen's sensitive graphite drawings bring a Goth flavour of celebrated horror. Skulls, gnashing teeth, guns, knives, razor blades and bullets tell smudgy stories of dungeons and punishments. Jensen has tales to tell, having lived through a shooting and a car accident where he was run over and then flung over a meridian and hit by a second car coming from the opposite direction. He has a bouncer's memories of evening evictions and in stature and style, he cuts a formidable biker-like presence with a hand so soft, rendering so delicate, attention to the small so loving; that the cutting edge is felt personally, as keen as a slice.

The new romantics have a presence with works by Angela Grossmann and Attila Richard Lukacs. From the languishing angst of a Goethian passion, the romantic willingness to suffer for love, for sensation, or just out of morbid curiosity is evoked within their masterful styles. Marcus Leatherdale's photograph of a tattooed male shunning the penetration of the camera's eye or the drawings by Tom of Finland, call up countercultures where black leather and ink often



Scott Jensen, *Untitled* - 2007, Graphite, Ink, Mixed Media on Paper, 10x7 inches

decorate the denizens of the dark realms. From the collection of Patric Lehmann, they encapsulate a trend towards the dark side that are an acknowledged part of artistic counter cultures.

With the dark simplicity of graphite where the eraser has cast a glow of unearthly significance on the scene, Daphne Gerou's implied narratives bridge the genres of fantasy and reality. The dark depictions make a quantum leap from cute to ominous. The uniformed bunnies' passive expressions, their lack of identifiable differences, their cool personalities (or are they only timid?) set up a dynamic of menace. It is not the seething rage of horror about to pounce, but an insidious suspicion of the irrevocably unjust situation that the less demonstrative species are caught in by virtue of modernity and industrialization.

There is not hopelessness in the vista, however. The bunnies are outfitted and, naturally silent, they appear organized in their bid to adjust their dilemma. The bunnies are on the move. They are leaving in the dead of night like refugees exiting an occupied zone. They are navigating by signs that are foreign to their habitual naturalism. The bunnies are glowing in the dark as if they had eaten radioactive fodder. Uniformed, armed and signalling to far distant bunnies, they are migrating strategically. The bunnies have apparently discovered something that mankind hasn't quite grasped yet - that there is an imbalance - "the time is out of joint".

The advocate for acknowledging the dark side, Daniel Erban, perpetuates images of horror in simple primitive imaginings, almost as if they were done by a child which makes the horror more horrific and signifies intent. If the intent is to shock, it doesn't always work for often the response to Daniel Erban's work is a reactionary identification with it, an exclamatory response that has an affirmative rather than a negative reaction - perhaps because the resulting pieces are stunning. Tutored to accept our dark side from the time of Freud onwards, a mature acceptance of negative imaging is almost common place from the perspective of an educated viewer. It's hard to shock in the light of media coverage. A regal depiction of horror, in fact, becomes attractive and the need to act out horror is nullified by the satisfaction of understanding it and with discretionary caution, embracing it. Acceptance of the dark side through visual knowledge allows the opportunity to vicariously purge any notions of violence and disgust. Daniel Erban's work is morally responsible work. It accepts the sorry condition of aborted philosophies and like the needles poked in a voodoo doll, the substitute effigy suffices to pierce the heart of the contemporary conscience.



Daniel Erban, *Vengeance* - 2008, Latex on Canvas Unstretched, 106x103 inches

Erban's use of abstraction helps to distance for the immediate impression almost misses the subject. This is the 'stunning' aspect. Although the stark, bold, graphic depictions of severing, hanging, vomiting, and obliterating brutality is unavoidably understood, there is a security in the position of the viewer for witnessing is not participating in the violence. Or is it? By accepting Daniel Erban's work, is the horror being endorsed? No, absolutely no! The shameful truth of a mitigated existence is further understood and by acknowledging the crass it loses power. The evil is not allowed to creep up and catch, unawares, a blithe compatriot. Instead the common passion for art ignites compassion, empathy and recognition that this twisted depiction of existence resonates and rings, sadly, true. The work is blatantly honest.

Letting out the psychological stops to slash, rip, and seemingly torture with a heavy black line on blood red paper, Erban's work is simultaneously disturbing and thrilling. He has committed strange and horrid thoughts to paper. He has raised the primal fear of unleashed violence like an unavoidable predator stalking a dream and creating the spectres of nightmares.

John Farrugia stakes an absolute claim on death and the dark side with his skeletons. Fully present and impervious to change other than patina discoloration, Farrugia has committed the symbol of decomposition to bronze. We are all destined to eventually return to dust, but not so Farrugia's pieces. They will remain in state long after the artist's physical body has fallen and so he has invoked a challenge to mortality. His work will outlive him although imbued with the ominous message of death. The size, easily captured by the gaze, enables the contemplation of the impermanence of life and the ultimate eminence of the dark unknown death. Crusty and yet endearingly individual, the skeletons, through their gestures, tell the stories of humans stripped of pretence, circumstance, clothes, features and defining flesh. The narrative is derived from religious themes or Arthurian legend. The sculptural depiction of the iconic struggles for position, immortality and Godliness strikes new chords with the symphonic realisation of the inevitable dance with death, the one name on the dance card that cannot be erased.

The overriding impression of *The Dark Side and Snow* is not depressing, oddly enough, but energising. The work is strong, confident and assured and in the presence of firm statements, creatively realised and technically accomplished, the reaction falls in line with the response to good art under any title. *The Dark Side and Snow* moves the viewer closer to the light of a greater understanding of art, life and the nourishing aspects of culture.



John Farrugia, *Strength And The Stone* - 2008, Bronze, Concrete, Wood, 27.5x28.75x58 inches



Nancy Watt, *Snowprint IV* - 2007, 600 gram paper, 43x30 inches



Daphne Gerou, *New Homes For A Brighter Tomorrow* - 2009, Graphite on Paper, 23.5x18.5 inches

NEOPRIEST

February 13 - March 21, 2009

New Pop Realists Intellectually Engaged in Story Telling

The identification of an aesthetic can serve various positive purposes. For the artists, it affords an objective from which to consider why the name is applicable. For the appreciator, it allows for roads of association to be traveled that might not have been self generated and therefore discover correlations that run within these works. To the art writer, critic and curator, it gives a platform upon which to comment, theorize, criticize and organize. It can also position *neopriest* within historical and philosophical contexts or *neopriest* can, like a sauce, add new flavour to an already sufficiently nourishing dish.



NeoPriest - Headbones Gallery

THE BOOK OF HEADBONES, CALLED

NEOPRIEST

CHAPTER 1

1 ¶ *NeoPriest* - New Pop Realism
Intellectually Engaged in Story Telling

2 ¶ *NeoPriest* is:

An assertion of identity

A declaration of aesthetic preference

*An acknowledgement of accomplished
practice*

An endorsement of visual style

An exploration into the sublime

A prospect for a potent seduction

3 ¶ *Neopriest* is about a journey that has
provided insights and created the desire to
broaden the scope of *Headbones Gallery*.

4 ¶ *The Drawers* has been exploring
contemporary drawing and works on paper
with some vigour for the past three years and
will continue to do so.

5 ¶ *NeoPriest* will be an additional focus of
Headbones Gallery - almost like the splitting
of one cell into two distinctive organisms.

6 ¶ *Headbones Gallery* will build further
awareness by asserting an identity in the form
of the *NeoPriest* aesthetic.

7 ¶ The aesthetic might be summarized by a
quick graphic read with bold clarity. It can
pop out at you or draw you in. Realist elements
tell a story. The work is accomplished, thought
provoking and engaging.

Richard Fogarty, Director
Headbones Gallery & The Drawers



PSYCHIDELIC RENDERING ILLUSTRATING ECCENTRIC STEREO-TYPES
SCOTT McEWAN



Pop - 2007, acrylic on arches, 30 x 20 inches

ESSAY BY JULIE OAKES

NEOPRIEST

CHAPTER 2

1 The identification of an aesthetic can serve various positive purposes.

2 The naming - in this case *NeoPriest* - grants an opportunity to take a breath, and contemplate, distancing from the art object in order to place it in relation to historical and philosophical positioning.

3 For the artists, it affords an objective from which to consider why the name is applicable.

4 For the appreciator, it allows for roads of association to be travelled that might not have been self generated and thus also discover the aesthetic that runs within these works and from there discern the correlations.

5 To the art writer, critic and curator, it gives a platform upon which to comment, theorise, criticize and organise.

6 For some, it increases the already rich fog that surrounds the art object, increasing mystique and like a sauce, adding a new flavour to an already sufficiently nourishing dish.

7 The naming of an aesthetic presents ruminating possibilities hitherto undiscovered and in this respect can be pronounced a viable exercise in thought.

8 The grouping of the works as *NeoPriest* is circumstantial and in so declaring this fact there is acknowledgement that there are most certainly more *NeoPriest* works out there than the perpetrators of the denomination have time to access. For the time being, the group of artists is this, in alphabetical order (a non-hierarchical classification of 'before' or 'after'): Aleks Bartosik, Osvaldo Ramirez Castillo, Billy Copley, Scott Ellis, Scott McEwan, Robert Farmer, Ed Giordano Jr,

Ashley Johnson, Zachari Logan, Jesse McCloskey, Julie Oakes, Srdjan Segan and Jenny WingYee Tong. Thirteen to date - but the number is irrelevant (falling into the circumstantial arena like the alphabetical order), nothing mystical or ordained.

9 Each artist could have a different idea in mind when applying *NeoPriest* to his or her art work, but there is a resonance, a willingness to be considered under this heading and varying latitudes of acceptance.

10 Since there was intended to be nothing binding in the grouping, this works well for all.

11 *Neo* connotes a previous generation, the older, that the new has descended from. In this case it does not mean 'emerging' or nascent but refers to historical comparisons and precedents.

12 There is a maturity to the works of each of the artists; they have all fully arrived, been 'outed', blooded, vetted and assumed rank.

13 The acronym most applicable seems to be *Pop Realists Intellectually Engaged in Story Telling* and each of the words is coloured in varying tones, hues and brightness in relation to the works.

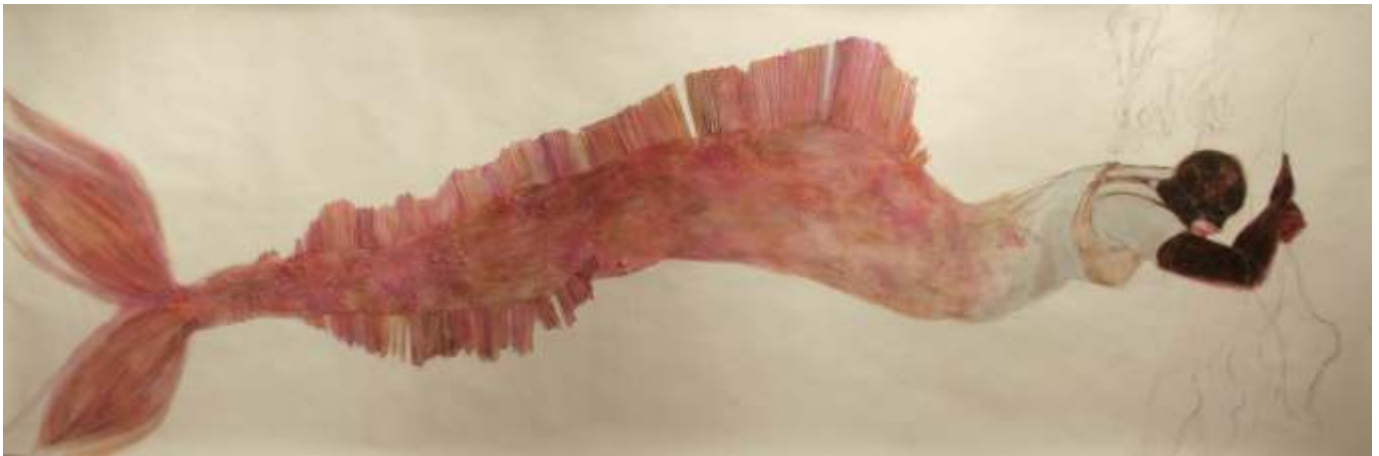
14 Some are more saturated with *Pop*; Billy Copley, Osvaldo Ramirez Castillo, Scott McEwan and Robert Farmer all use a cartoon style and coloring.

15 Some are stronger in the *Realist* spectrum; Ashley Johnson, Zachari Logan, Aleks Bartosik and Julie Oakes.

16 Some are more heatedly engaged such as Giordano with his inescapable angst or Jesse McCloskey with his expressionistic handling.

17 Others are cooler, more analytical, like

PREDISPOSITION TO REVEALING INCREDIBLE EFFEMINATE SITUATIONS & TALES
ALEKS BARTOSIK



Dear water lady, my goldfish how deep you are in the sea, please stay with me - 2009
Pencil, acrylic and conte on paper, 59 x 176"

INTERPRETATION

Scott Ellis' carefully constructed manipulations of imagery taken from media sources.

18 All are telling stories and are intellectually engaged. Some repeat the same characters and plot lines like Jesse McCloskey with his girl/witch and dog/devil or Srdjan Segan with the innards of his stretched men being exposed, again and again, or Jenny Wing Yee Tong with her donkeys lit by antique chandeliers causing swoons.

19 But all of the works contain some of the ingredients of this acronym.

20 The reference to the real is always present. None of these artists have left the representational and abandoned themselves to abstraction although there is also an element of abstraction running throughout.

21 Space also becomes pertinent in McCloskey's and Copley's work with the picture planes receding and advancing - but they are the exceptions. For most, figure on ground reigns against shallow perspectives.

22 It is of note that there is an adherence to traditional mediums, that primarily the neopriest practice is producing paintings and collage works. McCloskey, Copley, Segan and Wing Yee Tong all employ an expressionistic handling of the material.

23 There is a metaphysical bent running through the aesthetic. The ghostly and ghastly make appearances.

24 Jesse McCloskey calls upon New England witch hunts; Johnson, the shamanism and primitivism of Africa; Oakes, Buddhism and the apocalypse; Wing Yee Tong, fairies, fantasy and midsummer night's dreams; Segan, the mythological; Logan, classical and Christian constructs; Castillo, Aztec Gods; Bartosik, Amazon women exhibiting a

pantheistic display of curiosity; while Scott McEwan invokes the psychedelic states. Even Scott Ellis, with all of his repercussive immediacy calls up the three realms of Heaven, Earth and Hell. Ed Giordano's enigmatic *Father Domini* or his crucifixion imagery is clearly an outbreak of confessional guilt.

McEwan invokes the psychedelic states. Even Scott Ellis, with all of his repercussive immediacy calls up the three realms of Heaven, Earth and Hell. Ed Giordano's enigmatic *Father Domini* or his crucifixion imagery is clearly an outbreak of confessional guilt.

25 Copley steers clear - unless the great pilgrimage of consumerism, brought to iconographic singularity with his shopping bags could be deemed a contemporary metaphysical orientation.

26 There is very little of the jaded outlook or detached irony that has been a telling mark of the post-modern era within the *neopriest* aesthetic and here the relationship to the word 'priest' is brought forward.

27 Juice courses through the veins of the corpus of this aesthetic, pumped by undaunted commitment to the work.

28 The artists, acting much like priests, serve as mediators between the great spirits and the growing congregation of those who have found their way into the Church of Fine Arts.

29 *NeoPriest* shows dedication in the artistic practices that have transcended the commonality of quotidian rounds to partake in faithful rituals that make art happen.

30 The obsessive, stridently focussed practices of these artists are a testament to their calling where each observes a near religious adherence to production with

PAINSTAKING REFLECTIONS IN ETHEREAL SUBTLE TECHNIQUES
JENNY WING YEE TONG



Faster Than A Running Lantern - 2008, mixed media on vellum, 40 x 70 inches

INTERPRETATION

personal genuflections to varying principles, be they specific or as general as human rights and righteous indignation.

31 The clearing aside of all other duties and distractions to live the monastic life of the artist sequestered in the studio, the confrontation between the self and the reason for existence, the telling of knowledge through the physical body of work - many apt associations can be drawn between religion and art.

32 And there is the obvious; that art serves as the conduit for the un-see-able, assisting in the difficulty of believing by exercising slights of hand.

33 *NeoPriest* is new - a spark of life more than a crowning glory. The term, *NeoPriest*, is a light touch of a verbal wand. Nothing more. A godmother has anointed heads and sparkle dust is beginning to whirl with faceted brilliance causing reflections.

34 This is not an opening act with explosions, fireworks and didactic predispositions but a subtle insertion, a glimmer of insight.

Julie Oakes
Toronto
September 2008



PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM INSINUATING EXPLICIT SEXUAL TABOOS
ASHLEY JOHNSON



Pox - 2009, acrylic on paper, 40 x 37 inches

ESSAY BY ASHLEY JOHNSON

NEOPRIEST

CHAPTER 3

1 Humanity is on the brink of momentous changes that will either make life more difficult or, if we adapt our thinking in time, better.

2 The global disparity of wealth and the inability of financial institutions to bridge the divide necessitate change. The current financial crisis is really bad news for wealthy nations but it is catastrophic for the poor. Most probably the solution chosen will be more powerful global banking institutions less accountable to national interests. The continued reliance on outmoded political and socio-economic strategies also militates against resolving the environmental crisis, which is the larger catastrophe.

3 One wonders why this is such an intractable problem and how come the gamut of political positions is so defined and resistant to change.

4 An anomaly to take note of is the common view of reality as a space/object/time phenomenon. This Newtonian perception is directly challenged by Quantum Mechanics, which demonstrates a new kind of physics where distinguishable objects in space become indistinguishable sub atomic flux. The problem is that these two versions of reality cannot be reconciled with one another. Society mainly uses the older version of reality while physicists explore the latter. The significance of this is it indicates a human conceptual failure in that we cannot accept the inherent ambiguity of mutually exclusive 'truths'.

5 Western society is largely oblivious to other cultures, but certain cultures have no

problem reconciling alternative versions of reality, like the San Bushmen of the Kalahari or the Australian Aborigines. They see experiential reality as part of an overall Dreamtime or Spirit-world. One of the features of this way of thinking is to see the animals and environment as part of the self and vice versa.

6 It seems to me that the Western notion of the individual is really just a paradigm and that creative endeavour could/should be aimed at reinventing the persona and as a logical extension, the society. If the 'environment' were contained within the idea of the 'self' perhaps we would pay more attention to it and devise better structures of governance.

7 As an artist, a fundamental aspect of the drive to reinvent the 'self' is to tell stories. These stories delve into the underbelly of society though, exposing taboos and crossing boundaries. The point of bringing these hidden aspects into view is to re examine outmoded ways of thinking in an effort to permit new vision. It is a process of uncensoring.

8 *NeoPriest* is a loose affiliation of artists sharing certain attributes such as the need to communicate through art, addressing social issues.

9 Some artists come from countries in the Balkans or South America that have experienced extreme trauma and they bring this vision to their art. Others from North American society note uncomfortable aspects of this society such as the cannibalistic preying by powerful corporate predators.

10 The propaganda machine that ships youngsters off to die in foreign fields fighting

POP REALISM INTRODUCING EL SALVADORIAN TRAGEDIES
OSVALDO RAMIREZ CASTILLO



La M.S. - 2007, mixed media on Mylar, 17 x 9.5 inches

INTERPRETATION

for causes that are not obvious or true. The insurance/banking machine lures the consumer into a modern form of slavery while offering the illusion of freedom.

11 There are many aspects of society that need to be revisited, most notably religion. A new form of spirituality is needed for the modern age, one that takes proper cognizance of the environment and venerates all life instead of imagining that humanity is distinct and more valuable.

12 Certain *NeoPriests* focus on Christian mythology and view it through the consumerist mentality that trivializes existence. Pagan belief would seem more congruent with the modern desire for symbiosis between environment and self.

13 Sexuality is another area where prejudicial perceptions are engendered by religious and moral background. Several *NeoPriests* bring these issues to the fore, attempting to restore balance and rekindle an interest in human nature. Issues of gender equality are also contained among these stories.

14 The *NeoPriests* are obsessive in their work and driven by the banality of a society that seems bent on self-destruction. The consumer society's scale of values elevate the least worthy, aided and abetted by a media intent on selling products.

15 There is an urgent need for an intellectual revolution and the *NeoPriests* would hope to be part of this inevitable process of re-valuation.

Ashley Johnson
Toronto
September 2008



Painterly REFERENCES INVOKING & EXPRESSING SITUATIONAL TRIALS
JESSE MCCLOSKEY



Park Art - 2002, Paint and paper collage on paper, 38 x 50 inches

POP REALIST INTERPRETING ECCLESIASTIC SURREAL TALES
ROBERT FARMER



Toys in the Attic - 2009, Oil on panel, 16 x 12 inches

POSITIVE REFERENCES TO INTIMACY, ETHNOGRAPHY & SACRED TOPICS
JULIE OAKES



Thin Boundaries - 2005, oil on canvas, 152 x 132 inches

PESSIMISTIC REALISM WITH IRONIC EXAMPLES OF STRESS & TENSION
ED GIORDANO JR.



Untitled - 2006, Clay & paint, 3x5x10 inches

PALINGENESIS REALISED IN ICONOGRAPHIC ELONGATED STRETCHED TOTEMICS
SRDJAN SEGAN



Tall Stretched Figure - 2004, Coffee, pencil and charcoal on Canvas, 384 x 42 inches

POP RECONSTRUCTIONS INCORPORATING ELEMENTS FROM SERIAL 'TOONS
BILLY COPLEY



Finger & Spring - 2006, Acrylic and rice paper collage on paper, 41 x 29 inches

PERSONAL REALISM WITH INSIGHTS EXPRESSING A SEEABLE TRUTH
ZACHARI LOGAN



Bunny Hug - 2008, graphite on paper, 48 x 42 inches

Bridge Art Fair, New York, March 5-8, 2009

Headbones Gallery brings the NeoPriest aesthetic to Bridge Art Fair, at the Waterfront building, 222-12th Avenue, New York from March 5-8, 2009.

Exhibited Artists

Oswaldo R. Castillo, Billy Copley, Scott P. Ellis, Robert Farmer, Jesse McCloskey, Scott McEwan, Julie Oakes, David C. Salazar, Srdjan Segan, Ashley Johnson and Jenny Wing Yee Tong



Bridge NY Art Fair Booth, 2009 - Headbones Gallery

(ab strak' tid)

Abstraction simplifies the puzzle of existence so that tiny diverse pieces form shapes that can more easily be interlocked with other shapes. Abstraction evens out dissimilarities. An exhibition of abstract works manifests this idea as, visually, a harmonious sense of heightened organisation replaces the cacophony of things that make up our normal physical environment. Gone is the furniture, utilitarian objects, didactic pressures of politics and socialisation. In their place is an outcropping of intellect. Diverse techniques and styles are more able to relate to each other when 'object' has been removed, when the non-objective overtakes the referential.

Even in those works where there is a resilient reference, as in Mahmoud Meraji's large untitled acrylic paintings or Forero's shaped and painted panels, the elements of form, line and colour dominate over subject matter. The implied figures assist the trajectory described by the paint but the work is more about the mind than the matter. This is the satisfaction of abstraction; that it is relational. It relates within itself, to the borders that contain, to the exploration of the series, and to the larger field of abstraction. In (ab strak' tid), the pieces 'talk' to each other.

Conceptual art took this niggling contradiction a step further, but for now, Headbones Gallery will 'abstract' the term 'abstract' by concentrating on the adjective 'abstracted' - and then take another step away by titling the exhibition phonetically.

(ab strak' tid), March 26 - May 2, 2009

Ram Samocha's energetic drawing performance, *Abstract Peace*, ignites the exhibition as his gestural spontaneity flares.

Intellectual underpinning removes abstraction from the physical so that mental and spiritual practice is as evident as the artistic. This coupling of idea with color, form, material and the personal visual vocabulary of each artist makes *ab strak' tid* an exhibition of rarefied thought.

The architectonic light and monument works of Khaled Mansur, the rich, shimmering and seemingly bejeweled fabric of Heidi Thompson's and Scott Taylor's layered colors, the lyric illusions in Mahmoud Meraji's and Cesar Forero's dancing shapes, the humourous sense of play with David Samilla and the visceral plasticity of Bodo Korsig's woodblocks & Karl Heinz Boyke's paintings and bronze sculptures; spurned on by sensation, resonate within the intellect.



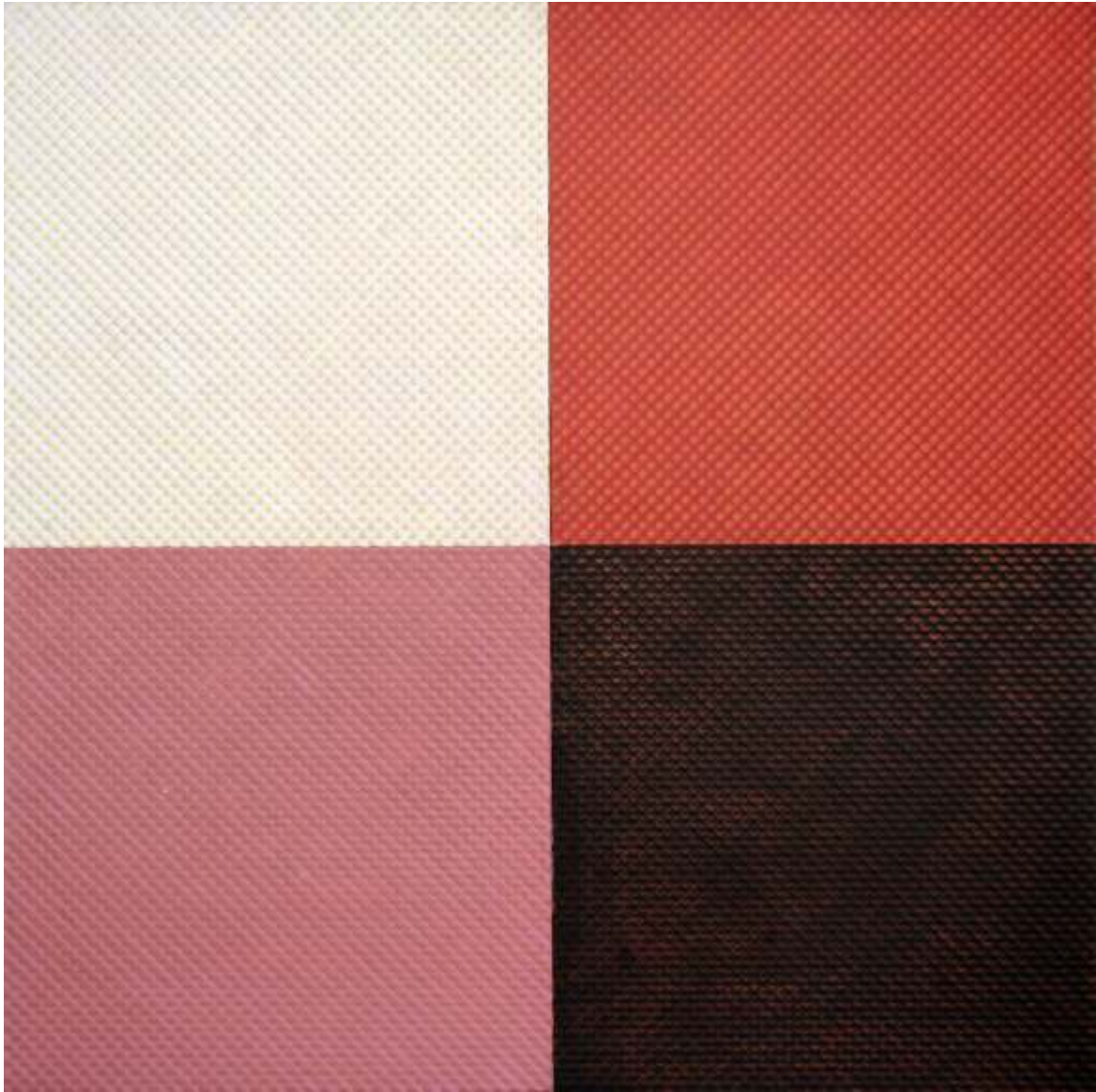
(ab strak' tid) - Headbones Gallery

Steve Rockwell

(ab strak' tid)

The individuality of the artist as it translates his particular interests into the physical art object is filtered through the chosen technique. Steve Rockwell's *Parallax I, II and III*, with obsessive precision, reveals a logical, ordered, patient agency of human nature as, with a clear, clean, method; he challenges the perceptions. He provokes a number of responses that transpire as a run of revelations, each transformative step in the process being predictable, much like a ritual initiation. From a distance, the paper appears to carry an over-all colour field. Closer inspection reveals that the colour field is made up of thousands of minuscule circles or squares. A new aspect of the transformation now occurs as the painterly application of colour shows that each unit is hand painted and still retains the gesture of the application. These read as a seemingly infinite number of small and perfect paintings that are interesting in themselves, square inch by square inch, and yet also demanding an attention as to how each section relates to the whole.

The meditative repetition of this process also produces a sonorous effect on the spectator's eye. It is strenuous trying to discern the combinations of patterns, the links in directions and pathways that form the relationships between the individual units. So the final level left open to the spectator is one on which to de-focus, to rest in the fact that Rockwell has done the work, both mentally and physically, and it is time to enjoy the pleasure of a visual sensation.



Parallax III - 2008, alkyd on paper on mahogany, 32x32 inches

Cesar Forero

(ab strak' tid)

Imagine a combination between a furnace and a tornado - a forceful blast of energy, whirling, spiralling upwards and away while carrying with it, like Dorothy to Oz, an enchanting, sprightly being, enlivened by the tipsy curviness. This is Cesar Forero for the work that he manifests retains the character of the creator - Cesar seated atop his creative wave.

Cesar's dancing shapes, saturated with a luscious exoticism - his birth place, Colombia - form suggestive patterns with psychedelic twists of perception. Forero is also a dancer, costumer, film maker, set designer and these abstracted figures, like photogenic pirouettes frozen in mid-stride, glitzy and glorifying in it, dramatise abstraction. The simplification of abstraction, in Forero's art, is about the excited mind, the aroused intellect, - sensational research. The multi-disciplinary relationships in Forero's work also provides a segue into the performance work of Ram Samocha.



Dogged - 2002, oil on masonite, 47x40 inches

Ram Samocha

(ab strak' tid)

Abstract expressionism lauded the gesture and the trace of the artist's movement. Combining the practice of creation with performance, Samocha's work focuses on the non-representational, but generously opens the mystical doors of his individual creative process through his present physical movements. By being present, his movements become a part of the art piece, an abstracted version of a self portrait. The artist is present in the work when he steps away from it but he is also present for the viewer as he completes the piece. That his mark is long and rhythmic allows for an athletic performance. That the work is completed on site and then viewed where it was accomplished allows the aura of the phenomenal object a palatable history as if the ghost of Samocha hovers once he has left.



Abstract Peace - 2009, Performance drawing at Headbones Gallery

Khaled Mansur

(ab strak' tid)

Using new media, Khaled Mansur brings a literal three dimensionality into his work. Using slickness to erase the trace of his hand, he overrides the expressive potential with his perfect technical acumen. The object gains the upper hand rather than the maker - perhaps the ultimate aim of creativity - and the result is something more absolute than the originator. The basis for minimalism was the paring back of complexity to a purist point, unencumbered by human fallibility. The works of Donald Judd or Ellsworth Kelly are examples where the process is so mechanical that they appear manufactured rather than made. In Mansur's work, the fabrication is so smart that it leaves no room for evidence of human mistakes. This science fictive precision supports the aerodynamic lines. The lighting in *Tomorrow Contained* comes from the inside of the piece yet there is no sign of a power source. It appears to generate its own illumination, a futuristic concept, but it is actually beaming from the 'mother source' ambient light, just as earth is lit by the sun or moon.

Mansur's colour schemes vacillate between industrial, corporate and the disco space where the sheerness of plexi-glass is background for chi-chi. Along with the Bauhaus, modernity and the sleek perfection of automobiles, Mansur is in stride with the times and with an unflinching determination to perfect his aesthetic through new media, he is the purist within (ab-strak-tid).



Tomorrow Contained - 2009, acrylic construction, 12x36x4 inches

Mahmoud Meraji

(ab strak' tid)

Mahmoud Meraji's work is subtle and classy, intellectual and yet fresh. Like the story-line of dreams where the connections are hard to make but the sense is embedded in the memorable impact of the visual, so his figures and their situations veer away from logic to enter a more instinctual realm. His work is an example of the term abstract when used as an adjective as in the title of the exhibition (ab strak' tid). He uses a vocabulary of images that seem to possess romantic underpinnings, where the visual illustrates taste. Never too much, sparingly doled out to accentuate the detailed rendering, Meraji uses repetition in a symphonic sense, subverting rhythms in favour of a melody that forms agreeable successions and arrangements of shapes and movements. It is a classical melody with attention to form lending a general effect of balance while the emotions are distant and collected. Mahmoud Meraji is graceful in his depiction. He is discreet with a gentleman's manners. And because of these layers of meanings, not quite revealed, but refined and cultured, the work touches the finer aspects of our own connoisseurship with a firm presence of mind.

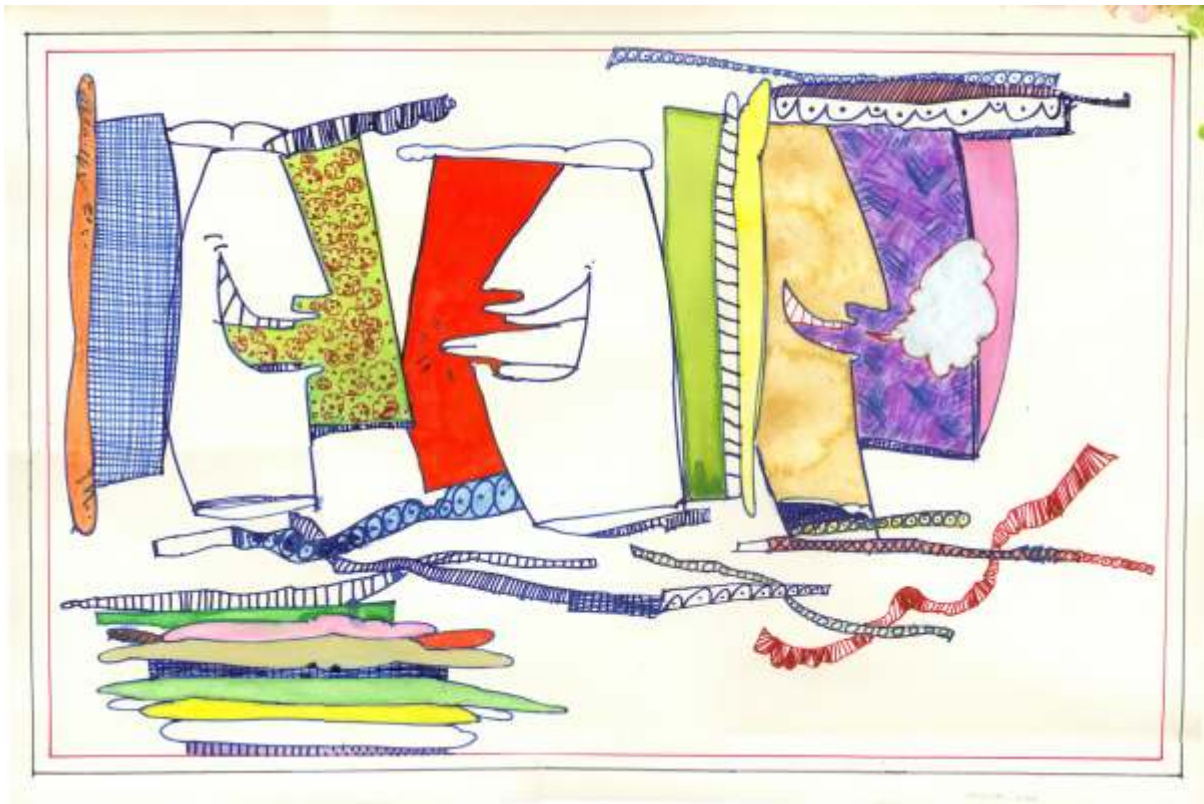


Untitled - 2008, acrylic on canvas, 52x42 inches

David Samila

(ab strak' tid)

With pop flare and lightness of heart (art), David Samila's line drawings also use romantic illusions but with more of a romp than a wooing. The clouds, lace, pokes, tongues, puffy piles of soft shapes and patterning bring to mind coverlets, bed sheets, pillows, dreams and bed. Whereas Kandinsky gave credence to the importance of play, serendipity and the whimsical, Samila flies these notions in the fresh breeze of his personal spontaneous joy. His significance is in bringing together a wide age range for although his work is mature there is a youthful appeal as if he has transcended time by yielding to the force of uninhibited expression. This unabashed creativity, unselfconscious and liberated, is the crux of the relief of abstraction. It is where the mind overpowers the confines of the physical and anything can happen.



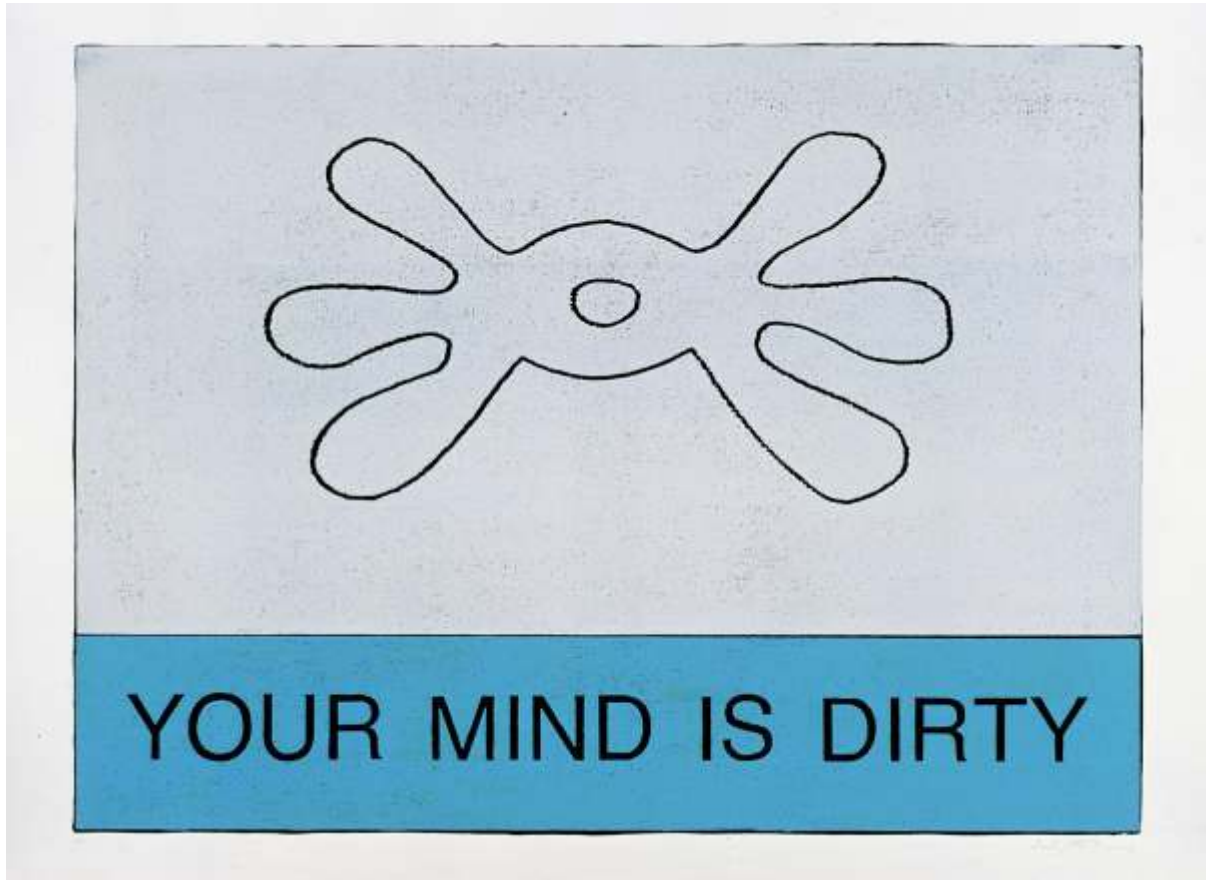
My Purple Sky World - 2008, coloured pencil, watercolour, ink on paper, 13x19.5 inches

Bodo Korsig

(ab strak' tid)

With abstraction, research changes from reference, narrative, literality or information to the tools of the trade - colour, space, form, texture, line. Bodo Korsig carries enigmatic line drawings of shapes that have metamorphic, biological or segmented suggestions with the word (man's ultimate abstract creation). The word is mark making that communicates message rather than existing solely as visual marks. The straight line and curve of the 'D', for instance is not as relevant as the fact that 'D' begins the word 'DIRTY'. *YOUR MIND IS DIRTY*. The text furthers the association with the intellect when the mind as the totality of the conscious and unconscious is described as a sullied physicality. The letters set up a new relationship between imagery and the meaning of the word. The bar of colour on which the word is placed reconfigures the rectangle and with intrinsic specificity, brings in another relational element.

The quality of the ink on the paper of these unique wood-block prints, allows for another appreciation as the density of colour (white or colour on black on white paper), with inconsistent covering, allows for a textural sensibility to the material. Fluidity, viscosity, opacity serve the linear and make the shapes happen as the flow of the hand is echoed in the press, roll and pressure of ink applied. From the making to the reception, the intellectual rigour is communicated through the medium. But not just the medium is the message. The message is also the medium with which Korsig puts forth his ruminations.



YOUR MIND IS DIRTY - 2002, wood-block on paper, 31x42 inches

F. Scott Taylor

(ab strak' tid)

Scott Taylor dives into rarefied illuminations of the mind both referentially and through stimulating the response to jibe with his original state of mind. Rather than hinging on a spring resilience as in Meraji or Forero's work with the figurative an inspiration for the abstract, the associative aspects in Taylor's work have been gifted to the viewer. There are just enough hints or semblances to precipitate the response in the intended vein. Taylor's work conjures the spiritual, mythological, religious and alchemical. His predestination grants an opportunity to revisit the precious realms held in the specific memory bank of each viewer. Tapestries, illuminated manuscripts, jewels, gold, silver, diamonds, bibles, illustrated fairy tales, holy tomes of any denomination, dance, and magic are but a few of the equivalent impressions spawned by Taylor's work. That there is a passage way, portal or framed invitation in the composition parallels the staging of the religious narratives produced during the renaissance. The rarefied implications experienced by the creator and then experienced by the viewer connect but also grant room for the individuality of perception and personal historical references.

The luminescent delicate palette brings beauty into Taylor's pictures - a philosophical standpoint that contains a positivist belief system. This originating stance provokes a corresponding 'plus', a pleasurable component that relates to the ecstatic visuals. The most wonderful objects were those said to be 'fit for a king' and this is the present that Taylor offers - pieces destined for palates as regally intelligent as his own.



Aquamarine African Dissolve - 1991-93, oil pastel & enamel spray on paper, 17x14 inches

Heidi Thompson

(ab strak' tid)

Relating well to this ordered obsession is Heidi Thompson's large colour field works. The immediate impression is a sensate response as colour field becomes a launching pad for more particular experiences embedded in the viewer's consciousness, to spring into being.

Using the piece as an object for meditation, and paring the sensation down to the energy that is flowing into the eyes and being then transmitted to the brain brings about a distinctly human frame of mind. Because there is no subject other than the materials that make up the phenomenal object that is the piece of art, there is room to enter into a symbiotic relationship with the artwork. This pure seeing, because of human cognizance, causes an emotion in reaction to the sheer beauty, or maybe dread at the subliminal mystery inherent in being or it could be a pleasurable shock at the glory of perceiving such a vision. This is the strength and appeal of Thompson's abstraction; the psychic or spiritual overrides matter spurred by remembrance or recollection. The art work as physical presence catches attention (memory of patina, wall or rust, for instance) and yet it doesn't fade into disinterest over time. The wonder continues and the piece pulses a new version of the vision with each encounter.



Untitled (Magenta Blue) - 2007, sand, gesso & acrylic on paper, 30 x 22.5 inches

Karl-Heinz Boyke

(ab strak' tid)

This conversation with abstraction wraps up with a strong, weighty foot in the place where abstraction solidified - modernism. Formalist and secure in craft, Boyke's work speaks within itself and to itself, communicating similarities between the individual sculptures as well as unique traits. With a hieroglyphic distinction, his language is best understood by the initiated. What appears to be privileged visual information is unraveled when the key to the source of the imagery is made clear. Closer inspection - and illumination by the artist for it is doubtful that the impressions would be read as such without direction - reveals that a horseshoe, a saw blade, the grip of a tool and other utilitarian items have been pressed into the original bed from which the bronze mould was made. The formation of the final bronze, from the first material (clay, wax or plasticine) is made by passing through a stage where a mould is made in which to pour the molten metal. Boyke, with a clear and curious eye, has been known to consider this passageway from positive through negative to resulting positive as worthy of notice. He has transformed the negative into the positive which would mean that a second negative must have been made. The relief titled *Kleines Medallion* is an example of such a transformation.

Abstraction is rooted in the physical world. Though the idea for the making, the intellectual component, can be complicated, convoluted, mysterious, perhaps even confused; man exists within the physical and his expression, the art object, is also physical. (Ab strak' tid) explores works of art that, from the workings of the mind, become structured, solid works of art. The physical dependency on the 'real' object in Boyke's method of fabrication illustrates this connection and brings (to mind) a question inherent in the concept of the abstract. Can any work of art truly lay claim to the word 'abstract' for the artist obfuscates the absolute abstract when he makes the idea exist as an object.



Kleines Medallion II - 2007, bronze, 7.25 inches, ed. 12

Figuration, May 7 - June 18, 2009

There's something about the honesty of one's circumstance that sets the scene for powerful images. We are all imbedded in figuration but the personal range of specific experience is varied.

Mahmoud Meraji harkens to his Iranian roots with the use of symbols framing portraits of his family, self and friends. His son, Mehrad Meraji aggrandises friends and family with a positivism born of the undaunted belief that talent lends to a fresh artistic career. Zachari Logan's triplet nude self portraits radically poise the mundane with sensational eroticism while Susan Low-Beer's ceramic children leap in trancelike suspended animation. Each artist, 'figuring' it out, brings to bear the authenticity of personal practices and life orientations.



Figuration - Headbones Gallery

Figuration

Each individual body creates a circumstance from which to respond to life. In the beginning, each human existence comes with built in potentials and disadvantages. Nature sets the stage as the genes forge a combination of the mother and the father with their ancestors also having fed into the pool. The location of birth with attendant nationality, financial strata, social status, climate, political and religious orientations affect physicality as nurturing, from dysfunctional to supportive, shapes health, energy and the sense of well being.

Narrowing to the specific influence of culture upon the man or woman; dress, celebrations, taboos, sexual orientations, family values, gender, age and many more variables influence appearance. When choosing the figure as the basis for individual expression, it is not only the artist but mankind in general who uses their 'look' to impart messages. Examples would be the vestments of a Catholic priest, suit of a businessman, uniform of a cook, chains and spikes of the punk, corporate branding upon the employee, protective gear of a construction worker or the beret and striped tee-shirt that immediately transforms the artist into a Picasso. Identification and message is imparted through the figure.

Remove the clothes and there is still an abundance of information - age, health, gender. It is little wonder that the artist keeps returning to the body - the figure - as subject, for there is much to grapple with philosophically and even more to contend with when it comes to depiction.

The initial question becomes which part of this multifarious subject matter - the figure - will challenge the artist sufficiently to provoke grappling with it? In Figuration there is the common springboard of the figure as subject matter, but the reason for choosing the figure, which aspect of the figure is chosen, the presentation and how it is depicted is circumstantially specific to the artist.

Mahmoud Meraji

Figuration

Mahmoud Meraji is exposing his cultural heritage and the changes that the new lives that he has forged for himself and his family in Canada have wrought. He frames his subjects within the context of his past; first in his use of and reference to historical easel portraiture and second, by positioning his figures in relation to Iranian customs.

Easel painting was well known and respected in Iran since the late 1800's when the talented Iranian artist Kamal-ol-Molk, having studied in Paris, Florence and Versailles was appointed as the royal court painter to Nasereddin Shah. He introduced the European style and founded the Sanaye Mostazrafeh Art School, later known as the Kamal-ol-Molk Art School where the European style of painting was taught together with Iran's traditional painting. Kamal-ol-Molk trained highly competent students including Ali Mohammad Heidarian. The Modernist movement caught the imaginations of the next generation and produced world renowned artists such as Moshen Moghadam Vasiri.

Meraji has a dual art practice. He was included in the exhibition previous to Figuration at Headbones Gallery, (ab-straktid). He has used abstraction to further the release of his artistic identity within the Canadian context. The portraits, except for the fact that the sitters were often Iranian, did not overtly reveal his roots until the portrait titled *Nostalgia* completed in 2007 and included in the exhibition *Canadians Without Borders* at The Varley Gallery of Markham, Ontario. His son, Mehrad, sits with a crown of grass upon his head in front of a fish bowl. These are customary ritualistic items used in the celebration of the Iranian New Year but in the context of the European-style portrait they set up a surreal image. In *Mirage* the sense of a dream-like, psychological reality is carried even further as the artist and his wife, Amide seem suspended in séance, hands on a floating fish as if there is an answer within. Meraji's well developed expertise in portraiture becomes subservient to the imagery. No longer just an easel painting - there is a narrative beyond the identity of the sitters that is being imparted. It carries through in *Mehrad* a portrait of his son daydreaming, where the plastic dream state appears to have eked through to virtual reality.

In *Suicide*, this transcendence becomes even more unique. The Farsi word for self portrait is *khod keshee*. The word for suicide is *khod koshee*. Mahmoud Meraji is diving under a table on which rests the ritual fish bowl on a traditional piece of cloth. Caught between the Persian carpet and the objects above he seems swept along by a current. His face is ashen white. He is naked with the point of the table cloth covering his genitals. He states that the reference to suicide is

because he is killing his more conservative self so that from the cocoon of tradition he can emerge, chrysalis-like, and transform into a more liberated self.

There is a jerky, spastic, fractured aura in *Suicide*. Just as a word embodies a complete definition, so does a picture. And just as *Ab-strak-tid* became more abstract in its phonetic form, so does this new Meraji surrealism separate itself from its original meaning to form a new aspect of itself, more conceptual than the historical surrealists of Europe. Like the phonetic sur-real-ist; Meraji's surrealism is separate, broken apart, deconstructed and not quite in common usage yet.

Meraji's use of the figure can now be traced back to Persian miniature painting which speaks of the large questions about the nature of art and perception. There is a resonance between the miniature Mollahs in the *Presence of Nasser-ed-Din Shah Qajar*, executed in the Qajari style and *Mirage* for instance. Meraji has worked through the European style and gone back to posing psychological questions, figuring out the answers in a visual format.



Suicide - 2009, charcoal and pastel on paper, 51 x 76 inches

Mehrad Meraji

Figuration

Mehrad Meraji, the son of Mahmoud and Amide, is a step removed from the trauma of cultural transportation. He embraces both his identity and subjects with an open armed authenticity born of the fresh and un-polluted breath that the younger generation inhales. His milieu is multi cultural, his friends are of different ethnicities and so for him this is more the norm than the unusual – to be Iranian and Canadian, to speak a second language with the brightened and advantaged brain that is a result of the effort.

The Meraji family's nurturing has produced an open and generous personality. At the peak of his curiosity and with a talented hand that has honed skills far beyond his years, Mehrad appears to view the world through art glasses that turn his friends into large blow-ups of cinematic proportions. It falls in line with his age when peers dominate attention and anything is possible. Not bucking at size, no hesitation in tackling monumental proportions, with a sharp eye, good balance and the bombastic delivery of a gladiator, Mehrad has a stretch of life before him that enables his daring. If he makes a mistake, there is tomorrow to recover from it and hence, he bounds bravely forward for the self confidence of youth has room to mature. Mehrad is pickling in the well seasoned juice of an inspired and supportive home with an energetically artistic peer group and the worldly exposure of the Ontario College of Art and Design as it opens the minds of its students to a larger art world enhancing the taste of his work. Mehrad is figuring it all out and is well up to the task.



Yan - 2009, charcoal on paper, 96 x 50 inches

Susan Low-Beer

Figuration

Looking back on childhood, there is a vague haziness that perfects remembered images, crystallizing the body into a more miraculous, realized holistic substance. As a child, distracted by the exertion of growing up and hindered by self absorption, the freedom of a leap into the air is taken for granted, gauged against the difficulty, accomplished as one is able and then it is let go to be relegated in importance to the back burner of things done, time past. The age-old saying that “youth is wasted on the young” has elements of truth that art can grasp when life cannot as in Susan Low-Beer's ceramic installation *State of Grace*. Low-Beer slows down the disintegration of dissemblance that is created as time changes the present into the past. The continuous layering of experience upon experience, age upon age, day upon day would be lost to the individuality of memory if it were not for the consolation of art

Low-Beer was inspired by a photograph of a child jumping, the abandonment of the serious pull of gravity overcome by the joy of a jump in the air. To decide to capture this leap of faith that defied the call of the earth in clay - the metaphorical material from which the Creator built and to which man metaphorically returns - and from this to build lightness, necessitated overcoming the inherent rigour of the medium. Like alchemy, the material becomes more precious as it opens worlds other than the physical.

The figure is acknowledged as home of the spirit (body as temple). The sculptures become more than the sum of their physical parts so that the resulting sensation is solely of The Jump. The group of children are oblivious of anything other than themselves. Even their fellow leapers are of no consequence to them and yet their silent partners, all engaged in the same boisterous act, strengthen the feeling of insularity as if they are engaged in a self absorbed ritual of concentration.

This dichotomy between the unsophisticated freedom of the jump and the quiet immobility of the ceramic sculptures makes for a spooky, yet thrilling disconnect. *State of Grace* is an installation that makes good use of awe.



State of Grace Installation - 2008, ceramic and metal base. *Photo Courtesy David Kaye*

Zachari Logan

Figuration

Zachari Logan exposes himself as an art piece. He has sculpted his body to near classical perfection. He further references the classics by assimilating the poses that models have traditionally assumed in studio art classes but he brings in contemporary clothing and props to alleviate the distancing of the formal pose and make for an unusual intimacy. The figures, larger than life size, hark to the grand works of the renaissance, Tintoretto, Rubens, or Titian, when they used figuration to evoke mythological and religious narratives. That Logan uses grandiose scale in conjunction with the quotidian provokes a sense of voyeurism yet there is no allusion to sexuality other than the fact that the genitals are present and exposed. In fact, the sole allusion to the potential for penetration is in the rough hewn spear piercing the side of one of the figures in *The Invincibles*, one of the drawings from *The Crowd Series*.

Without the clue of the red drawing of two men kissing or the title referring to gay pride, there is no evident allusion to homosexuality. The ambivalence of the non didactic helps to 'normalize' a sexual orientation that could still be considered a marginalised one, although according to recent statistics, one in ten males are openly homosexual.

Although there is diversity within this series, there is a consistency that rules with unflinching surety. There are no women here. There are only men and each man is an archetypical, perfect specimen of maleness - Zachari Logan, a prince among men with an Apollonian body. His seemingly autistic, self centered concentration seems to rest easy with the sum of his selves absolutely sufficient.

Yet there is humility, a soft stance in his way of drawing with a manner reminiscent of romantic illustration. Flaunting a Spartan nakedness, these 'Logans' inhabit a focused world, each figure realistically modeled with dramatic shadows adding clarity and dignity. Each version of Logan is concentrated on his task, unaware that he inhabits the frame with other aspects of himself. Each is hanging out with himself, so to speak, relaxed, naked - no problems. The drawings are larger than the normal concept of drawing. Drawing has a history as preparatory work, secretive intimate recordings, unfinished, undeveloped, partial ideas that have been given a cursory life on paper. Zachari Logan transcends both the physical and the conceptual limitations of drawings. He blows up the intimate and grants the subject a monumental, dignified bearing. Zachari Logan, figuring it out, has 'outed' the male figure.



Crowd 1 - 2008, graphite on paper (two panels), 102 x 84 inches

Bronson - The Prison Drawings, June 17 - June 27, 2009

Bronson, The Prison Drawings is a solo exhibition of drawings by one of Britain's most notorious inmates, Charles Bronson.

Bronson, The Prison Drawings - Courtesy of the Princess, are a play by play visual documentation of a prison romance from 1997 - 2000 told in graphite, ink and coloured pencil. The drawings are brutally revealing. Bronson's hand is controlled but his subject matter is not. The Princess is his muse, foil and interlocutor.

In late 1995, The Princess, Canadian woman prisoner TG0786 and Ontario College of Art (OCA) graduate, found herself incarcerated in the United Kingdom on a six year smuggling charge. With an interest in art therapy, she began writing to Bronson after seeing one of his drawings in a British tabloid and a romantic correspondence of drawings both singular and collaborative, was begun. Eventually, the happy couple pledged to be married, never having personally met, and the British tabloids went wild with their sensational story of love and commitment.

With a curiously sweet candour, brushed with naughtiness, Bronson tells his story, confined by the size of the paper and materials made available to him. With no emotional holds barred, Bronson tells it as he sees it from within prisons of cement blocks, spied upon by surveillance cameras and tortured by his very active imagination. This sociological, psychological and diaristic presentation of the life of an inmate is an exhibition that encourages study and contemplation, yet also rewards both the curious and the art lover.



NEWS OF THE WORLD, November 9, 1997 - Newspaper Clipping

Bronson, The Prison Drawings

His Body is His Temple, His Mind His Tempest by Ben Portis

What impress me first off about the drawings of Charles Bronson are the tender spots. The confines in which he has been held for most of the past 35 years are defiantly transmogrified by his sensitive perception and imagination. The play of meagre light on the surfaces of steel-clad doors and walls connotes his atmospheric domain and reconciled, contemplative, philosophical tranquility. The super-definition of windows, airshafts, ventilation grilles, peepholes, keyholes, locks and even rivet heads connotes the futile permeability of these same walls, passage through which has been categorically denied. The forbidden rest-of-the-world might as well be a spectral speck for all Bronson knows or cares. In his quietest moments, Bronson senses the life span and free will of a companion spider, or mouse, or bird. He is an immortal.

We all inhabit our prisons. Sometimes this is referred to as the mind. Those who conform to voluntary inhibition are left at liberty. Those who do not may end up in maximum security, where unruly bodies are ram-packed back into their unwilling, often unaccommodating minds. Bronson, having sledged his body up into an intimidating, irreducible mass, saved his mind for better things, such as poetry, and art, and Joyce.

These epistolary drawings, fugitive, head-strong love letters to a woman their author has never met, consist of text equally as image. Sometimes they tirade, sometimes they instructively caption and annotate the monotonous day-to-day debasement, sometimes they hallucinate beneath the lowest depths to which men will sink. Block letters shout out the horrors - PAIN, INSANITY, RESTRAINT! Hatchling wardens and trustees, drawn as Bosch-like half-formed or quarter-formed embryos, demonize the already bedevilled Bronson. Sometimes you just got to make a break for it, so just as many times the letters are his means of escape, pervading, encroaching into the imagination of the imagined beloved. Is this a form of consensual, intellectual rape? Maybe, yet Bronson seems willing to give as well as to take. He thinks about becoming a mortal again, when one day will idly waste into the next, he retires to his mortgaged cell lined with past-life prison mementos and floral wallpaper, lets his rock body soften with age and soda pop, and delightedly gets scolded or cuckolded by his princess.

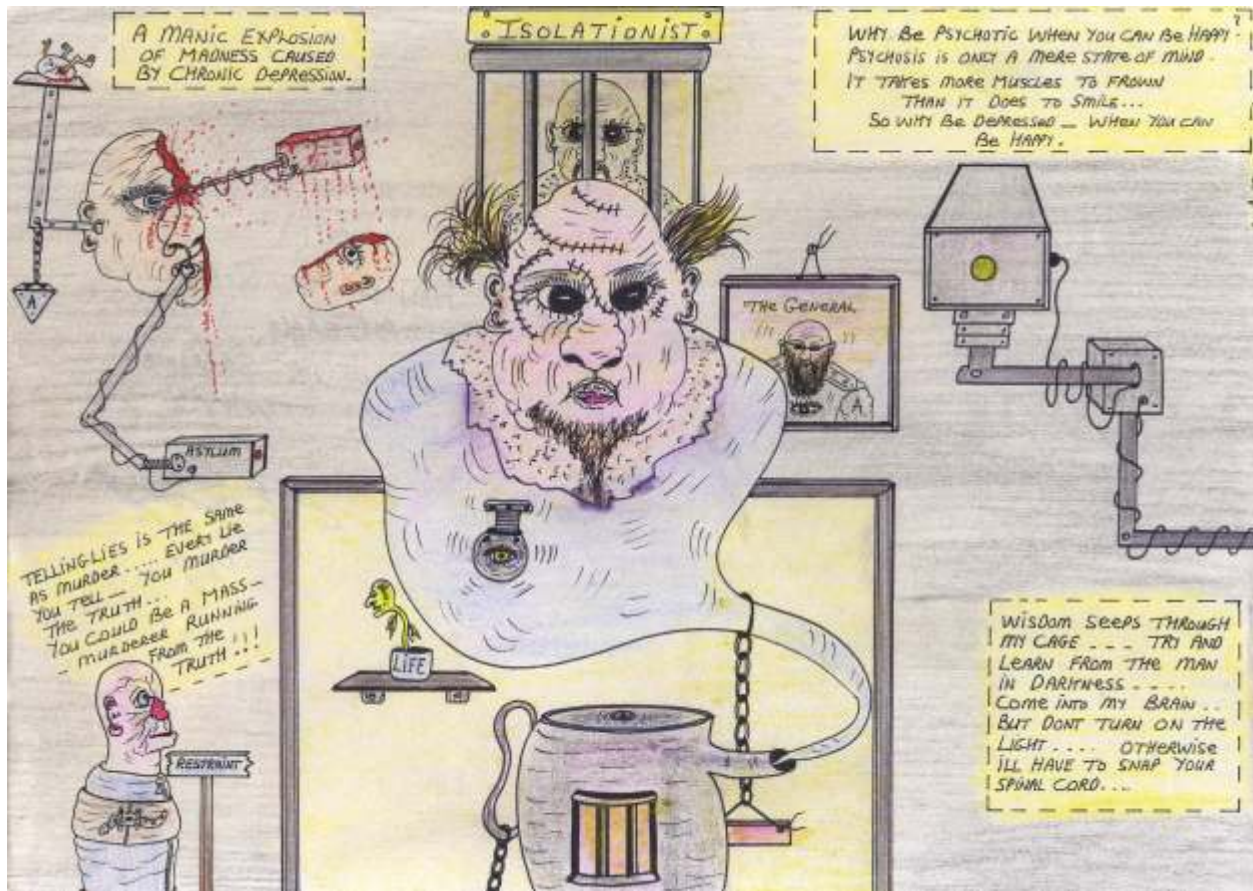
Bronson reflects on his creativity on the reverse of several drawings, a more conventional side of his correspondence in which he sends comparatively tamer thoughts and encouragement to Joyce. "Some cartoons kinda grab your neck and squeeze a little to[o] tight. This one comes crashing out of my brain and flows through my pen and I'm laughing as it takes

shape." A few years later, "Later, future, in time, I shall do my art in oil, big canvas, the size of cell door, this time, present, I am just 'preparing' for the big one." Or:

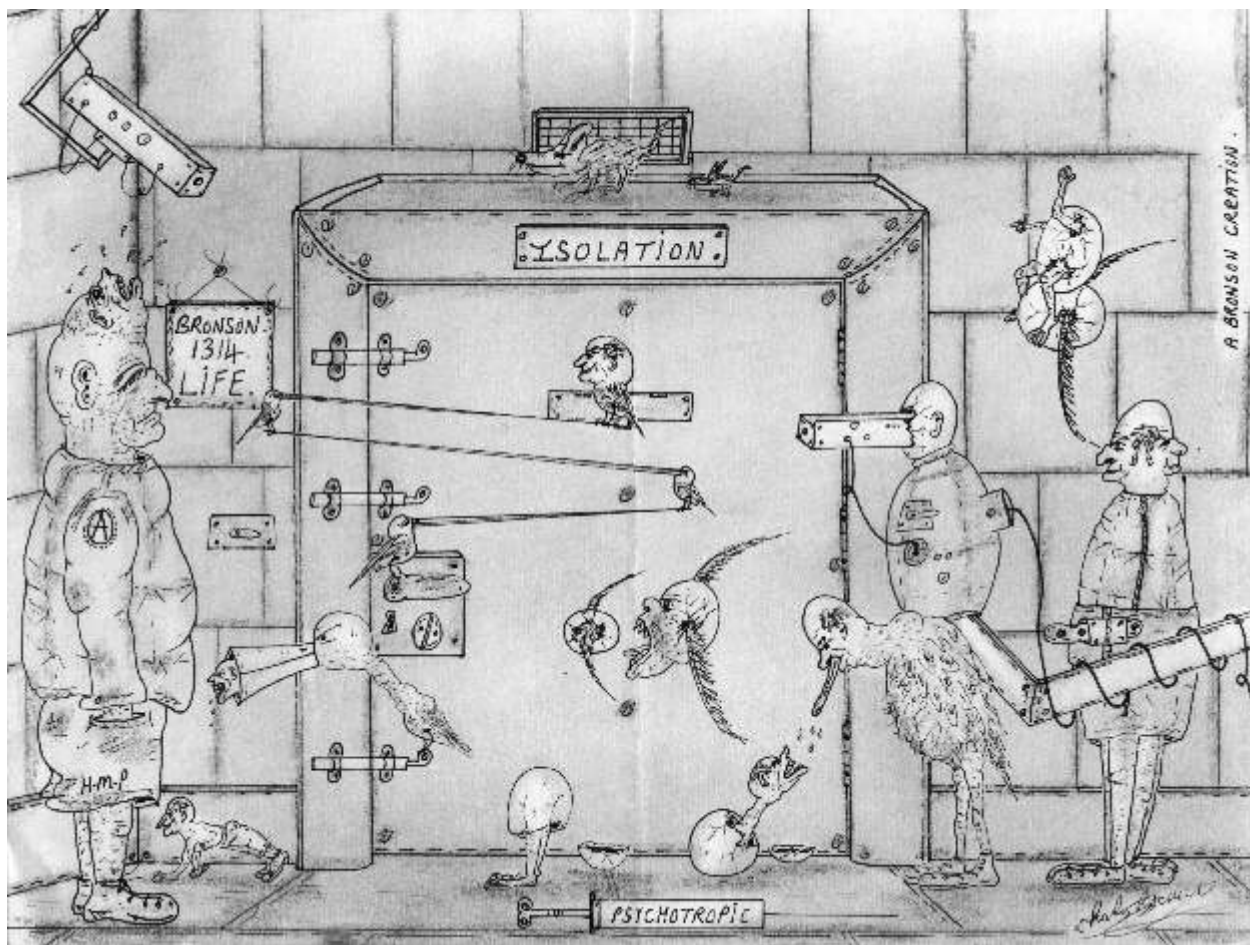
Have you noticed how my art is progressing?
Hands, fingers, expressions!
It's coz I'm relaxed!
I'm settled in a routine!
I'm in peace! Silence!
It's like a cemetery!

Joyce noticed and kept it all, the uninhibited poetic notes and graphic observations of a self-styled madman, laughing all the way to the crematorium. This is insider art by a profoundly pathological insider.

Ben Portis, June 14, 2009



Chronic Depression - 1997, ink, graphite and crayon on paper, 8.25 x 11.75 inches



Psychotropic - 2000, ink, graphite and crayon on paper, 8.25 x 11.75 inches



Painting - 1998, ink, graphite and crayon on paper, 8.25 x 11.75 inches

Road Show - The Traveling Drawers - July 01 - August 31, 2009

Each summer Headbones, The Drawers, Gallery does a cross country tour with a portable exhibition in tow in order to introduce curators, collectors, art appreciators and the curious general to new works on paper.

The Travelling Drawers, 2009, features *The Prison Drawings*, a selection of ink and coloured pencil drawings by Charles Bronson, collages by Scott Ellis, oil paintings on paper and panel by Rob Farmer and gouaches and bronzes by Julie Oakes.



Traveling Drawers on the road - Fogarty & Oakes, 2009

Definitely Superior Art Gallery

Rub Out Gallery, July 3, 2009



Definitely Superior Rubout Gallery posters - Thunder Bay, Ontario

Chez Susanne

Kelowna, BC, July, 2009



Installation - Chez Susanne, Kelowna, British Columbia

Ashpa Naira Art Gallery

Vernon, BC, August, 2009



Ashpa Naira Gallery, Vernon, British Columbia

Contrary Projects

Regina, Saskatchewan, August 25, 2009



Contrary Projects - Regina, Saskatchewan

Summer Guest Resident - Documentary Film maker Sepp Bruderman

The *Lab* is presented by Sepp Brudermann, resident curator and documentary film maker from Vienna, Austria at Headbones Gallery, Toronto. During July and August Headbones Gallery will be transformed into Brudermann's laboratory and recruitment station.

Brudermann's proposal:

"The LAB" is a deconstruction. A laboratory of methods. A film production. An artist's studio. An office. A labyrinth. A recruitment station. A discovery.

In 2010 Sepp R. Brudermann will shoot a film, a documentary experiment - "THE ARK EXPERIMENT". A film about a possible future, a film about the end of the world as we know it, nuclear war and collapse, about a permanent crisis and unknown possibilities, a film about fear.

In the beautiful village of OOooOO there is the biggest self-made nuclear shelter in the world. During the LAB we are looking for 100 volunteers to go down into that shelter and pre-enact the end of the world next year. We are looking for "THE 100 SURVIVORS".

We will live and work in the gallery and challenge traditional research methods by tackling our subject from different angles using an eclectic choice of artistic media which in the end will result in a synergetic whole - the film.

Every weekend from July 10th onwards there will be events, dinners, concerts and lectures.



"The Lab" Headbones Gallery - Toronto, Ontario

Back To The Garden - September 11 - October 4, 2009

Joni Mitchell, raised in Saskatchewan, wrote "Back to the Garden" and in 1969, forty summers ago, it was performed by Crosby, Stills and Nash at Woodstock. Held by baby boomers and successive generations of eco-minded youth as a rallying chorus for affirmative positivism; the song focused on the need to reconcile the impact of progress with holistic idealism. As Torontonians return to the city where cultural inspiration replaces the natural regeneration of summertime, four visual artists - Angiola Churchill, Donna Kriekle, Ortansa Moraru and Christian Bernard Singer - extend the season in *Back to the Garden*, opening - pointedly - on September Eleventh at Headbones Gallery.

In Angiola Churchill's pristine white paper installation, *Sacred Grove*, a fresh breeze rustles the floating, feminine florals as Singer's moss installation infuses the gallery with a deep earthy smell. Moraru's woodblock or tempera prints of, aptly, trees stands firm with the solidity of her master technique. And from Saskatchewan as well, Donna Kriekle presents fulsome berries, crisp ripe apples and the niggle of grasshoppers under prairie blue skies.

Beauty is presupposed in a garden visit, pleasure anticipated. *Back to the Garden* at Headbones Gallery will fulfill the expectations.



Back To The Garden - Headbones Gallery

Angiola Churchill

Back To The Garden

The *Sacred Grove* never arrived. It left New York City via Greyhound Express on September 3 in a blue suitcase: destination – Buffalo where Headbones Gallery was to receive it and drive it up to Toronto. It never arrived in Buffalo.

Angiola Churchill's paper installation *Winter Labyrinth* had been presented at Headbones Gallery in the exhibition *Abstract, Black and White* and then as a feature installation in the exhibition *Aligning with Beauty* at The Varley Gallery of Markham Ontario - to great acclaim. The labour in Churchill's art work is extreme. The delicate paper forms have been twisted or folded into shape and then assembled as strands to form the ethereal gardens that have graced galleries and museums throughout Europe and America. Angiola Churchill is a senior artist, Professor Emeritus and founder of New York University's Masters Venice Program. She has assembled a select group of volunteers who twist as they discuss philosophy, suggested readings and art. Many have been Churchill's students and hold secondary or terminal degrees. All have great respect for her work and hence have contributed to the making of it. This attests to the gravity of the missing *Sacred Grove* – a work made from the labour and dedication of many hands.

"Who has seen this child?" Posted signs pleading for information on missing children recall the placards with photos of their men missing in action worn by European women as the trains brought back the soldiers. Both invoke a similar sense of desperation.

"Who has seen this suitcase? This art work?" As tribunals still scour the archives of museums, auction houses and galleries for art works absconded during wars, so we continue the search for the *Sacred Grove*. It has become allegorical in proportion. The accustomed channels have been exhausted. Message machines have been more frequent than live correspondents at the other end of the telephone lines. Thorough searches have been made of baggage rooms. And behind the efforts, a niggling awareness of the warning on intercoms in transport stations - "do not leave your bags unattended" - this background admonition since the anticipation of terrorism¹ became disproportional to the threat; causes concern.

Was Angiola Churchill's suitcase deemed dangerous and destroyed? Has anyone opened it since it left her assistant's able hands? What has become of the *Sacred Grove*?

Any information or advice on the possible recovery of this piece will be greatly appreciated.



The Sacred Grove - 2009, detail from paper installation, 12 x 12 feet

Donna Kriekle

Back To The Garden

Kriekle works in seasons with cycles overlaying and rejuvenating imagery that has been embedded in our understanding of man's relationship to his physicality since he first depicted. By capturing the ever-changing, it becomes frozen in time and thus enables possession of the fleeting moment. The rendering of cycles in series helps to position the human species within the context of the natural world while still recognising man's dominion, that of the overview, the ability - unique to our species - of imagining the greater picture. Kriekle does this to perfection, displaying the sophistication with her impeccable technique. The complex overlays of her watercolour technique imitate the individuality of the moment. She paints the *marvel* of the subject so that the viewer can appreciate her capacity to arrest time through her creation with equivalent wonder.

The subject, quotidian at first glance, immediately leaps to the superior because she is so good at depicting it. It is the bridge that allows us to accept her engagement with the less demonstrative aspects of our existence - the sky, flora and even the 'meagre' as in her grasshopper series. It is the moment when the meek inherit the earth, as she brings them into play and then to significance. The visibility of the uniqueness of the natural phenomena ennobles what we might otherwise pass by in our busy lives. It lifts the subject up to us from the unnoticeable to attraction. Each work shows the precious individuality of the subject. *World View, 1991* grants the ultimate overview of this philosophy with the Earth in all of its shiny glory offered as a gift - the biggest present imaginable.

Kriekle's works are covetable. The inherent beauty of the object and its ability to inspire reflection and thankfulness - the sky-gazing, flower-smelling, woods-strolling aspects of our lives - is brought within the range of possession. Even from modernity's concrete isolation, the connection to the healing cycles of life in fullness and fecundity achieve importance as time ticks by. In *Taste, 1995*, Kriekle expressly addresses time in relation to the fruitful.

The 2009 *Cycles of Life* are morally identifiable to all. From the fresh pink apple blossoms to the dry and crumbling autumn leaves, we are confronted by the brutal honesty of our limited life span. We can identify. The dignity that Kriekle brings to her work, both technical and compositional, makes the bitter pill of life's fleetingness quite a pleasant swallow.



Cycle of Life - 2009, watercolour on paper, 22 x 22 inches

Ortansa Moraru

Commentary by Ciprian Radovan

Ortansa Moraru is an artist with solid professional training and an excellent native capacity for analysis and synthesis at the same time. Her creative patterns stem most often from immediate reality but also from a clear conceptual and spiritual incursion in her own biography. This is a participative way to enter the state of doing and sensing the stimulating ambiance of the artistic act in its progress, with all the individual complexity and all the joy of imagery genesis.

Also capable of using with excellent skill a large diversity of styles and techniques, going through various printmaking means (xylography, linocut, lithography, etching, monotype) or nonconventional mixed techniques towards painting; she is clearly realizing her creative potential. The receptivity, the inspiration, the feeling and the dream are complemented by always keeping the illusion of spontaneity, without any exhaustion or alteration of freshness. Moraru knows how to emphasize a holistic state fully accomplished, through the constructive succession of details and the orchestrated definition of dynamic meanings.

It is important to underline that, in essence, the art of Ortansa Moraru is neither narrative nor declarative. It induces an adjacent perception of making the invisible visible by exposing the truth of things with a coherence typical to the true artist since her ideate fluency is supported by an impeccable professional competence.

Ciprian Radovan art critic
Timisoara, Romania



Roots III - 2009, woodcut, printed on Japanese paper, 48 x 24 inches

Christian Bernard Singer

Back To The Garden

Christian Bernard Singer's closeness to the land through the use of the organic substance moss - a cryptogamic plant of the class *Musci* that is rich with romantic associations - can be related to historical landscape artwork. The use of the landscape as subject in order to describe symbolic or associative states, from religious allegory to psychic metaphor, is a traditional practice. The use of the landscape, the organic material, as medium raises stakes to encompass the ephemeral for moss has a shelf life at odds with the idea of longevity built into collections and museums. The question of maintenance arises which brings another concept into play as the relative life cycles of all organic substances are dependant upon ongoing care which is a concept not necessarily associated with an art piece. We have come to think of a work of art as being immutable through time. The inevitability of disintegration is however a fact no matter how solid the substance, how stalled the 'return to dust'. Art tends to try and fool the process by setting up an immortality of sorts as the work of the artist lives on beyond his personal life span. But who lives longer, man or moss?

The term 'moss back' is used for a gamut of characters from extreme conservative to hillbilly or backwoods person to old turtle. It speaks of the idea that one who grows moss is slow. That moss grows in moist places, as tufts or carpets and is not so firmly rooted as to make it hard to remove from its habitat makes it a substance able to be mutated.

The conversations that Christian Bernard Singer begins with his moss installations are as flighty and fanciful as the fairyland that moss creates. *Initiations of Spring* with the title romantic and the structure for the floating moss a bedspring brings a Midsummer Night's Dream to the fore. Transformation myths, magical dreams and pagan rituals connect to the sensuous perceptions where the soft mossy parts of bodies stir on cushy beds. *Back to the Garden* with the cry for sexual liberation that came along with the sixties is resurrected.

With Singer's ... *and the Creator*, aptly described as "an installation in moss of various dimensions", a cartographic idea comes to mind as the mossy island on a white wall becomes the landscape as seen from a God's eye viewpoint. What could defy mortality more than a kinship to the everlasting through such an implied divine inference?



... and the Creator - 2009, mosses and wood, 70 x 135 inches

Minutial Matters, October 16 - November 9, 2009

Six artists reveal their obsessive ability in *Minutial Matters*. From New York, Ruth Waldman's works has been honoured in exhibitions that ranged from a concentration on size and detail to spotlighting the disguised eroticism of her characters. Katia Santibanez, also from New York where Pace Editions is currently showing her work, speaks an erotic visual language as well but hers is one of tickling hairs and sensuous wavering. Daniel Hanequand's miniature paintings on panels reveal an intimate futuristic realm that has been executed with such care that wonder follows on perusal. He is an accomplished master of his own universe. Two emerging artists introduce their latest works. Cole Swanson who was trained in India in the art of miniature painting airs his skills with a contemporary subject matter. These paintings must be exhibited under glass for so delicate is the surface that even a drop of moisture can disturb the perfection. Mitsuo Kimura, from Tokyo, presents small paintings on stretched paper that recall Japanese animation, fabrics and design wherein he tells of his reactions to the western world in lively saturated colours and stylised characters. And re-emerging from Toronto is Larry Eisenstein's full-on obsessive doodles of evolving forms and obfuscated narratives.

Clearly, these artists have "sweated the small stuff", spent time with a magnifying glass and exerted patience born of dedicated practices.



Minutial Matters - Headbones Gallery

Minutial Matters

We are exhorted to “pay attention to details” and by doing so the larger endeavours will fall into place. We have been counselled to acknowledge “the power of one” and to focus on the importance of the individual, no matter how small or inconsequential. Conversely, we have also been advised “not to sweat the small things”. Man’s fascination with minutiae extends into the sciences where microscopic discoveries illuminate health, engineering and physics. The ability of the eye to delve ever tinier has been aesthetically grasped in carvings on grains of rice, Roman enamels, Persian miniatures and renaissance religious icons. The applied arts have grappled with such preciously minuscule treasures as tapestries made of hair and beaded carpets.



Minutial Matters - Headbones Gallery

Mitsuo Kimura

Minutial Matters

Murakami branded Japanese contemporary art just as Louis Vuitton with Murakami branded his product and the repetition of Murakami imagery in the fashion world spread the brand far further than the exclusive realms of Fine Art. When Warhol used products as his subject, Pop was born. Murakami used art on products and marketing art through secondary products gained in significance. Authenticity, already in question due to mechanical reproduction, assumed a new definition with the signature of the artist no longer the mark of phenomenology as factories fabricated, assistants produced and the hand and gesture of the artist was firmly eradicated. Still, the look, which after all is the overriding criteria of visual art, remained in tact - a Murakami is easily recognisable. There are certain traits that lead to the recognition – the cartoon characters, wide eyed and big headed, the delicate shading often in saccharin, close to fluorescent colors, the symbolic imaging of the elements, the reduction of natural floral and fauna to design and the negation of the individual expression of the artist in favour of a slick and impersonal finish. All of these elements can also be found in traditional Japanese paintings, screens and fabrics with the exception of the exaggerated features and heads that mark a more contemporary handling of character best referenced in cartoons. Therefore, the first impressions of similarity between Mitsuo Kimura's work and Murakami's, or the derivative implications that the work of the older and established artist might have affected the young and emerging are over ridden by the more likely impact of an overall Japanese historicity on the work of the young Kimura.

The association to traditional miniature painting where narrative is foremost falls in line with Kimura's attesting to the biographical subject matter in his work. He relates his adventures in Canada where he is currently visiting from Japan, within these finely painted panels. Personal storytelling motivates the imagery and from his private image bank he has created a particular set of beings that are more akin to his journey than to general cartoon characters. Repeated use of a face on what could be a finger bring simple finger puppets into a world where the scrolled clouds, water patterning, formulaic fires, lotus blossoms and clustering of small motifs set the scene in a Japanese context. The finish is so perfectly accomplished that there is not a trace of the messier aspects of the visual diary. Emotion is radically expressed in the cartoon explosiveness of the dominating characters such as the



The Missing Animals - 2009, Acrylic and pencil on paper, 9 x 12 inches

spiked and maniacal visage portrayed in *Anger*. This 12 x 16 inch format pops with the vibrancy of both youth and exuberance and establishes itself as a force not be ignored. Kimura's work shows the self absorption of a generation where the identification with the look of the times is securely fastened to experience.



Anger - 2009, Acrylic and pencil on paper, 12 x 16.5 inches



Green Seed - 2009, Acrylic and pencil on paper, 10 x 8 inches

Cole Swanson

Minutial Matters

Miniatures were made to tell a story and to be easily transportable and readable for both the illiterate and literate. They would depict recognisable spaces and the narrative would be one that also resonated with the viewer. The subject was broached in such a manner as to include as much as possible of what had come before the scene depicted and also gives hints as to what would happen next. Most poignant are the Indian miniature paintings that told of loved ones meeting with the expectation of the encounter welling and the results implied. Because it took such a long time to paint a miniature, the subject matter and staging of it was carefully planned so as to take advantage of the moment on view. Symbolism was often used so that the details and their significance could be maximised. The painter was taking the viewer on a wee journey within a small perimeter and attempting to make that experience as wonderful as the means would allow. Erotic miniatures also maximised the potency of the intimate encounter through the necessity for closeness.

Cole Swanson, in *Bitter March*, records the journey that he makes daily in his commute between Toronto and Mississauga where he is the curator of the Living Art Center. The border is a highway just as the dimensions of the world experienced within a commute is framed by the road. The bird's eye view of the looping overpasses form a decorative backdrop for the sole occupant of the picture, a woman Swanson noticed in passing from the inside seclusion and hermetic headspace of the commute. She is no one special and her dress leaves few clues as to her personality, background, state of mind or circumstance. She could be the 'everywoman', the common denominator of modern life, heading somewhere but with no particular definition, the generic human, socially indifferent and ambivalent. Relating back to the history of miniature painting and how it hooked in to the daily life and knowledge of the viewer so that it reinforced the tale of existence as most knew it as a common narrative of the time – Cole Swanson is maintaining the authenticity of the format.

How innocuous is the modern dilemma, the common narrative? Is there an underlying element of manipulation in the way that we have become accustomed to living? The potential for coercion is made clear in the series that Swanson has just embarked upon that employs the installation of an air freshener (the brand that is depicted in the miniature) in close proximity to the painting. Even the sense of smell is controlled and here lies the rub – for to a portion of the population air freshener scents are an anathema. To some even toxic, artificial scents are the



Exaltation (Two Squirrels and a Junkie) - 2009, Opaque watercolour and gold on wasli, 9 x 13 inches

basic ingredients of environmental fatigue. The argument for the dictatorship of the viewer could come into play when the artist attempts to influence not only the vision but the scent.

This sets up another dynamic for the miniature was also meant to be an intimate viewing as in miniatures that have been used for the expression of the erotic. To juxtapose a close encounter with the imposition of atmospheric control through scent, a sense that can awaken memories as it creates new impressions; is to maximise the minitual. But much like the audio recording of an installation piece, whether or not the scent stimulus is left on during the entire duration of the exhibition run or not is probably dependant on the gallerist's stoicism to endure the intervention.

Swanson's miniature paintings have indeed brought the common narrative up to date.



Glade - 2009, Opaque watercolour and gold on wasli, 5 x 5 inches



Bitter March - 2009, Opaque watercolour on wasli, 9 x 13 inches

Larry Eisenstein

Minutial Matters

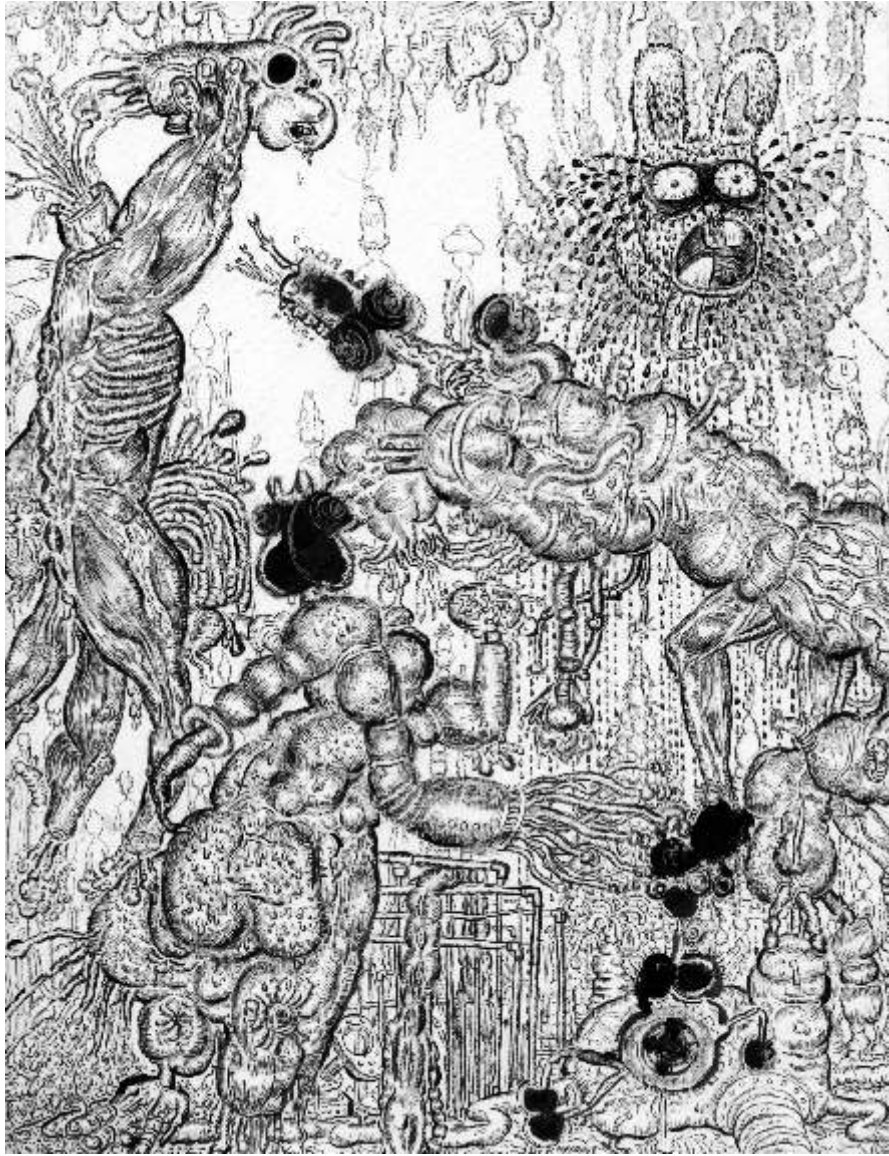
In the presence of little ones, soft words are spoken, doors are closed quietly and care is taken not to step on toes. With awareness of the other person in mind and of personal proximity within the order of things, orientation towards the small one becomes inclusive with a positive co-dependency that could be upset if there was a voice too dominant. This approach allows for the beauty of small things to come forward and be appreciated. The biblical phrase “the meek shall inherit the earth” is often at odds, ignored in fact, in competitively driven social orders such as modernity produces. 'Meek' is defined as “humbly patient”, with the respectful attitude towards the small line and the delicate image that it brings forth. Eisenstein enables the meek. His is an attitude of inclusion and cooperation that encourages wonder in the minuscule. His practice allows the less demonstrative to step forward.

The relationship between the size of the human body and the size of a work of art has come into play through the ages primarily in terms of 'larger'. The gesture of the fingers and the small distances traveled compare to the swings and swirls of the arm extended outwards to grow even bigger with the trajectories of paint as it splashes outwards in abstract expressionism (Pollock). The all-encompassing potential for immersion in color field work, the prevalence of the contemporary trend towards the total surround of installation work or the factories producing work by artists such as Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst; all are in competition with the size of the body and our ability to accomplish the act of the art making. The art work overwhelms the body. With Larry Eisenstein's work, however, the body determines the connection in a more submissive manner for the detail of the imagery is so intense that the perception is dependant on the viability of the eyes to perceive. One must move in close, develop intimacy. There is a direction that originates from the viewer to move into the frame of perceptual relevance. The viewer, therefore, is the one in control of receiving, not the art work. This is an instance of co-operation between the maker and the viewer, the giver and the receiver.

There is a feminine aspect in the coloured swirls of *I love you, heart* that reflects the new found freedom of post modernism to claim from areas not necessarily deemed 'strong'. Once again, comparing the posturing of abstract expressionism with its muscular, masculine bravado to Eisenstein's commitment to a more delicate visual vocabulary that references floral, curlicue, organic forms; the movement of liberated artistic decision towards the small and non

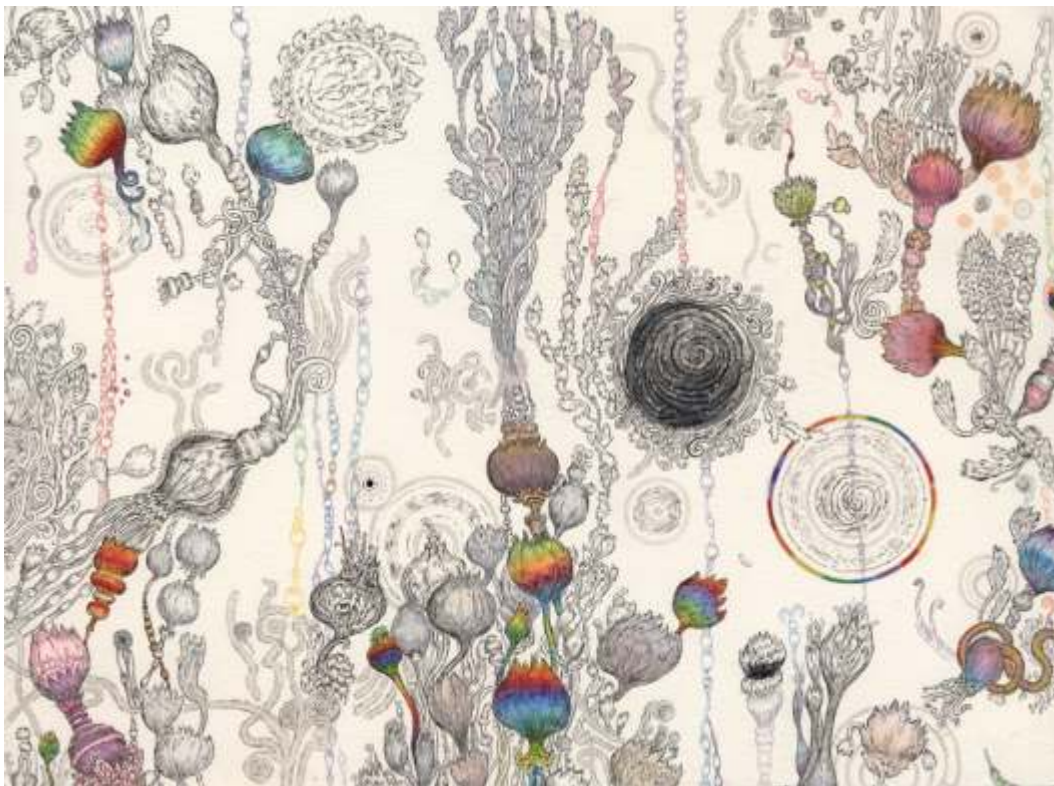


I Love You, Heart - 2009, Ink and gouache on paper, 15 x 10.5 inches



Plasmeato - 2009, Ink on paper, 11 x 8.5 inches

demonstrative becomes a radical progression. That Eisenstein combines the grotesque with his organic referencing rounds out the picture. Like the revelations of Ernst Haeckel's pivotal imaging in *Art Forms in Nature*, the relevance of design and beauty to the edification of mankind is confirmed in Eisenstein's work.



Rainbooboo - 2009, Ink and pencil on paper, 9 x 12 inches

Daniel Hanequand

Minutial Matters

Daniel Hanequand treats each one of his paintings like a parent caring for his child, concerned for his destiny. His close examination and careful nurturing pays astute attention to each individual nuance and even when he has finished with them and put on the crowning touches, his work seems attached to him. A 'Hanequand' is clearly identified as having come from his family. The Hanequand name doesn't even have to be read in the signature for the resemblance between pieces is noticeable, more like a family resemblance. You can tell they are a 'Hanequand' just by looking at them. They possess a similar personality, a strangeness that sets them apart from the normal and that itself is a compliment for were they to be deemed 'normal' they would be classed inappropriately. They are far from mundane. The Hanequands are an exceptional breed and the miniatures, like small children, are especially endearing.

Daniel Hanequand has thrown out the old and created a new sociological order with the swagger of a true French revolutionary. He has upturned existing, stuck and rather boring functional ways and invented a different breed of humanoid and then placed the beings into relationships and a context of his own making. When Paul Klee abstracted the figure, he turned from depiction, sorted the elements through cubism and then dove into the signification of abstraction and geometry. Hanequand is a 'curvist' rather than a cubist, softening the fractured space and creating a world view that is more akin to poetry than documentation. There is an abounding lyricism in his work which leaves room for the outsider, the viewer, to enter and rewrite the Hanequand story in tales of a more personal telling. Just as abstraction leaves room to invent narrative, so these characters as they exist within their peculiar architectonic, leave room for interpretation for they are believable. They have arrived, inhabited our consciousness and left an indelible imprint yet there is room for the exchange that happens between the viewer and the art work that leads to a refreshed interpretation of the work on each new meeting.

The miniatures are spookier than the larger paintings as if they are inhabited by foundling children with a built in vulnerability that increases their 'otherness'. Although many have a deathly intonation, it is not the screaming, howling land of phantoms or ghosts that he portrays but the luminous beauty of the spectral. Hanequand's skulls, for instance, are handsome remnants of a fleshier physicality. Eyes glow like soft bulbs with a romantic low light. The muted colours bring to mind tinted photographs brought back to earth from outer space or a postcard that arrives from an unknown sender who has been touring a fantastic underworld. The



Heat - 2003, Oil on Masonite, 4 x 4 inches

miniatures inspire the question as to what inhabits the mind of the creator. The answer contains elements associated with the heavenly realms of the afterlife, the side of 'strange' that is aligned with the unique and special rather than the frightening.

Hanequand has begat a world under cover of unassuming smallness. It is completely self generating - falling in love, procreating and inspiring attention. Exquisitely rendered (few hairs on tiny brushes) with an elliptical naturalism, the beings have taken over and left Daniel Hanequand slightly bewildered and bemused that they are so independently sure of themselves once weaned from his careful upbringing.



Urban Jungle - 2008, Oil on Ivory, 5 x 7 inches



Survivor - 2003, Oil on Ivorine, 2.5 x 2.5 inches

Katia Santibanez

Minutial Matters

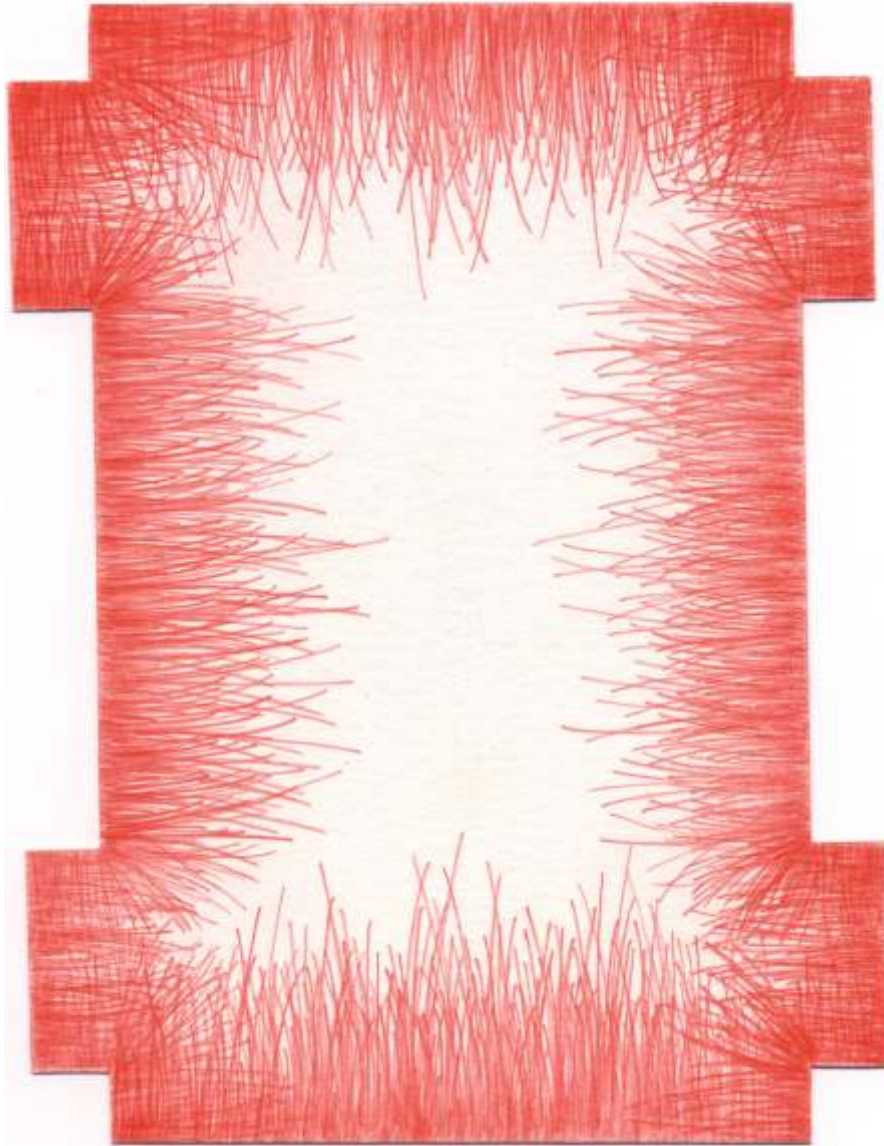
As fragile and delicate in her person as her wispy lines, Katia Santibanez' drawings exhibit tenacious patience. Not only is her work made of small markings, but the strokes are repetitious which means that again and again and again she makes the mark that grows under her attention into significance by virtue of her careful tending.

The incomprehensibility of the miniscule and of the miniscule in large numbers in particular, is a reference for philosophical musing. It can be connected to the sublime for it brings comprehension up a level and transforms the quotidian. There is a comparison made to the omnipotent perspective as being so acute that it recognises the importance of each blade of grass. The drawing, 2 / C,C / 34, for instance, is reminiscent of grass, ordered grass a lawn in fact. The perception of the importance of the single blade to the lawn is perceived at the intersection between that which is 'of the earth' and that which is 'made in heaven'. Katia Santibanez has physically understood the relationship between the fine and individual perfection of a blade and the lawn and brought it into comprehension.

Like the transcendental leap from the physical to the spiritual as a mantra is intoned, the hair-like lines drift above the mere suggestion of organic to an elevated comprehension of the workings of the relational. The link to the omnipotent perspective occurs when individualism, by inclusion in the grouping of similarities, joins with other individuals to form a pattern. The phenomena of focus comes into play as the close-up reveals the individual and then the pan-out reveals the pattern. Adages recommending taking a step away become pertinent.

Psychological distance enables an objective picture of that which can be blurred by subjectivity. To comprehend the truth of individuality it is necessary to subsume intimacy and back off. Yet the experience of the close-at-hand fuels that move towards comprehension for without the impetus to examine from different perspectives the status quo reigns in the inertia of comfort.

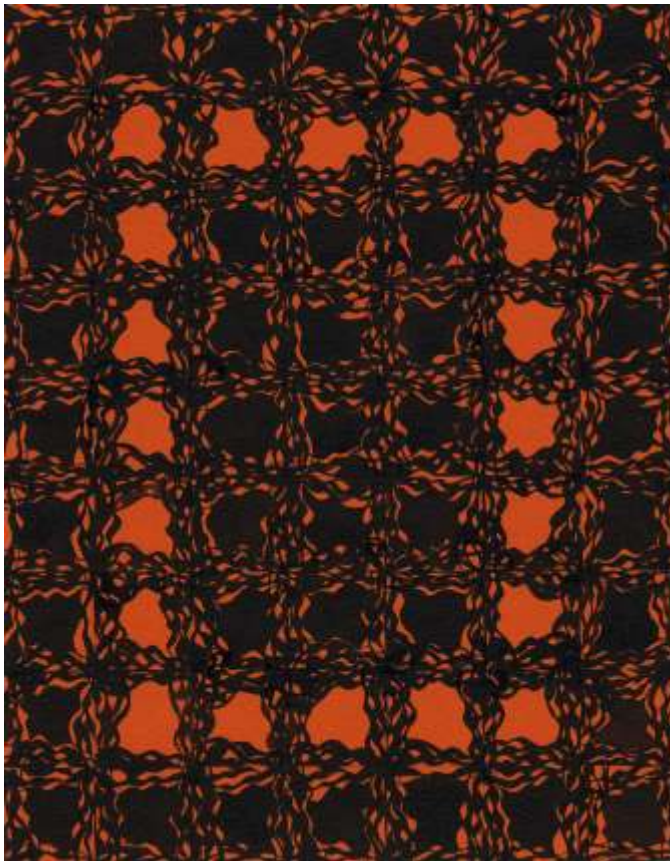
Katia Santibanez' work is challenging. It challenges comprehension on a number of levels the first being actuality. What exactly is it that she is revealing? Is there a biological reference from the outside world (grass, hair, membranes, threads, brushes)? Is she drawing from the innerscape, that world inside the head where, with eyes closed, connections made by the brain's lively synapses form a display much like a circuit board? There is implied movement in the delicate lines – waiver, shimmer, pulse – or perhaps it is the path that we follow, retracing her



Shape In Red - 2009, Color Pencil on shaped paper, 5 x 3.5 inches

hand and the journey it has taken.

Is this pure drawing? Is this path that her hand describes solely about mark-making, a realisation of the practice of drawing? If this is the case then the repetition of her fibrous line is the personality and character trait that rules the Santibanez heavens. It is because she is in tune with this network of careful cross connections that she relays the message outwards. Impressed by the



work these small drawings entail, their object-ness overrides the practice in the phenomenology of the art work.

Within relatively small formats (in an art world that tends to oversize), Santibanez inspires the respect due to a monumental task.

Sometime, Somehow - 2009, Black ink on orange paper, 7 x 5.5 inches



The Orange and Red Paradise - 2009, Color pencil on paper, 7 x 5.5 inches

Ruth Waldman

Minutial Matters

Ruth Waldman's work deserves a second look and this leads to a third and then a fourth and an eventual examination of what at first glance might have appeared to be an overall delicate yet undemonstrative design. It is like the role of 'the new woman' - sexy, competent, knowledgeable, secure, multidimensional and far deeper than the saccharine colors the feminine aspect presents as a first impression.

Waldman's work has progressed from the allusions to bondage and sadomasochism exhibited in 2004-2006. Although these pieces could hold their own in respectable circles, clothed as they were with decorum and appealing to an aristocratic sensibility; they were cultivated in the secret assignations where bondage, trusses and slings enhance pleasure and bring it into refinement. It was the realm of the Victorian lady, looking prim and pretty until the petticoats rise and all hell can break loose with a lascivious spill of imaginative cavorts.

Perhaps the table turned when, petticoats having risen, Waldman became a mother. Replacing the multiple permutations and twisted going-ons of a promiscuous bunch of freaky creatures; there is a pattern of interdependency suggesting nurturing. There is a clearer symbolic masculine (the pipes, spikes and hard edges) and feminine (florals and botanicals). Drips and squirts abide in abundance with mammatocumulus shapes featuring in the often playful dynamics of interconnectedness. The similarities of the invented shapes to children's toys (water-guns, kinetic plastic characters or hummingbird feeders) echo the bounty of life much like Renoir's rosy cheeked women and children laid claim to the validity of effervescence as artistic subject matter in an art world accustomed to concentrating on the heavier aspects of life.

Embroidery, needlework, and water coloring were once used to keep nervous female imaginations within a lady-like fold. Waldman's work is clear evidence of hours of patient execution. Waldman's disciplined, detailed and delicate touch is evidence enough of their origins. The wonder lies in the duality of both purpose and effect. As the discipline and talent of the finely crafted piece recedes into the awareness of close inspection, the strange fecund imagination of one of the 'gentler sex' leaves a fascinating possibility in its wake. Waldman's seemingly feminine perspicacious leanings are even more enticing when we examine her naughtiness.



Untitled, 052 - 2008, Colored pencil on paper, 12 x 9 inches



Untitled, 048 - 2007, Colored pencil on paper, 26 x 20 inches



Yellow Monster - 2002, Colored pencil on paper, 24 x 18 inches

Headbones, Booth 1034 at TIAF, October 22-26, 2009

Twenty-one Headbones Gallery featured artists have *Passed The Buddha* with Julie Oakes

Pass the Buddha is a meditation on non-attachment and universal consciousness.

It starts with a wood panel over which canvas is stretched and a yellow ground is applied, reminiscent of light and also referencing Tibetan butter sculptures, Chinese ivories and gold icons. A composition consisting of renditions of the Buddha, Bodhisatvas or attendant deities, referencing drawings sourced from the Far Eastern Collection (Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Indian) of the Royal Ontario Museum, is painted by Julie Oakes and then the panel is passed to another artist inviting them to add on to the work, to 'disturb the Buddha'.

Trying to maintain respect for the work already accomplished but also to further the visual journey, the egocentric stance of creation is mitigated in the light of the collaboration. This philosophically falls in line with the concept of non-attachment while allowing for a coupling of visual vocabularies.

To date, *Pass the Buddha* has been an open ended project that is as serendipitous as creation. The natural progression to inviting another artist to distract the composure of the Buddha is aligned with the Buddhist precept that task, practice and profession should be 'right' and take into consideration the furthering of mankind's positive aspects. It has also, without intention, become a multi cultural project as the artists have roots in many ethnicities. Ortansa Moraru and Irina Dascalu are from Romania, Aleks Bartosik - Poland, Srdjan Segan - Serbia, Morgan McKinney - Bahamas, Ashley Johnson - South Africa, Jesse McCloskey - USA, Zotz Collective - Mexico, Cesar Forero - Colombia, Mahmoud Meraji - Iran, Stephan Bircher - Switzerland and Gyurme Sonam, from Tibet, being the artist who is most rooted in Buddhist Iconography. From Canadian origin, participating artists include Diane Feught - BC, Heidi Thompson - BC, Scott P. Ellis - ON, Scott McEwan - ON, Gord Smith - ON, George Dewitte - ON, Robert Bigelow - BC, Christian Bernard Singer - ON and Robert Farmer - ON.



Toronto International Art Fair 2009 - Headbones Gallery

Spunky Rooms, November 13 - December 7, 2009

On **November 13, Friday**, Headbones Gallery opens an exhibition of works by two women artists; Robin Tewes, a mature New York artist who deals in images derived from domestic environments and Aleks Bartosik, who's autobiographically based, narrative drawings are introduced at the opening reception with a drawing performance.

Spunky women - Tewes' quiet resignation breaking out with military fierceness and Bartosik's seemingly virginal demeanour kicking her heels with spirited naughtiness, ready to be frisked. Unseemly women, their work is not in keeping with standard norms of taste and form. Each is rebellious. Neither is ladylike.



Spunky Rooms - Headbones Gallery

Dark Karma

Uncensored Thoughts on the Work of Aleks Bartosik by James D. Campbell

Picture this: Outsider artist Henry Darger prone on the gurney -- stripped, prepped and in constraints, waiting for a sex change op with no anaesthetic in sight, surrounded by his endearing Vivian girl heroines who are all holding steel tongs, trephines and Liston knives hidden behind their backs. This image comes effortlessly to mind when reflecting upon the work of Aleks Bartosik, for she does imaginative violence to Darger's demented, misogynistic *phantasia* as a gifted feminist artist unafraid of exploring her own dark side. She reclaims something of his territory as being ineluctably her own.

She shaves his work of what has been called its obsessively phallogocentric taxonomy and turns it on its head. No erect penises grafted onto young girls here. You might say she harrows up his soul from the nether regions where it has languished these last many years, draws and quarters it -- and makes it unapologetically her own, Kali-like. I do not mean to suggest that there is anything like stylistic affiliation at work here aside from a similarly put-upon, at-high-risk repertoire of painting subjects, but only that Bartosik shares with Darger in a welter of fever-dream-like imagery what has been called a "near hallucinatory intensity". (1)

In any case, her visionary work has an inflammatory aura, an unsettling, potentially *wound-like* resonance. The mercury here often rises to near-boiling point. Once she gets the hooks in, you're *hers*. She particularizes with weird acumen those extreme fugue states of identity and desire that vex us in the life-world and puts paint to them -- and with beguiling virtuosity for an artist with only a bare decade of work behind her. In fact, all her work to date has been rife with telling psychological as well as oft-demonic, almost inassimilable sociological tropes. Like those of fellow painters Eliza Griffiths (mutable gender/identities) and Marion Wagschal (potent duende generators), her figures are triumphant painting events as well as psychic integers of chiasm and dark karma. Bartosik now joins their ranks as a feminist figurative painter exploring issues of gender and identity and psychological adversity in topical, intrepid and unforeseen ways.

Here is a visual artist capable of inordinately deft mark-making routines -- and a breathtaking delicacy in her rendering of the figure even when associated imagery is at its most dramatically wayward and extreme. However fraught with figures *in extremis* her work is, she knows what she is about. And it shows. She renders flesh jackets as angst-ridden playgrounds, and auratic red watercolor wash less as pancake makeup than spilled amniotic fluid or lifeblood -- and she does so with a casual authority few others have or can.



her existence only failed to honour her own "myth") - 2009, Acrylic, conte, pencil +oil on canvas, 50 x 48 inches

She works her drawn figures into a state of uncanny, even *vibratory* self-presence, grafting animal parts onto human parts and vice versa with radiant vestigial crossovers until just the right threshold of psychic density has been reached. One might suggest that she is a creature of perfect control – or one all too willing to put herself in harm's way with no safety net in sight for the sake of her art. Hers' is a no-holds-barred exploration of a twilight psychological space as harrowing as it is authentic.

The truth is that Bartosik the artist and presumably the person is entirely *unafraid*. She recognizes fear as being the true *mindfucker* and resists it at every turn. Her works are at once subversive and provocative, celebrating rupture over continuity and continuity over rupture, as a means of ownership, avowal and perhaps overcoming. Her female figures are rendered with rare skill in open arenas of suffering and transformation – and with a consummately theatrical, take-no-prisoners bravado. But their rendering also possesses an aching, even heartbreaking, subtlety that betrays the sheer sophistication of this artist's understanding of human psychology and the need for excess as a way of working-through the perils of the present tense.

Her corpus represents her own unique take on Eden's night side and its in!. While she detonates conventional narrative structure with all the delirium of a single heartfelt image wrested from the mind's eye and sent full-tilt over the edge of every orthodoxy and every expectation, we still infer from her painting content that it is always told in the first person -- I mean, that Aleks Bartosik herself is the subject, the sole *agent provocateur* of her own wildly adumbrated reality, her Artaud-like cruelty theatre of the Real. With a repertoire that ranges freely from wall-drawings and performances to costume and painting, Bartosik demonstrates that her own personae are strongly inscribed across all these surfaces and spaces with what is frequently a karmic, unstoppable and almost demented Kali-like fury.

But it should be emphasized that her embodied Me always rests on the solid fundament of an empathic We. No mute solipsist, she. Bartosik never turns away from or denies the world, but embraces it – and its extremities -- at all costs and whatever the consequences. Her work investigates both self and other and their several interactive morphologies at the closest of quarters.

If her pictorial accomplishments apropos this human equation are profoundly multiple, well, it is probably because her painting world intermixes vulnerability and a lucid childlike innocence with disruptions characterized by an extreme violence and portents of a



(detail) two girls and two horses - 2007, acrylic + pencil on drafting papers on panel, 15.75 x 21.25 inches

polymorphous perversity. There is also a salutary ambiguity always already at work there, even in the face of such disruptive web-like tremors, a smudging of possible selves across the full gamut of the human. But governing all that is what one concludes is a hard-won self-awareness, a well-nigh omniscient clarity that reads as virtually absolute. In other words, hers is a clarity that triumphs over everything else.

Aleks Bartosik was asked not that long ago what inspired her and she responded with an understatement and honesty that still rings true:

"People. I'm inspired by the particularities, delicacies, sensitivities, beauties and obsessions held within relationships between lovers, siblings/twins, friends, strangers, or themselves. I like to observe the visible (and accessible) interactions between people and the situations they are placed in and re-create my own scenarios and my own environments and narrations." (2)

She is a gifted critic and surveyor of the Social, or say, better, a wily ethnographer of the inner and outer worlds of her female protagonists and their tangled skein of relationships in the lived world. Aleks *agonistes*. She is untangling a noose to catch her viewers' heads in, as she lures them into her own oneiric and ontologically fraught domain wherein they may experience pleasure, as she says, or experience a whole world of hurt heretofore only hinted at in the annals of their own lives or richly embedded there. She has said:

"I want the viewers to have experienced some sort of a visual pleasure. Entered some sort of an imaginary land or situation. I am not particularly sure what I would like them to say, but I know what I would like them to experience. Perhaps they may say something like: "That was strange." in a delightful sense or a frightened sense. The Horse Heads (a work in progress) are rooted in a larger and deeper narrative, but I purposefully want them to appear playful and child-like." (3)

That was strange. Yes, and surreal, too. But also emotionally true. Pleasurable? Often. Seductive? Yes. Painful, maybe, if truth be told. I have termed the characterizing ethos of her work "dark karma". But this is limiting, even misleading, especially where it dovetails with Buddhist teaching, because it only tells one side of the story, offers only half the truth, if you will. The whole truth is this: if there is dark karma in her work, there are also textures of light karma strewn out across its full array that invigorate and might well redeem the present tense of painting.

Perhaps Bartosik is reminding us – reminding *herself* as well, of course -- that this fragile life



Spunky Rooms - Headbones Gallery

we live, is, well, *fragile*, and overwhelmingly a consequence and not a mere souvenir or portent of how we have lived. A life lived in and through angst and psychic suffering (i.e. dark karma) is a consequence of having lived controlled by desire-nature. If a life lived meretriciously (i.e. light karma) is a result of having lived in control of desire-nature, well, Bartosik demonstrates that too, and in the very execution of these works, with their fearless mien, and transparent process-esthetic, and, above all, her will to move forwards restlessly from one medium to the next, all the while embroidering her signature cosmogony with myriad scars and cries of ecstatic joy and agony across the face of the life-world.

Arguably, her whole body of work, in its very ethic of execution and resolute “isness” in the world, can be fruitfully understood in terms of the concept of dark-and-bright action as the presence of wholesome and unwholesome features in the self-same action in Buddhist thought. (4) One might suggest that she is a savant of the lower worlds and perhaps intends that her work itself is an adamantine bridge towards overcoming desire-nature, making dark karma light, and triumphing over the specters of adversity by walking on air, seraph or sylph-like.

If you have the strength, if you possess the emotional wherewithal, the psychological stamina, and above all, if you are not afraid of the dark, Aleks Bartosik will take you by the hand and lead you over the threshold into the night side of Eden where she will proceed to take you places you've never been, show you things that you have never seen, and perhaps see the life run out of you. (5) Her invitation to the dark side of dreamland, writ in letters awash in blood, bruises and a tremulous beauty, is one hard to resist. Yes, this work stakes that kind of claim, possesses both a fiercely visceral *and* fiendishly auratic life, is not easily dismissed, and seldom forgotten.

In effect, Aleks Bartosik's art seesaws in arresting and exhilarating fashion between the purely abject and the authentically human; between a psychological hard place and a perilous beauty, as it were. Perilous because it trembles ghost-like on the threshold of disappearance as quickly as it is glimpsed, and morphs from dream into nightmare and back again in a bare nanosecond.

Not since Betty Goodwin left us (she died last autumn at the age of 85) has a Canadian artist measured and plumbed so fearlessly and with such remarkable acuity and devil-may-care abandon the hungry tides and restless shadows of the human heart.

James D. Campbell



she fell into nothingness and nothingness was wonderful - 2007, Acrylic + pencil on drafting papers on panel, 15.75 x 21.25 inches

Notes

1. See John M. MacGregor? *Henry Darger In The Realms of The Unreal* (New York: Delano Greenidge Editions, 2002).
2. Aleks Bartosik, cited in post submitted by Jen 11/28/2007 on *She Does the City.com*, online text.
3. Ibid.
4. See "Dark and Bright Karma: a New Reading" by Dr. Abraham Vélez de Cea of the Georgetown University Theology Department at <http://www.buddhistethics.org/karma12/velez01.pdf>.
As the author notes, this concept "has an enormous potential to explain the ethical behavior of many Buddhists. In this sense, the concept of dark-and- bright action bridges the gap between theory and practice in Buddhist ethics, that is, between the elitist and idealistic view of Buddhist ethics characteristic of Abhidharma literature, and the more common ethical practice of ordinary Buddhists."
5. As the malevolent spirit and splendidly righteous anti-heroine -- played by the inimitable Alice Krige -- said with relish in the film version of Peter Straub's *Ghost Story*.



Untitled (Venus # 9, Jen) - 2009, Acrylic, conte, pencil +oil on canvas, 48 x 48 inches

Peeping Tomatina

Ruminating on the Concealment of Robin Tewes' Rooms by Julie Oakes

Tewes does not consider the architectural domestic space within tropes usually associated with a woman's relationship to her home. These pristine, well kept rooms that she images are not the expression of the personality inhabiting the rooms. This 'general' home visualization has not had a house pride make-over. It is not the typical bourgeoisie backdrop but a series of generic stand-ins for a rooms, a symbolic over-all for the domestic situation, a concealment of otherness. Her secure style reinforces the insistence that the aberrations from the norm and subtle rebellions enacted within this picture of normality are on level ground. This is what it is like, she insists. It is this beige, monotonous, decorous domesticity that is making women less than they can be.

Tewes speaks of a loss of human potential that happens in the modern codification of style. But she finds a subtle release. On the periphery of perfect order, Venus rises (*All I Want is my Equal*). Within the boundaries, the truth comes out although within the immaculate kitchen, the corporeal woman is only a shade, a ghost of herself as in *Revision - #1 - Kitchen*

Or consider *I'm a Good Listener* where woman, as symbol, as beauty, as an object herself, is disembodied. Her reflection - the second image, a step of separation away from the original, away from the truth of objectivity - hangs suspended as she stands with her back towards us, with her feet in a clean white midrange bathtub, so that only the backside of her beauty is reflected back into this room of rooms. This room is not an ordinary bath room despite the lack of individuality. It is an odd room for a bath to be in; the carpeted floor, the living room arm chair, the drapes open to an expanse of blue that floats, dreamlike, outside of the room of all rooms, the one and only room. That there is not just one such painting, but several – studies, watercolour, pencil, coloured pencil – proves that Tewes, like Morandi and his repetitive subject matter, senses that with concentration and the dogged pursuit of objectness, truth will be revealed.

Everything about Tewes' rooms is middle-of-the-road. There is no exceptionality. There is no sign of character. It is important that the room en-frames. It sets up the nature of woman. Tewes' rooms are not an opportunity for a happy home maker to create an expression of herself. Nothing in Tewes' rooms has been changed, conquered, created other than the picture of the room, the art object and it is here, framed by a kind of plebeian gentleness, that the rebellion is launched.

There is a double blind at work in Tewes revelation of the truth. Behind the walls, in rooms,



All I Want Is My Equal - 2006, Oil on panel, 22 x 28 inches

in the privacy of enclosure, madness stews, bubbles and boils over like the spatter of fat from a frying pan staining the chrome fittings of a stove with a hard-to-see, difficult to scrub awayness. The orgasm of words that the pretty blonde head could not contain sprays like an unleashed tom cat and marks the domestic territory. Scribbles on the walls. Graffiti protests of social imbalances. There is unrest in this seemingly pristine environment and it is female. Hysteria. The madness of the woman who find herself, because it is her nature to nest, ensconced in an *idea* of a woman's place when really she is more than two dimensional. She is more than three dimensional. She is in the fourth dimension where intuition and lunar pull inform her wisdom.

How can change or growth come about if there is no fertilizer, no dirt, no messy menstrual blood, no birthing climate? The pacification of the masses through a working consumerism that was made possible through a wage that would support purchases that seemed to indicate progress - a toilet, a fridge, a TV, a car! - soothes the populace into believing that things are alright. It is only in social desperation that the concept of revolution can begin. Tewes draws aside the curtain of concealment that modernity and socialization has draw over the nature of woman. She finds reason to act out. And in the boundary of her insulated rooms, she reveals the craziness.

It brings to mind John Heidegger's concept of mankind as "standing reserve". Although Heidegger's 'en-framer' is modern technology it translates well into the sameness of modernity that came with generic homes. The essay by Ronald Godzinski, Jr. helps to clarify the relevance of Heidegger's philosophical concept as it can be applied to the work of Robin Tewes.

"From Heidegger's perspective, en-framing is the way in which truth reveals itself as standing-reserve. We simply cannot avoid its influence or sway. One is already in a relationship with it, so it is not a matter of whether or not I will respond to it. Rather, it is a matter of *how* I will respond to it. More importantly, our response to the challenge that en-framing emits, is neither completely predetermined nor free."

Tewes makes the visual statement that it is lack of identity that comes through as the truth. Her work reveals this through exactly the same process as that which Heidegger termed 'unconcealment'. Tewes erases the obfuscation of 'comfort' to show what pacifying domesticity leads to. The 'standing reserve - the potential unused - is *creativity* at the price of the placid lifestyle of homogeneity.

Tewes is a New York City girl. She grew up in Richmond Hills, Queens, a blue collar



... but my boyfriend isn't - 1999, Gouache on paper, 29 x 23", image size 14.5 x 10.5 inches

neighborhood. Levittown, NY opened in 1951. It is a suburb on Long Island that opened the way for the middle class to move out of the city and into the suburbs. It was made possible because of sameness as the cost of building multiples led to mass produced homes. The selling feature was a floor to ceiling window that looked out onto an expanse of the outdoors. This was the dream home of the mothers of the fifties when Robin Tewes was a child. Tewes cites Levittown as being the talked about escape from the city. She has relatives who made it there. It brings to mind the song "Little Boxes" performed by Pete Seeger and written by Malvina Reynolds in 1962. It became the theme song for the TV show "Weeds" in 2005 when distance from the dream was sufficient to make satirical sketches of the life in these 'little boxes' a prime time, money making serial. The conformist insinuation of living in sameness has exerted a recognizable cultural influence upon the majority of the middle class.

Tewes, as many women artists of her generation, is aware and articulate concerning the status of women artists. She is concurrent with such staunch feminist players as The Guerrilla Girls who have substantiated the inequality of women to men in the art world and positively addressed the problems to effective ends. She, like them, has assumed a disguise but where the Guerrilla Girls use theatricality, Tewes uses the soft sell. Tewes decided to focus in on the domestic space and to exert her point of view; within the frame. She makes her point - once you see how woman is framed; she can do whatever she wants.

Robin Tewes has been on a dogged pursuit of understanding with a Zen persistence that interprets her research with the simplicity of a Koan. As in a Koan, the original question posed has an element of the nonsensical and yet the answer is an illumination. What makes up the domestic environment? Since the rooms that Robin Tewes draws represent an interior where the majority of North American women spend their days - and noticing that she has drawn and painted these typical spaces for years - what has her search revealed? The pieces speak the answers in the aberrations from normality that occur within the picture frame, like a message read between the lines or a subliminal voice-over.

To have recorded these spaces connotes that she has observed and documented them. Has she invented rooms, or are they rooms remembered where the details are specifically tied to impressions that were large enough to leave a mark on her consciousness? The insignificant details would have faded away so that the import of the room leapt forward and assumed the attention. To read the messages scribed on the walls (or in an instance on a table top) requires an



Faded Calendar - 1992, Pencil on paper, 29 x 23", image size 15 x 11 inches

attention to detail. Often the words have been written and then erased as if the significance of the message is not worthy of being viewed or, if it is a visual, the relationship to the environment is tangential as in ink blot images.

A timorous stance has been taken to catch the intrusive presence off guard. It is revealing and necessary to spend the time reading, for this is not a loudly proclaimed declaration of being. The walls are whispering. What do they whisper? They say that they have forgotten something, they ask why he is always late, they list the groceries and they talk about art. At the same time as the Cy Twombly-like scribble registers, the words themselves communicate the artist's thoughts about her discipline.

Within quiet domestic environments, aesthetically arranged, chosen with a particular eye for order and cleanliness, in the intact, pristine expressions of place - Robin Tewes is firm and exact in her presentation of her world. She turns the potential to be picayune – the nonsensical aspect of her Koan – into a dignified illumination. It is the skew in the picture that heightens the revelation - the scribbled insistent messages, often confused and muddled like the niggles of things lost or a reminder to focus - on art, on love, on anything outside of the perfect pristine, seemingly normal, room.

Clothed in tasteful colors and unobtrusive settings, Tewes states her case. This is the world we live in. Look at it. She is unconcealing the innocuous passivity of 'a woman's place' and beneath the surface she exposes a seething vital forcefulness of nature. This is the blood that flows through female veins and gives color to the skin, pith to the matter. Her work reveals the truth of this particular standing reserve, the fourth dimension of femininity. She shows that woman is a force to be reckoned with, a rich and wonderful resource that has been undermined - only temporarily. Tewes' female is on her way out and up. The room has a view now for inside is unconcealed truth, and Truth is a seer.

Julie Oakes

"(En)Framing Heidegger's philosophy of Technology" from *Essay in Philosophy*, A Biannual Journal, Volume 6, Number 1, Jan 2005 from The World Wide Web



Down the Drain - 2006, Gouache on paper, 29 x 23", image size 11.5 x 8.5 inches

Paper Salon & Scott P. Ellis, December 11 - January 4, 2010

Celebrate the holiday season at Headbones Gallery and get a ten dollar drawing?! Headbones Gallery is hosting a paper salon from December 11 to January 3 and in order to stimulate the holiday festivities with good old fashioned seasonal commercialism, there will be a slasher sale with prices **slashed** on the spot!

Yes folks, at the **Grand Opening** December 11 from 6PM until 9PM and on Saturday from 12 until 6, **celebrity slasher salesman Jay Ould** (Dec.11 only) **rips** through the regular value of works on paper from your favourite artists! December 13, the prices go back to normal so **dash** on over to 260 Carlaw Avenue and somewhere in the midst of the **helter skelter**, a ten dollar drawing revealed! **Which is the ten dollar drawing!?**

In tandem, Headbones shows the works of the great collage fabricator and visual statesman, **Scott P. Ellis** in conjunction with the social/political audio/video shorts by **RX (the party party)** whose works buzz the circuits of youtube popularity.



Paper Salon - Headbones Gallery

Scott P. Ellis

Restraining Order by Ashley Johnson

Mass media devours and enslaves our modern culture even as we consume it. Communications theorist, Marshall McLuhan, famous for his statement “The medium is the message”, considered media as “extensions” of our bodies and minds. He contended that the invention of print technology allowed us to organize social concepts like individualism, capitalism and democracy. His dire prediction was that electronic media, in replacing print, would lead away from individualism to a collective identity and the global village.

For Scott Ellis, the magazine wasteland that McLuhan predicted has become his fertile compost heap. Ellis' complex collages dredge through the debris of the 20th century to expose some of the lies and myths that underpin our culture. One wonders what McLuhan would have thought of these works although he did produce his own aural art piece where he made statements while other voices and sounds would interrupt. This is not unlike Ellis' collages. There is a cacophony of visual interruption.

Even though images and texts are cut out from magazines they still carry residual information. They also elicit memories in the viewer of reading those articles or seeing that image. By combining them into new contexts, Scott magnifies the effect and sets off multiple chains of thought. His imagery is culled from a vast reservoir of types and sources including some that go back to the 1940's. These naïve pieces of propaganda seem crude and unbelievable to our sophisticated eyes. Yet, sadly, our attitudes to war, and continuing acceptance of the propaganda machine's messages are revisited in the present-day conflicts between the Middle East and West.

Some of the central myths of our time like belief in the progress of man, the sexual morality of humanity, the basic goodness of democracy, the romance of war and nationalism, the efficient division of labour model, engineering marvels, space exploration, medical experiments, corporate and political leaders working for the common good, the spiritual health of religion. These are all grist to Ellis' mill. He churns them over and stomps on them all with a wry but desperate sense of black humour.

His titles are particularly ironic: “The Myth, The Mission, The Money” or “How to Build an Empire” or “Welcome to Our Brave New World”. He zeroes in on the hypocrisy of the corporate and political agenda or the belligerence of the West as epitomized by its self appointed leader of the free world, America. Warplanes dot the skyline while soldiers charge across the beaches. Iconic images of Bush, Obama and Osama Bin Laden peer through gaps. A chimp in a suit puffs

on a cigarette while a jolly Father Christmas advertises coca cola. A large snail, his shell an American flag, slides blithely across the surface before the eyes of an astonished dinosaur skeleton. The dense absurdity reminds one of Hieronymous Bosch's works on the follies of man.

Ellis takes aim at religion, sex, corporate greed and political expediency generally, using whatever resources come to hand. Comical vultures can become metaphors for politicians. A Catholic nun and an Islamic woman in a burkha flank a bikini-clad girl in sunglasses. Behind her head is a pair of spread-eagled legs with an American flag in the crotch and the slogan "All the President's Women" waving overhead. Various currencies float across the surface like balloons. Wall Street: it's a banquet of exploitation that spans the globe and extends into space.

Magazine imagery is limited in size yet Ellis makes some enormous collages. Each of these is meticulously organized like a puzzle. Nothing is random. Ellis utilizes the underlying structures of colour, form and meaning in his text and images to weave a complex structure across the whole. Rhythms move like waves following shapes or lines of text to establish a subtle infrastructure overall. He uses colour sparingly so a major proportion of the surface is in mid tones, which allows him to set off more dramatic passages of red, yellow or black and white. The surfaces of the collages pulsate with visual movement. Caesuras open up and the viewer moves into the vista, then leaps to the front again or delves down from a new perspective. This visual manipulation of the surface is usually very balanced. In "Mind Over Matter of Things" he explores an oval format. Rhythms extending from the central passages spiral out creating a homogenous surface.

These are highly organized and exquisitely executed art pieces with an intelligent and earnest communication. Emblematic of Ellis' concerns is a butterfly in "Wheels that make the World Go Round" whose wings are made from a globe of the earth. We live in such a fragile moment and perhaps we are poised on the brink of our own extinction. Ellis reminds us of the festering contagion we have fostered through our greed, intolerance and blind faith.

Ashley Johnson, Toronto 2009



Welcome To Our Brave New World - 2009, Collage on panel, 29 x 60 inches

The 2009 Headbones Award Winner - Mahmoud Meraji

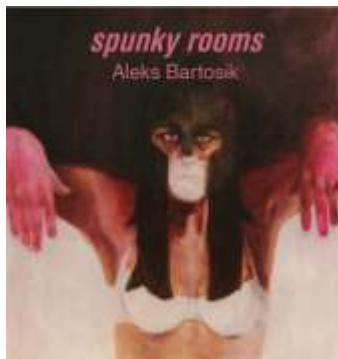
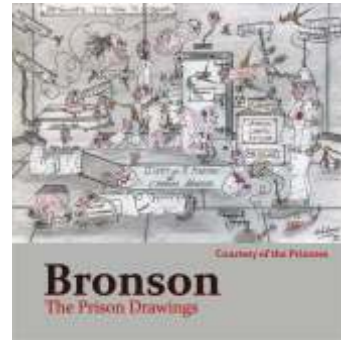
The annual Headbones Award, created by the previous year's winner, is a unique cast bronze sculpture generously co-sponsored by Artcast Inc. All of the artists who have been featured in a Headbones Gallery exhibition are called upon to select their three favorite artists from the years exhibition schedule. The artist with the most nominations receives the award. The 2009 Headbones Award was announced at 8PM during the opening reception of **HARDERFASTER** Saturday, January 8, 2009.

Congratulations to Mahmoud Meraji for receiving most votes by his peers and being selected the 2009 Headbones Award recipient.



2009 Headbones Award - Cast bronze created by Ashley Johnson, 5.25x5x5.5 inches

2009 Headbones Publications



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