

A large, circular metal frame, possibly a component of a scientific instrument or a piece of art, is the central focus. It contains several long, thin, rectangular metal strips that are arranged in a fan-like pattern, radiating from the center. The strips appear to be made of a dark, possibly oxidized metal. In the foreground, a small, shallow metal bowl sits on a thin metal stand. The bowl contains a small, pinkish object, possibly a candle or a piece of wax. The entire scene is set against a dark background, and the lighting highlights the metallic surfaces and the intricate details of the frame and strips.

GIZMOS

CHUCK ST. JOHN

STEVE MENNIE

GIZMOS

Steve Mennie & Chuck St. John

March 25 to April 30, 2023



HEADBONES GALLERY

Artist Catalog: GIZMOS: Steve Mennie & Chuck St. John
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This catalog was created for the exhibition GIZMOS: Steve Mennie & Chuck St. John
Vernon, BC, March 25 to April 30, 2023

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Steve Mennie 1945
Chuck St. John 1956

GIZMOS commentary © 2023 Julie Oakes

Rich Fog Micro Publishing, printed in Vernon, BC, 2023
Layout and Design, Richard Fogarty, Julie Oakes
Photography: Steve Mennie, Chuck St. John, Richard Fogarty
Vernon, BC, March 25 to April 30, 2023
Printed on the Ricoh SP C830DN

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ISBN: 978-1-988707-41-9

RICH FOG



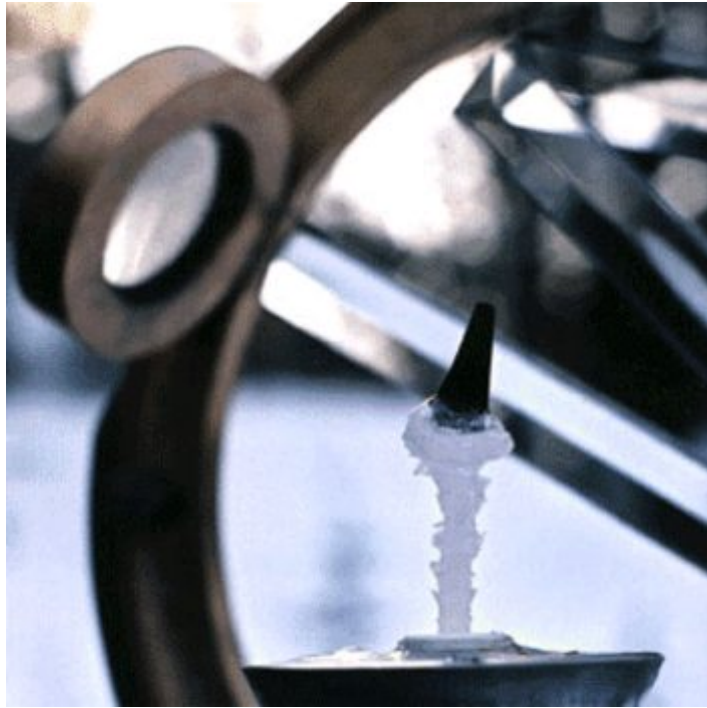
Micro Publishing

GIZMOS

Steve Mennie & Chuck St. John



Commentary by Julie Oakes



GIZMOS

Steve Mennie & Chuck St. John



There is an implied logic in the way we approach life (there has to be in order to relate to each other) but as if there is a door open at the far reaches of things-as-they-are, there is a light *beyond* that, illuminating ideas outside the room of logic. By willing consciousness towards this light, change brings us into this future room where objects that have never-before-been come to exist. It sounds like a fairytale, but it is the process of life, moving from earliest times through centuries until the Renaissance, then to the industrial age followed by modernity where, notably, the idea of 'progress' became the primary driver. The metaphor of passage can also be applied to the creative process.

GIZMOS resides in this realm that moves from the past into the future. Gizmos - those things that we don't quite have a word for yet. A 'gizmo' is so ephemeral that the dictionary definition is just "gadget, thing". 'Gadget' tends to diminish and what exactly is a 'thing'? A broad term that could be, well, just about anything. Extend the concept into the act of making an art piece and (since art can be just about anything or just about anything can be called art) GIZMOS is a good title for these works by Steve Mennie whose studio is in Salmon Arm and Chuck St. John, who lives and works in Lee Creek. Each artist gathers material from the jetsam of their complicated lives and makes it into art.

Both Mennie and St. John operate in an aura of the eternal reversible, creating from objects and images of the past, presenting, and then as that door opened leads to another beckoning light, the process (that of an artist) begins again.



STEVE MENNIE



Steve Mennie *Framed Collage 8* (2021-23) 16.5 x 13.5 in

taste backed up by unwavering
opinions and suggested mores



STEVE MENNIE



Steve Mennie *Framed Collage 10* (2021-23) 8 x 8 in

Steve Mennie has nimbly moved between and through artistic genres. He has had periods as an adept realist in both drawings and paintings but has also produced significant abstract series. He is a master printmaker (silk screen), a vidographer, and this latest work uses collage. He possesses a critical, ironic wit fueled by media exposure and a disappointment at man's stewardship of the earth. In these new works he uses drawings in conjunction with found imagery and manipulated images which he has assembled and enclosed in vintage frames, underlining the fact that we are conditioned and 'framed' by our time. His is a spare, tilted and yet styled vision, each piece sedate and wry.

Mennie's new collages could be related to the work of the Dada-ists who used collaged photos along with drawings and paint, often with political innuendo within the imagery. Mennie uses a similar sophisticated palette that brings attention to the design or formal structure of the works and from there the underlay of meaning may be gleaned or at least suggested like a question exemplified. Mennie's judgement, a combination of taste backed up by unwavering opinions and suggested mores, comes off with elegance intact – no coarse street slurs here but rather finely turned phrases.



Steve Mennie *Untitled green* (2020) 23 x 20 in



Steve Mennie *Untitledyellow* (2020) 23 x 20 in



Steve Mennie *Untitled peach* (2020) 23 x 20 in



Steve Mennie *Untitled blue* (2020) 23 x 20 in



actual size





actual size

Steve Mennie *Framed Collage 2* (2021-23) 28 x 34 in





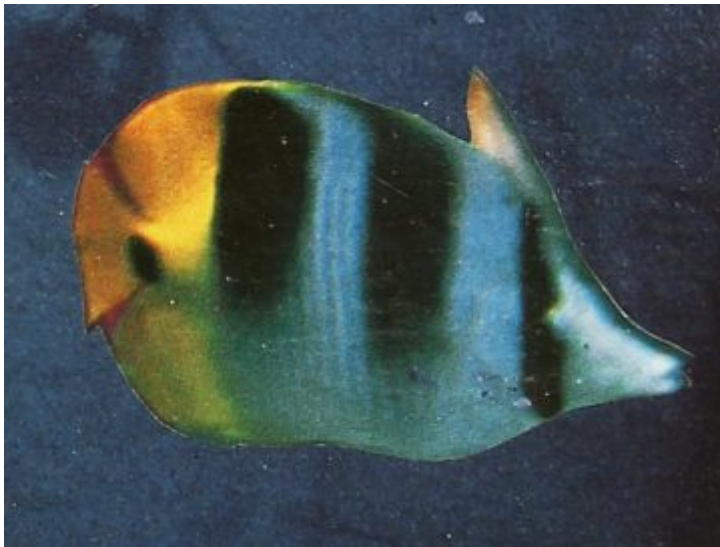
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Steve Mennie *Framed Collage 6* (2021-23) 17.5 x 15 in





actual size





ditto





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actual size



Steve Mennie *Framed Collage 11* (2021-23) 14.5 x 16 in



CHUCK ST. JOHN



symbols eking meaning
like the workstations of
geniuses

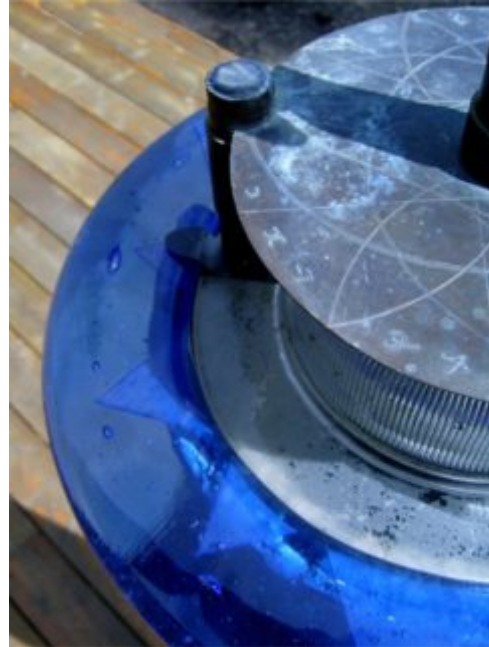


CHUCK ST. JOHN

Where Chuck St. John weighs in is with reference to the metaphysical through an unmistakably iconic allusion. His sculptures may appear weighted in cement, but the artist has developed a compound that looks and works like cement but is markedly lighter. As if the sculptures could have been instruments used in scientific experiments or objects to be worshipped by ancestors, in either case the imagined predecessors neglected to pass down manuals for their applications, so that 'use' is mysterious. St. John also has a firm grip on the fabrication of stained glass, a medium which comes with unavoidable cultural associations to religion. Whether in glass, stone, cement or found objects, his works suggest architectonic sacred spaces, naves, altars or pulpits fashioned as if the language of art nouveau has cosmically tuned in to the design embodied in nature and then combined that potent visual vocabulary with magical systems – astrology, numerology, lunar and solar influences.

Making art is experimental and like mathematics can reveal connections between forces, disciplines and systems as the art objects open conversations that reveal wholeness. St. John has made use of symbols that eke meaning, like the workstations of geniuses, which makes them partially undecipherable within a contemporary context. This aura of secrecy is the very essence of a magic spell where the mystery intact is the source of power. Elements within the sculptures (glass crystal, folding ruler, convex lens, candle, geometric lines, dots, cones, pyramids, bells) appear destined to line up with natural phenomena in a suggested promise that, if so aligned, further levels of meaning would be read. As if they had origins in Stonehenge, Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, the glistening gold dome of Matri Mandir, The Shrine of the Seven Sleepers In Afghanistan or the Zorat stone ring in Armenia, St. John's sculptures inspire studying cultures where the sacred is daily fare.

The change in the sculptures from day to night is pronounced. Through solar energy collectors, there is a new world illuminated once the sun has gone down. What was once common and earthly by day, becomes superposable and transformed by night.





Night

Chuck St. John *Lost at Sea* (2010) 33 x 34 x 75 in





Chuck St. John *9/10ths* (2022) 51 x 12 x 14 in





Night

Chuck St. John *Icon I* (2000) 47 x 12 x 12 in





Chuck St. John *Solaris* (2015) 60 x 13 x 13 in





Chuck St. *John Bird's Eye View*
(2000)





Night

Chuck St. John *DNA Icon* (2022) 61 x 18 x 18 in





Chuck St. John *Icon V* (2000) 63 x 13 x 15 in





Chuck St. John *The Victaulic* (2021) 49 x 16 x 12 in

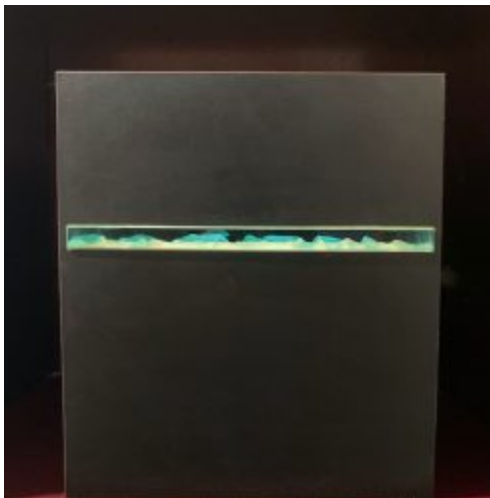




Night

Chuck St. John *Runic Balance* (2015) 50 x 12 x 12in





Chuck St. John *Arctic Dream* (1995) 14 x 12.5 x 13 in



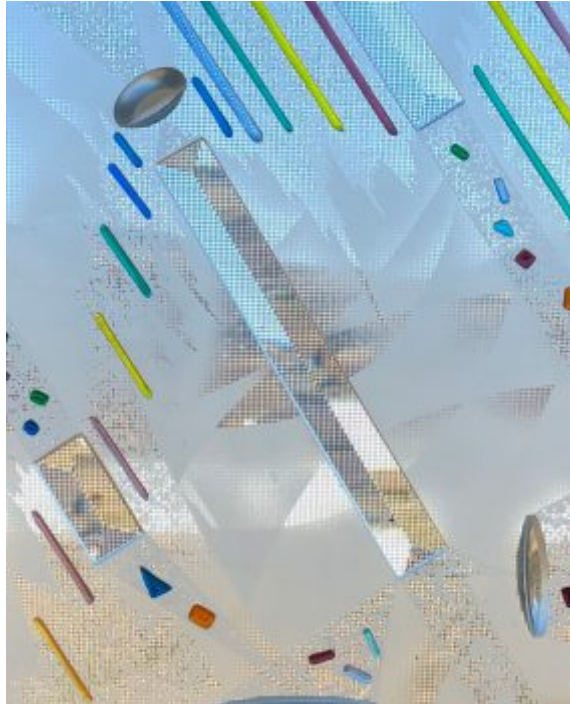
Chuck St. John *Time Switch* (2023) 20 x 12 x 5.5 in



Chuck St. John *Fish Projector* (1995) 14.5 x 5 x 10 in

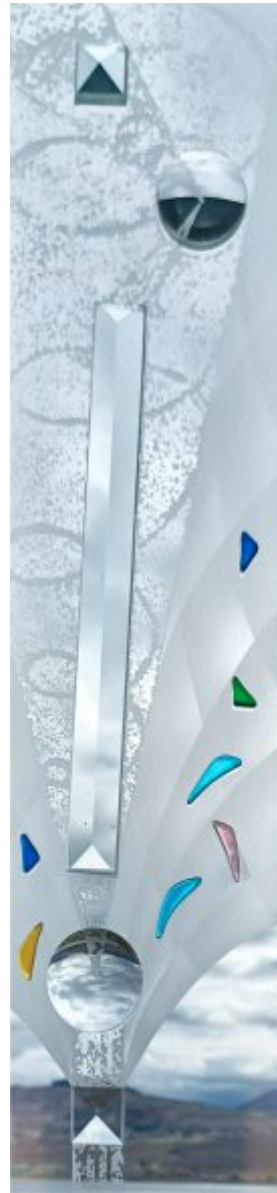


Chuck St. John *Pandora's Lamp* (1995) 14 x 8.5 x 8.5 in



Chuck St. John *Multi-Lens Panel* (1995) 32.5 x 13.5 in





Chuck St. John *Verticle Vortex* (2017) 52,5 x 8 in



Chuck St. John *Large Lens Abstract* (2000)
40.5 x 18.5 in



Chuck St. John *Deco II* (1995) 47.5 x 28 in



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CHUCK ST. JOHN

GIZMOS

