

A FLOURISH OF FEATHERS



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NOVEMBER 28 - JANUARY 16, 2016



HEADBONES GALLERY

Artist Catalog: A Flourish of Feathers
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This catalog was created for the exhibition *A Flourish of Feathers* at Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC, Canada
November 28 - January 16, 2016

Artworks Copyright:
Doug Alcock
Joe Fafard
Allesandra Exposito
Steve Mennie
Julie Oakes
Gabriel Orozco
Crystal Przybille
Rose Sanderson
Stephen Lee Scott
David Wilson

Commentary © 2015 Julie Oakes

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RICH FOG



Micro Publishing



COMMENTARY BY JULIE OAKES



Headbones Gallery - 2015



A Flourish of Feathers covers the subject like a down quilt and whether large or small, a feather is the focus of attention. Symbolizing ascension to a higher plane, the feather has stood in for the acquisition of spiritual wisdom, thunder, the wind and even a whisper. Used in shamanic staffs, ceremonial head dresses and the adornment of both the royal and the ecclesiastical, feathers have been sought for their colour, origin and physical properties.

The basis of man's adoration of the feather is in relation to the properties that allow it to rise above. Defying the pull of gravity, a ruler to which all are subject, the feather, working not as a single entity but within a symbiotic relationship with other feathers, enables flight. Man's early attempts at flight imitated birds, strapping man-made wings on their shoulders while adding wings to earthbound creatures in their art making. Iconic winged images abide such as the angel with wings to carry man closer to celestial deities and over forty mythological flying beings- that are not birds- from Adze to Zduhac. Within this range there is the Dragon, Firebird, Griffin, Pegasus, Phoenix, Sphinx and Sylph as well as the very Devil himself, who counters the angel's flights upwards to heaven with his flights to the burning nether worlds.

Headbones Gallery, perches on a hillside like an eagle's aerie overlooking Swan Lake, a nature preserve for birds. Raptors and herons are common sights. Because of the location of the building, birds can be seen flying on a level with the windows; not only magpies, wrens, robins, mourning doves, starlings and blackbirds but also



hawks, ravens, falcons, harriers and eagles. The railings on the banisters at the entryway are black steel feathers forged by Alcock, the panels of glass have images of birds, a collaborative project by David Montpetit and Oakes, and these panels are held in place with stainless-steel, powder-coated feathers.

Each of the artists in *A Flourish of Feathers* has used feathers or birds in their personal visual vocabulary. Some, such as Alcock, Esposito or Oakes have used birds and feathers for some time in their image making. Others such as the sculptors Gabriel Orozco or Joe Fafard transfer their acumen into the feathered realm with aplomb although birds are not necessarily a repeated image for them.

Alcock has fashioned feathers for many of his sculptures from 2001 until today. He made myriads of individually forged and welded feathers for both *Leap of Faith*, 2001 and *Harrier Landing*, 2007 which is included in *A Flourish of Feathers*. His process is physical, arduous and demands a singular level of expertise. In *Muse*, just completed, feathers held high and low as if describing a great sweeping flourish bring Alcock's mastery of metal once again onto the pedestal it deserves.

The Okanagan Nation artist David Wilson, whose works can be seen at the Vernon Performing Art Center, the Vernon Hospital and the Vernon District Schoolboard paints not only on canvas but also on traditional drum forms and canoes. Wilson uses birds and feathers in reference to the traditions of his heritage as a member of the Sylix culture. The owl is a messenger. The eagle means strength, power, vision and these traits can also be



Concept Drawings for *Wish* - 12014



Detail of *Wish*

realised in the self. Feathers are used to identify a person by the way that the feather was cut or coloured as in arrows, costume or staffs such as that depicted in the acrylic painting, *Spirit Horse and Rider*.

Steven Lee Scott draws on the counter culture. The feathered face of *Leamus* with his body newly inked in tattoos by his own hand, sits before a comic strip that also features birds.

Oakes' *A Thousands Poems* is based on a local narrative. Two baby ravens fell from their nest in a high tree onto the road beneath. Humans, trying to save them were pelted with branches and greenery as a great flock of ravens descended upon them. The baby birds were taken to a vet where one was diagnosed with a broken wing and the other a broken back. Miraculously, it was the one with the broken back that survived and has now joined the adult ravens in the tree beside the road. It was painted at the same time as news broke on the Bataclan tragedy.

Steve Mennie's *Hidden Intersection* tells a story where mans' development criss-crosses with a feathery flock. Mennie observed that ravens were smart enough to understand that by sitting on the solar receptors of highway lights, they could turn them on, giving them a warm roost.

Rose Sanderson, with a miniscule brush, grants size to her birds as ravens inhabit a laundromat or a giant sandpiper walks on the beach where people are, in comparison, diminished. Working on transfers of photographs that she had taken, Sanderson imagines birds, smaller than man even in the largest species, physically grander and empowered.

The title of the exhibition, *A Flourish of Feathers*, derives from a reference to the large featured piece by Crystal Przybille (pronounced Shibill) - *Wish*. Przybille's work allows for a wide range of information to be processed through her skills because the research that she invests in her subject brings her insights to bare.

A graduate with distinction from the Bachelor of Fine Arts Program at the University of Victoria, Crystal Przybille's early work was seen at the Alternator Gallery in Kelowna in group exhibitions and at The Art Gallery of the South Okanagan in a solo exhibition. Yet despite her expanding profile in the Okanagan, Przybille was spending extended durations of time in Europe, practicing art. Drawn to the northern countries, she was artist in residence at Stichting Kunst & Complex in Rotterdam, Netherlands and the De Overslag in Eindhoven in 2001 having been awarded funding by both the BC Arts Council and The Canada Council. This exposure to the collections of European museums and galleries can be seen in her figurative, monumental public sculptures, large accomplished bronze works such as *Father Pandosy* at Kelowna's Pandosy Mission Heritage Site. Depicting the historical priest mid stride, she propels an image of Father Pandosy forward into our time so that



Crystal Przybille in studio- 2014



Wish: Aluminium, birch, egg tempera and silk, Kelowna Art Gallery Airport - 2014

he who had once made liaisons between the indigenous peoples of the Okanagan and the settlers still appears to be going about, pushing forward with his pioneering spirit.

Further following a northern path of exploration Przybille was artist in residence at Matchbox Gallery in Rankin Inlet Nunavut in January of 2002. Immersed in the environment that produced great works by indigenous artists she developed a sympathy of both sensibility and imagery. When Przybille was commissioned in 2010 to create a piece for the satellite airport space of the Kelowna Art Gallery, she utilized a sparseness of form within a postmodern melding of diverse materials. *Wish* is the featured presentation of a *Flourish of Feathers* for it is the sweeping expansive reach of this piece that suggested the title.

From 2012 to 13, Przybille had busy hands. This was the slant that she brought to the call for a public commission for Victoria's Sesquicentennial entitled *Hands of Time*, life-size, life-like bronze hands installed in twelve locations in the seaside city and depicted in a style informed by western sculptural traditions. Yet the Bernard Avenue Pole pieces *Illuminature*, also from 2013 with the inherent, readable clarity of stylized shapes harkens towards a designed imagery, more akin to traditional indigenous rendering. Przybille has worked out a competency of styles where each project maintains character and identity because of her ability to perform so well in each arena.

Przybille's interest in the Sylix culture that came about through the Father Pandosy research and was acknowledged in *Illuminature* continues with a public art commission for the Westbank First Nation. Przybille's maquette for Chief S^wkn^{cut} (Sookinchute), depicts the Chief standing and raising a feathery plume towards the sky.

Birds, feathers, and flight have long fascinated from Greek tales of Icarus, to Leonardo da Vinci's drawings of flying machines, through to contemporary resolutions of man's entrancement with the skies. This exhibition is definitely not 'for the birds', though it calls into play our bird-like affiliations.

Julie Oakes, Vernon, BC- 2015



Detail of *Wish* by Crystal Przybille at Headbones Gallery - 2015

Crystal Przybille
Chief Sookinchute, 2015
Bronze maquette, 19"x12"x7", Edition 20



Crystal Przybille

Three Drawing studies for Chief Sookinchute sculpture - 2015

Graphite on Mylar, Each 18"x12







Crystal Przybille

Father Pandosy, 2012

Bronze maquette, 16"x12"x7", Edition 20



Julie Oakes
Cavorting Display, 2015
Oil on canvas, 44" x 66"



Julie Oakes
Different Strokes, Sunny Kiss, 2012
Oil on canvas, 44" x 66"



Julie Oakes

Lucy in the Sky with Raven Skywalker, 2012

Oil on canvas, 44" x 66"



Doug Alcock

Muse - 2015

Forged and fabricated steel, 55"x12"x8"



Doug Alcock

Harrier Landing, 2007

Forged and fabricated steel, 32"x24"x24"



David Wilson
Thunder Beings - 2014
Acrylic on Elkskin drum, diameter 10"



David Wilson
Sacred Clown - 2014
Acrylic on Elkskin drum, diameter 14"



David Wilson
Has Mountain Lion Spirit - 2015
Acrylic on Elkskin drum, diameter 16"



David Wilson
Spirit Horse and Rider - 2013
Acrylic on canvas, 18"x18"



Stephen Lee Scott

Leamas - 2012

Ink, pencil crayon, wash on paper, 30"x 22"

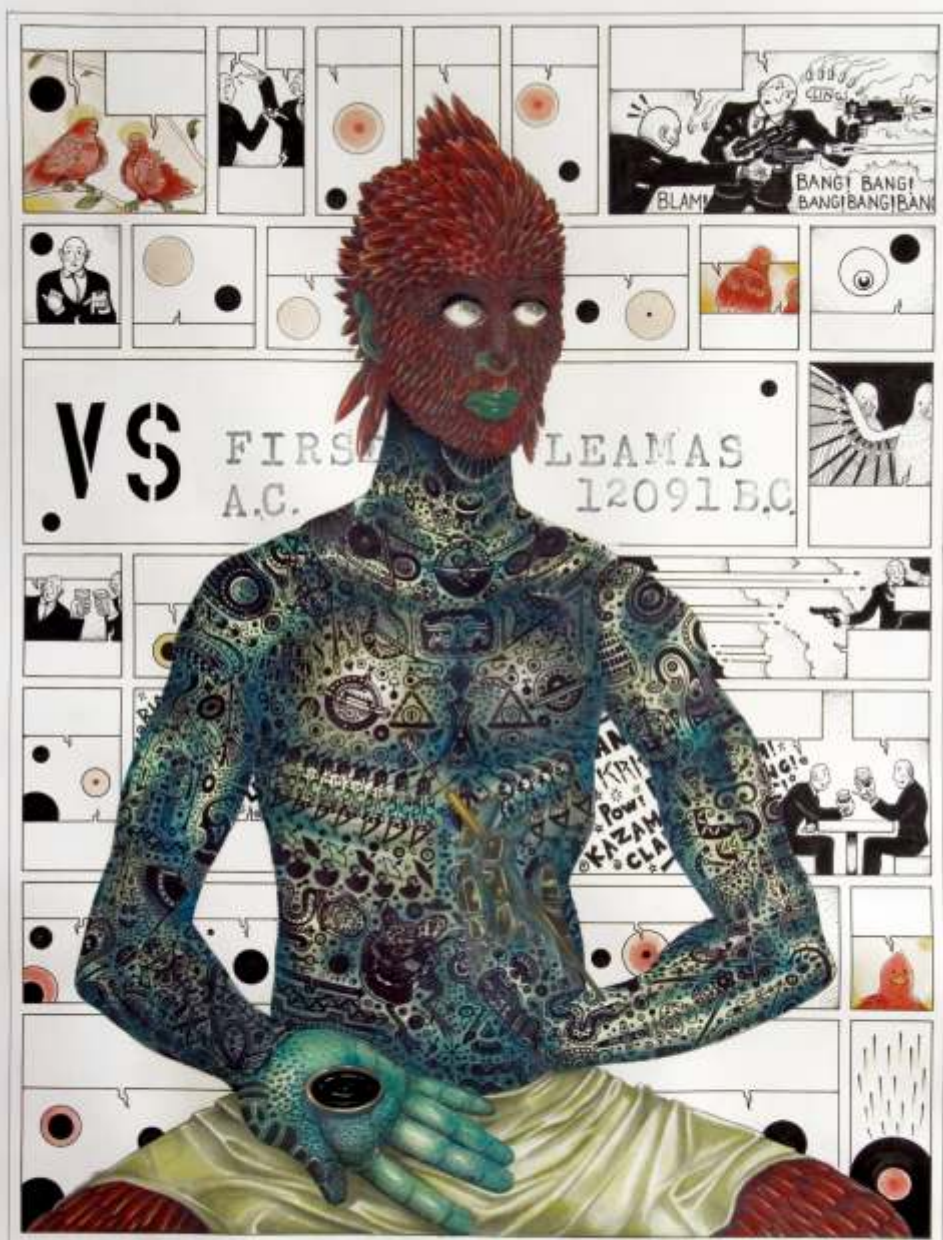


Illustration by G. G. 1975

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Rose Sanderson

Pigeon, San Francisco, California - 2015

Hand painted acrylic on artists photo transfer, 5"x5"



Rose Sanderson

Black Winged Stilt, Stanton Beach, California - 2015

Hand painted acrylic on artists photo transfer, 5"x5"



Rose Sanderson

Black Birds, Alameda Laundromat, California - 2015

Hand painted acrylic on artists photo transfer, 5"x5"



Rose Sanderson

Road Runner, Joshua Tree National Park, California - 2015

Hand painted acrylic on artists photo transfer, 5"x5"



Steve Mennie

Hidden Intersection - 1994

Screenprint on paper, 12"x 25", Ed. 178



Allesandra Exposito

Untitled - 2004

Mixed media on chicken skull, 4"x2.5"x 1.5"



Gabriel Orozco

Black Feather - 2015

Wood, paint, artist statement & throwing instructions in box, 6"x 12", Ed. 1000



Joe Fafard

Long Black Veil - 2013

Patinated Bronze, 11.5"x26"x9", Edition 7



Julie Oakes
Thousands of Poems, 2015
Gouache on paper (diptych) , 30"x 42"



Julie Oakes
Soft Hook, 2015
Oil on shaped canvas, 20"x 24"



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www.alcockart.com

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www.mariangoodman.com/artists/gabriel-orozco/

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www.sites.google.com/site/crystalprzybille/

Rose Sanderson
www.rosesanderson.com

Stephen Lee Scott
www.youblisher.com/p/390885-Headbones-Gallery-presents-Stephen-Lee-Scott-Servicemen/

David Wilson
www.youblisher.com/p/714748-David-Wilson-Paintings/



HEADBONES GALLERY
Presents
A FLOURISH OF FEATHERS
Featuring
CRYSTAL PRZYBIŁE

With works by:

*Joe Fafard, Gabriel Orozco, Julie Oakes, Allesandra Exposito,
David Wilson, Doug Alcock, Stephen Lee Scott & Rose Sanderson*

NOVEMBER 28 - JANUARY 16, 2016

Opening Reception 6-8 pm - Saturday, November 28, 2015

*Wish by Crystal Przybille: Mixed Media (aluminum, birch, egg tempera, silk)
Chief Sookinchute. Maquette. Bronze. 2015. 49 cm high.*

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