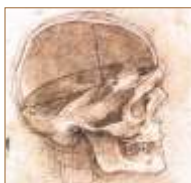


2006



# The Drawers - Headbones Gallery

*Contemporary Drawing, Sculpture and Works on Paper*

## Headbones Anthology 2006

Commentaries by Julie Oakes

RICH FOG



Micro Publishing  
Toronto, 2006

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## Headbones Gallery, The Drawers - 2006

### Contemporary Drawing, Sculpture and Works on Paper

More of an anthem than an anthology, *Headbones, The Drawers, 2006* cites praise. The writings seek to expand the congregation of the already converted by clarifying and granting a resonant stature to the works. *Headbones, The Drawers* is concerned primarily with *The Works* and the first impression upon opening the book is of phenomenal works on paper. The commentaries serve as a convocation; gathered together, they deepen the mysteries like a holy writ where the magic of perception stays intact but is made more accessible through the witnessing of words.

Having spent significant time in New York City, living and working alongside of art luminaries, we decided to validate and share the knowledge we had gained with a commercial venue and moved to Canada in order to fill a need that we had researched and found to be wanting here – a works-on-paper gallery. Works on paper provide portability and affordability, both for the artists and the collectors for the pristine page on which to place a mark easily accepts a quick take or a labored opus. On December 14, 2005, *Headbones, The Drawers* opened in 202B, a second floor loft space at 260 Carlaw on the east side of Toronto. The artists were drawn from the original stable of *Headbones Gallery* in BC (1994-2000) and artists we knew from New York, London and Europe. Once the doors opened, the generator belched a puff or two of dark smoke (probably choking on the realization of the commitment) and then maintained a steady chug of well oiled energy. *Headbones, The Drawers*, moved to the present location at street level, Unit 102, in May.

The project thrived as artists found their way to *Headbones*, from Montreal, London, Ontario, Owen Sound, and other parts of Canada, The United States and Europe. *Headbones*, as well, went to great lengths (across Canada) to search for work. *The Drawers* was both inclusive and selective, with a proactive approach. We continued a practice that we had in New York of hosting dinners in the studio and invited artists, writers, collectors, intellectuals and personalities to bi-weekly sit-down dinners in the gallery. Surrounded by the work and with time to contemplate the choices with lively conversations lending feedback to the coalescence, we furthered the concept of *Headbones, The Drawers*. The main component in the work accepted was evidence of the hand, the touch, the track that the artist had left on the paper. For this reason, *Headbones* shied away from photography or

digitally based work - with a few exceptions.

We discovered (a pleasant epiphany) that sculpture lent itself to the exhibition of works on paper and supported the awareness and appreciation of the two disciplines. As a synergistic relationship developed with the master sculptor, Gord Smith, who is the sole artist that Headbones represents (the others are featured), the presentation of three dimensional work (also by Catherine Hahn, Stephen Bircher and Kerry Stevens) enhanced the myriad applications of paper.

The catalogues and book projects that Rich Fog Micro Publishing produced have been an essential component of the Headbones model. They have served as an introduction of the artist to collectors and curators, an opportunity for the artist to have the work noticed by an independent commentator and a liaison between the viewer and the work. The catalogues strengthen the historical presence of the art work that passes through Headbones, the Drawers, and in themselves become collectibles.

This anthology presents Headbones, The Drawers, 2006 and offers this documentation work to collectors, libraries and archives as a testament of potent works.

Julie Oakes and Richard Fogarty

## Inaugural Drawer's Selection, December 14 - February 2, 2006

On December 14, 2005, *Headbones, The Drawers* introduces the first ten Canadian and International Artist's to its drawers in Toronto. Exhibition dates are December 14 – February 2.

In existence in British Columbia since 1995, now, "*Headbones, The Drawers*" will be focusing on contemporary drawing and works on paper.

"*The Drawers*" will exhibit ten Canadian and International artists every month. Following the exhibition month, the works will be placed in the drawers for on-going viewing. This will make space for up to ten new artists to be exhibited in the gallery space.

The mandate of the gallery is to encourage collecting at an entry level by offering works for sale that are both affordable and of a high caliber.

Based on the models of Pierogi Gallery and The Drawing Center in New York, the concept for *Headbones, The Drawers* is inspired by the recent interest in drawings and works on paper in the contemporary art market.

Managing Director of *Headbones, The Drawers*, Richard Fogarty translated his interest in collecting artwork into Rich Fog Micro Publishing, printing and publishing art catalogues and art books. He is producing catalogues for each of the artists represented in the *Drawers*.

*Headbones, The Drawers* manages the storage, exhibition, and sales of drawings and works on paper of approximately one hundred visual artists in a one-year period. Collectors have viewing access to about one-thousand catalogued drawings or works on paper at any given time. Gallery hours are from Wednesday to Saturday, 12-6pm.

Richard Fogarty, Director

# Robert Bigelow

## Inaugural Drawer's Selection

The channel between the physical world and the spiritual world for Robert Bigelow is ART. When art and religion have similarities, there is a practice to support this association - an artistic practice similar to the devotions of a priest in order to tune into the spiritual state.

When spirituality is manifest in great works of art, it provokes a reverence for the phenomenal object. If the practice and devotional habits are pure, and the mind is sharp and connected to a holistic center, then the resultant visuals reveal the spirit realm.

This process, for Robert Bigelow, is *Abstract Automatism*. His hand is the channel from which his awareness of the spiritual visual realm is brought into this physical world. Each art piece is a visual record of a mind state. There are, of course, conscious decisions made during the transmission of this automatic imagery. Robert chooses a blue or a red, a black or yellow. He chooses his implement, a brush, pen, pencil - of varying sizes. He tapes his chosen paper to a board. All of these are actions born from the physical world. But the images themselves, that which we see as energetic swirls and markings originate outside of logic.

Robert's practice has been honed through meditation, vegetarianism, a perception of toxicity and a resultant correction towards clean air and healthful living. Bigelow's refined lifestyle serves to present his wisdom of the spiritual realms. The work that results from his practice gives back to the viewer a rich and complex positivism. It sets up a map of visual freedom that grants permission to wander the spirals, color fields, dizzy depths and convoluted space with an independent mind. Robert Bigelow's paintings are a sci-fi journey with a lifeline firmly rooted in the traditions and practices of the art world.



Feel the Heat  
Acrylic on paper  
30 x 22 in

## Billy Copley

### Inaugural Drawer's Selection

Relocation is not an option when confronting Billy Copley's work. You're *there* – in The City with all of the jive-ass clichés that go along with fast paced living. Billy lives within the milieu of siren city, NYC, with a studio in the art interested Williamsburg. He draws his imagery from popular sources and lays it down with savvy hip-ness.

When Clement Greenburg fussed about his need to separate the high from the low, he might have been able to avoid his angst had he known Billy's work. It would have met with Clement's high standards.

A specific example, *Girl on a Box*. She is in a modern classic pose is modeled in saccharine yellow, pink and turquoise against a nursery blue sky on an egg yolk floor that reminds us of the beach, it's that sunny. It's on a ground of red lines forming squares. In the foreground, if this was a logical space, there is a fractured object, a series of lines like a woodblock print stenciled in the same unyielding dense black as printer's ink. It is an intriguing set of lines, reminiscent of a mouth but there is something maleficent in the image. Billy's work is psychological and intellectually engaging. Subjectivity can't be avoided when confronted by a Copley. It inspires the invention of new adjectives.

Billy Copley puts together dissident elements from the world of mass-production-over done. He filters his arrangements through his nonconformity. He lays out a confident exclamation of the diversity of modernity. He overwhelms from a mere piece of paper with the strength of an immense Renaissance masterpiece.



Girl in a Box  
mixed media, collage on paper  
29 ¼ x 23 in  
2005

## Ed Giordano Jr. Inaugural Drawer's Selection

The combination of virility and impotence creates a push and pull in Ed Giordano's sculptures and drawings. Seemingly attached to the irony, his sculpture describes a common condition. They are rendered in common materials plaster and wood.

In *Father Domine*, the mouth has been replaced by a sealed megaphone. The body is bulky. It is starchy white with a flaky red (shame) falling on the shoulders. He has - not one - but many chips on his shoulders. His hands are pressed against his sides, glued to his body with no definable fingers.

Within each work there is a potential for rejection even though these sculptures are appealing or seductive. Their bulkiness is attractive for there is an energy lying beneath the surface that is straining to bust out. The viewer is able to empathize with the burden, frustration, humiliation or shame. One bulky figure is imprisoned by a massive block of chunky wood like the world pressing in upon him.

The work is not, despite the immobility of the figures, distanced. But they are often too "pinned" to make contact. This angst yanks on the heartstrings. It is identifiable. But there is a visionary strength in the "pinned" message. There is a purity and naivete. There is a sense of humor. These figures are endearing. In fact, they're lovable. They're memorable. They're hideously attractive.



*Father Domine*  
plaster, wood, paint  
18x8x10 in  
1998

## Catherine Hahn

### Beauty & Obsession

Catherine Hahn's jewelry is made to be worn by grand personages - powerful women, emperors, pharaohs or pundits, officers of high rank or exceedingly beautiful kept women. Her jewelry transcends the mere decorative and falls in line with the objects in royal treasuries such as The Dresden Collection, Jewels of Buckingham Palace, Tibetan Artifacts or The Treasures of Catherine the Great. Just as these world renowned collections were born from grandiose settings, so is Hahn's work for she is best known for her set and costume design - from the gigantic puppets that she created for three world fairs to the many years that she has worked with the nationally recognized Caravan Stage Company and Farm Theatre. She has designed countless productions for the stage, video and television ranging from Shakespeare and Brecht to the avant-garde, edgy, alternative and fringe.

Her jewelry creates character. Placed on the body of the intended to grant significance, the bearer becomes more than he or she was before donning the magnificent seal of rank. There are the associative roles - royal, shamanistic or priestly associations.

There is the history of the specific component, the found object that carries the patina of previous life. This is especially poignant when Hahn uses messages that suggest significance but elude specificity. The words in *Cracked not Broken* are only revealed when the cover plate of a dangling bauble is slid to one side. Above the winged silver heart, set with a veined blood-red stone, there is a tiny hand waving from a silver cuff. The effect is theatrical. This theatricality with layered associations gives three dimensionality to the characterization.

Hahn's work is, like the great treasures, displayable, as effective on walls or in cabinets as on bodies. They are loaded objects, precious items that carry an inherent allusion to the importance of possessions. They are as potent as spells and as awe-inspiring as reliquaries.



Cracked Not Broken, Necklace  
hand forged silver, jasper, brass and nicollite  
3.75 x 2.5x1/2 in  
2004

## Cynthia Karalla

### Inaugural Drawer's Selection

Like a private eye, Cynthia Karalla follows the clues and researches her subject. Honest but ruthless, her definition of *borrowing* is an extrapolation. She gives back, but she gives it back in an altered state.

With the belief that art is everywhere and in everything combined with her studies in Hermetic philosophy (the changing of lead into gold is a metaphor for taking a base human being and changing them into a supreme being), Cynthia Karalla developed an idea first generated a year earlier in Italy when she recognized a slight similarity to Mona Lisa in the man who eventually became the model for *Untitled, Mona*. Researching Leonardo da Vinci's work, Cynthia traced the model that he had used for his Mona to the male model used for the painting of St. John the Baptist and many other female Madonna portraits. The first photographs that Cynthia took for *Untitled (Mona)* show a young man posing who is exuding attitude. He is far more himself than Mona. She made the clothes and built a podium, recreating the scene. During eight days, over a two week period, and taking more than 4,000 photographs, Cynthia coaxed the young man into his role. The change is astonishing.

In *Jesu Christo*, the viewer is brought painfully close to the dripping painted wounds and deathly glance away - as close as a kiss – so that the viewer is placed in a compromised closeness. Karalla has breathed life into these stiff icons. *Rita de Cascia (Santi)* is another example. She is alluring, beautiful and sexy in her religious possession.

The idea of sneaking up and capturing is especially impressive in the photographs of the eyes. Here images reflected on the eyeball (these are not digital insertions) throw back to us that which the photographed eye is seeing - without Cynthia included. She has used the angle of reflection that best suited her stealthy tracking and passed it through her technical expertise to surprise us with her mastery.



Rita da Cascia (Santi)  
*Duraflex print*  
32 x 24 in

## Donna Kriekle

### Inaugural Drawer's Selection

Donna Kriekles work touches us with a light. It has a freshness and a playful quality, that embodies an appreciation of the joy of living. Her work sparkles. It is appropriate that her mediums embody light. Donna is a master watercolorist. World View is an example. She has managed to bring a gradated, saturated color field around the opening box without a blur or watermark. The Gift floats on clear white paper and is as pure as air, while the world is deep, molded, detailed and corporeal. Donna's oil paintings also present this sense of light and air as she records and invents skies that are as full of breath as the prairie skies above her poetic head. Her works in glass are etched with layers of words and images - reflecting and refracting depth, focus and meaning.

When painting the cycles of nature and time - the amaryllis buds, blooms and wilts, the grasshoppers eat the wheat although the wheat has already become bread, the apple grows upon the circular branch and drops to the earth before our eyes - not only the life, but the death itself, is generous of spirit. The mauves on the dying petals are provocative, the grasshoppers (killing the wheat to feed their brittle bodies) are fascinating in their mechanical structure, the earth itself, fragile eco systems suspended in space, is framed within the concept of giving and generosity. The earth is a gift.

From strong and nourishing to feminine and frivolous to sublime and seductive to effervescent, Donnas work engenders integrity and inspires respect.



World View  
watercolor on arches paper  
30 x 22 in  
1991

## Zachari Logan

### Inaugural Drawer's Selection

Although there is diversity, a consistency rules with unflinching surety. There are no women. There are only men and each man is an archetypal, perfect specimen of maleness. Zachari Logan's man is a prince among men. He has an Apollonian body. He is in the process of discovering the New World. He is a man among men even when wearing a ballgown.

Zachari Logan depicts with graphite in a manner reminiscent of romantic illustration. He has created a neo classical narrative of modern men with hip goatees, Little Lord Fauntleroy curls, baseball caps and sideburns dressed in the costumes of centuries previous or flaunting a Spartan nakedness. They inhabit a focused world, each figure realistically modeled with dramatic shadows adding clarity and dignity. Each man is concentrated on his task. They are busy doing the work of men, exploring the world in ships or scaling, mining and exploring mankind. In "Gulliver," Jonathan Swift's character is beached. The Lilliputians climb and claim the burly male body. They stand on his head, they peer into his anus, they truss his testicles. Zachari has lassoed masculinity.

The drawings are larger than the normal concept of drawing. Drawing has a history of being preparatory work, secretive intimate recordings, unfinished, undeveloped and 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 an intimate statement of homoerotic yearning and grants the subject a monumental, dignified bearing.



Voyage  
graphite on paper  
86 x 96 in, two panels  
2005

## Jesse McCloskey

### Inaugural Drawer's Selection

It's a thriller. The dog is being really mean to the girl. He's being awful! The girl, however, isn't a ready victim and comes up with her nastiness in retaliation. They're in a city park with a fountain and a token bird or two. Peculiar night vistas in that specifically urban sequestered space where the wild is tamed and drawn into line and where with long colonnades lead to fountains and bowers, form the dramatic backdrops. The receding illumination of park lamps, a flash of lightning or perhaps Jesse McCloskey's eyes light the scene and capture the brief instant when the malevolent deed is done.

McCloskey's wickedly colorful paintings are evidence rather than narrative. The crime has been interrupted, the naughtiness intercepted and the baseness of dog's treatment of girl (or girl of dog) enters the annals of crime history with his indelible brush strokes. Jesse McCloskey is like the war artist or the court crime sketcher. He fearlessly stares down the maleficent act. He glares at the potential for murder and in doing so holds it at bay so that we can enjoy the horror. With daring subjectivity he swirls the lurid paint using a palette as uncompromising as the deeds he has witnessed. He resists the temptation to affect the course of events, to rescue the girl or help the poor dog, and instead - depicts! He hands the evidence over to us, the viewers, and we shiver as we receive the impact of the visualizations of cruelty.

We are thrilled. Jesse McCloskey has done it again and we revel in the absurd horror of the dog biting the head off the girl or cheer as the girl stabs him back. McCloskey has done it again! As he has done it hundreds of times...with the same spunky girl and the same wily beast.

Is there a limit to the wickedness?



Attack in the Park  
Collage and tempera on paper  
22 x 30 in  
2005

## Julie Oakes

### Inaugural Drawer's Selection

#### QuerciaStories - Renaissance, Sensuality and Feminism

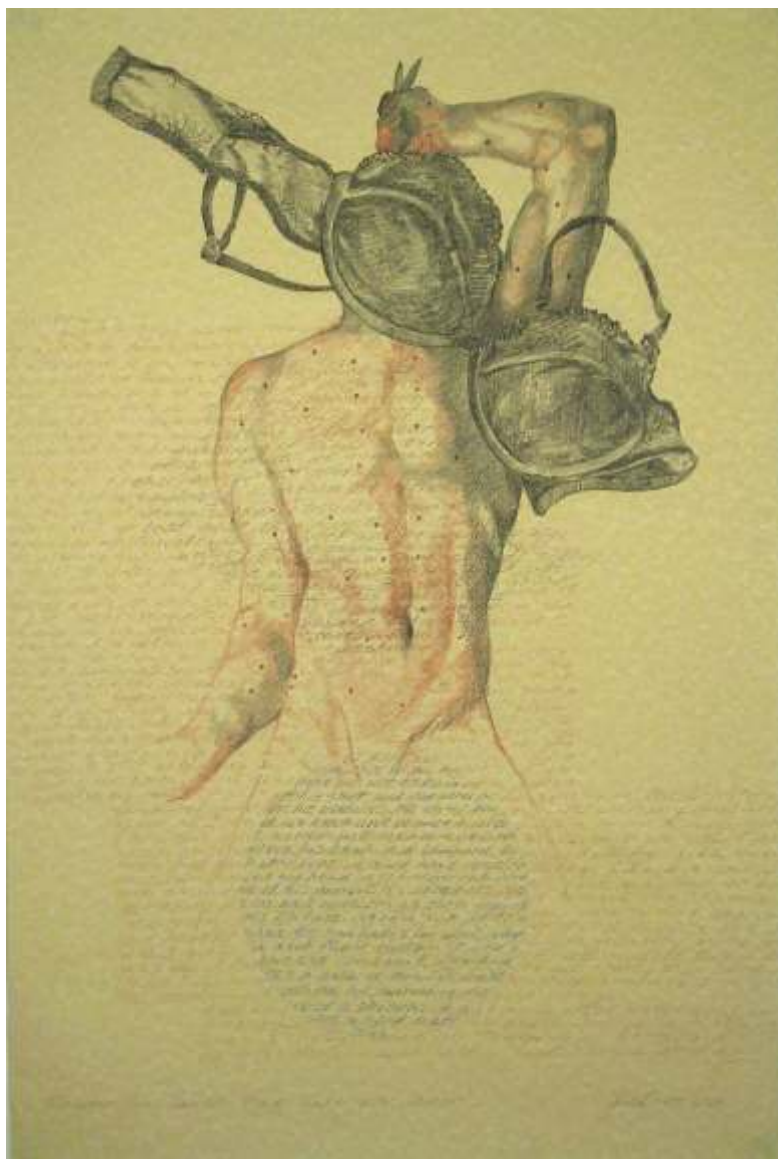
Beauty, obsession, passion. All these describe the work of artist Julie Oakes.

Quercia Stories intentionally references the techniques and concerns of Renaissance art. Over the past three years Oakes has drawn from the Metropolitan Museum collection in New York City as a ground for her writing. She derives from the collection, yet moves away from mimicking a style, and brings the works into a contemporary framework. The materials used are the traditional media of past generations. Specific references are made to techniques of the Renaissance period: parchment paper with sepia, indigo or black pencil, canvasses prepared with rabbit-skin glue, Bologna gesso, and natural pigments. In the paintings, meticulous renderings from Renaissance works are overlaid with strange and romantic imagery, at once obfuscating and revealing. In the drawings, excerpts from Quercia Stories, appear lightly on the page. They are difficult to read and follow. The writing is overlaid on the Met drawings with yet another layer of drawings obscuring the cursive writing. Within the universal symbols of love and eroticism the artist develops a personal, visual vocabulary.

The bed is an image clearly charged with sexual, political and sociological symbolism. Quercia Stories are tales of beddings. On first reading, the overall images are layered, yet they are also often broken down into fragments, reconstituted, and scaled toward the intimate. Erotic references from historical works, Victorian illustration, East Indian Tantric paintings, or Japanese erotica offer titillation, with contemporary images such as the provocative stiletto, lacy underwear, lipstick or the feathery fronds of an artist's brush balancing the collection with a less specific representation of sensuality. The freedom of literary expression, the strong, graphic presentation and the artist's confidence in handling her materials works well with the duplicity of the imagery: romance and threat, life and death, love and its absence.

At once feminine and masculine, hard-edged and soft, Quercia Stories, as a whole, text and visuals, captures the enigma that is the often tenuous and volatile relationship between human beings.

Condensed forward written by Susan Brandoli  
Copyright © Susan Brandoli



Quercia Stories, Under Cover Dancer  
*pencil on gold parchment paper*  
34 x 23 in  
2004

## Katia Santibanez

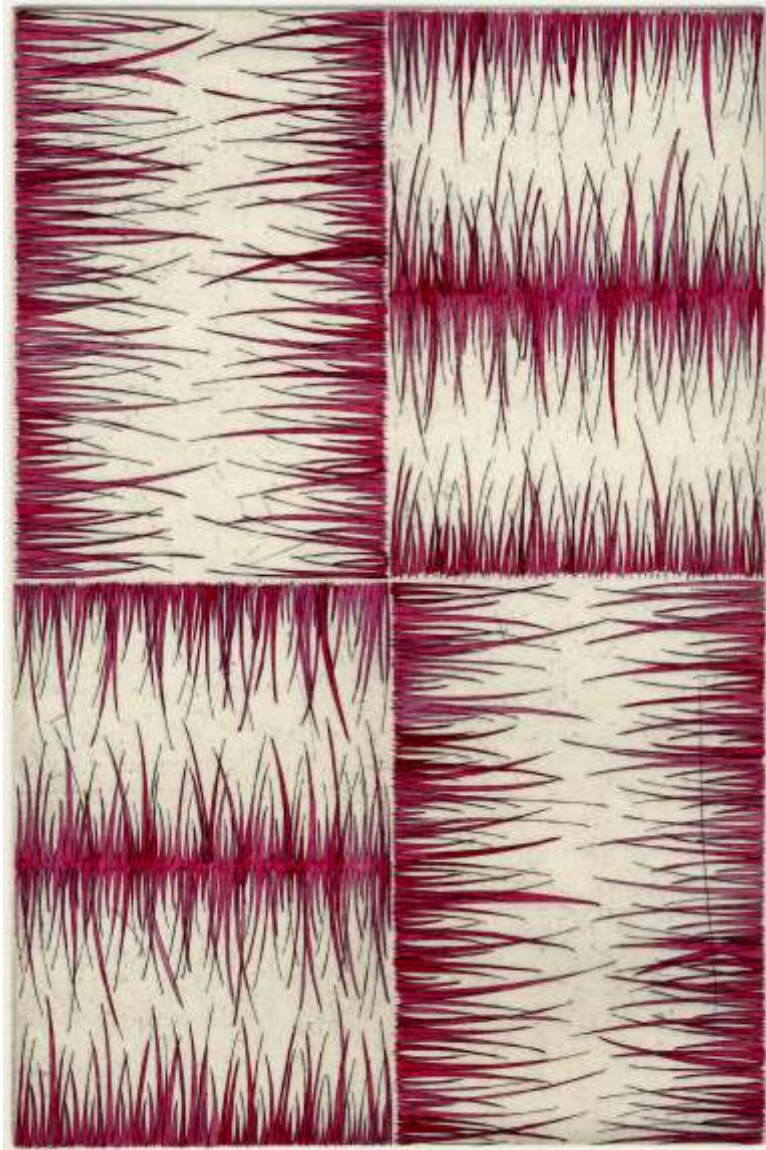
### Inaugural Drawer's Selection

"...as there are blades of grass" - A biblical quote to describe the importance of each presence.

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 goes outside of normal understanding, transcends the quotidian (and grass is common), and turns it into a statement from God. An expanse of grass and the number of blades therein, or the realization of the single blade to the lawn – this is the intersection between that which is 'of the earth' and that which is 'made in heaven'. This is a grandiose and loaded notion.

Katia Santibanez has physically understood the relationship between the fine and individual perfection of a blade and the lawn. She has brought it into comprehension by organizing the individual components and by physically rendering and capturing each one. Considering, first, the individual blade, it is a pristine blade. The shape is similar to a knife blade as it narrows to a point. The edges are sharp. Each one is as close to the other as the human hand is able to accomplish. Katia has paid equal and undivided attention to each component, has focused on the blade, and then has ordered it. Katia relates not only to the organic but also, with a firm commitment to the architectonic. She lines the little blades up, places them in squares and ordered rows. She controls them. She exerts her logic on an organic system. There is, arguably, always a component of playing "The Creator" in the making of art, and in art that derives subject matter from the natural world, the metaphor is strong and extrapolates to references of sexual and sensual elements such as hair or eyelashes.

The act of drawing, painting or etching the single component and then repeating it almost as often as naturally occurs also creates awe when looking at the work. Within relatively small formats (in an art world that tends to oversize), Katia Santibanez inspires the respect due to a monumental task. There is a palpable awareness of the labor that went into executing each precise blade over and over and over again. We are amazed at her vision. Her eyes are keen instruments. Her patience and attention - great. The works are awesome, with the strength of the original, rather than the cliché derivation, definition of the word.



Red & Black (diptych) Red. 4/15  
etching with hand painted watercolor on paper  
14" x 11 in,  
2006

## Drawer's Selection, February 4 - March 11, 2006

On Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> Headbones, The Drawers introduces ten new Canadian and International Artist's to its drawers.

Assistant director, previous owner of Headbones Gallery, visual artist and art writer Julie Oakes brings her established career and expertise to guide selection and programming. For the past six years, Oakes has been living in New York City where she acquired a Masters in Art and Art Professions from NYU, a Masters in Social and Political Science (Cultural Theory and Criticism) from The New School for Social Research and maintained a studio.



*Alphonse van Woerkom, Bagdad Video Club II, charcoal, charcoal powder, conté & white pencil on paper, 14x17 in., 2005 (detail)*

## Ellen Butler

### Drawer's Selection

The attraction of intimacy and the closeness required to wander over the details is offset by an overall lingering pleasure in the perusal of the whole with all of its misty subtleties. The coloring, as in ancient Chinese scrolls, is evocative with muted monochromatic simplicity.

The romantics were absorbed with the contemplation of the passing of time and the vulnerability of beauty. In Ellen Butler's work, the image seems to disintegrate before our eyes and the only semblance of stasis is the Chinese symbol. There is the suggestion of immeasurable distance yet a stellar glow appears to emanate off of the floating or falling biological forms. There is, as well, a haze that partially obfuscates them. The sense of dissemblance in process is counterbalanced by the suspicion that this might be a frozen moment in time that has been irrevocably captured on paper for inspection. In contrast, the Chinese symbol fixes this floating world by marking the time or suggesting a place that is foreign to our Western knowledge bank for we cannot interpret the symbol or translate the dark scrawl that appears to be from an exotic language. As the symbol sinks into the paper with its shadowed recessing, the impression of a cloudy environment turns to stone. The illusion to otherness is fixed within a reference of desire - dewy, gorgeous and illusive.

The process is mysterious and Ellen Butler has the technical acumen to pull from many. There is the hint of photography. The frozen yarn-like squiggles resemble the microscopic traces of cellular life forms captured between specimen slides. The edges of the veins have the look of silverpoint. It is the enhancement of inherent loveliness through the hand of a competent beautician that seduces us into the consideration of beauty and the sublime.



Silver leaves and Symbol  
*mixed media on paper*  
48 x 60 in  
2003

## Phyllis Godwin

### Drawer's Selection

Phyllis Godwin has always been a drawer and her fanciful dolls and fairies co-existed within the milieu of The Regina Five (she is married to Ted Godwin). This form of fanciful, flat, yet detailed depiction of figures with an invented ethnicity and style have come under scrutiny and garnered significant recognition recently in the work of the new drawers. The Royal Art Lodge and Marcel Dzama for instance. Phyllis Godwin's stylized and decorated females, enduring with admirable consistency as the rest of the art scene changed several times around her, ring with a truth that is as honest as Ukrainian eggs and braided bread.

There is an implied narrative but only the initiated can completely decipher Phyllis Godwin's secret story line. There is an aura of lore with ritual practices that these spindly sprites partake in for they are dressed up and either ready to go or well on their way. There is a common sense of costume, but it can't be traced to a specific culture. Phyllis Godwin has invented a cross between fashion and protection, a feminine armor. There are leg pads that seem to button behind, protecting the long legs so that they can continue to perform amazing contortions, twisting upon themselves like Celtic knots or macramé. Ropes, ribbons, laces, braids, florets and baubles form patterns with symmetry and ordered design displayed in absolute repetitive perfection. There is a perspective akin to the shallow dimension that was understood when the shift was first made from medieval to renaissance - a Giotto-like space. There is a formality that holds the flitting, happy, whimsical dolls in check with the order imposed by formal gardens where trees are trimmed into circles or the world is held in place by meticulously rendered borders.

There is no sense of time, no historical definition for these airy females. The dress is a mixture of ancient and modern, the stylization is as contemporary as comics and yet seemingly rooted in traditions. It is a world occupied by feminine delight.



Three Little Maids Are We  
watercolour and graphite  
24 x 18 in  
1984

## Jim Kalnin

### Drawer's Selection

The spirits of the wilderness are welcomed into the cultural echelon of Western Art and maintain a secure foothold on the ladder of eminence through the work of Jim Kalnin. In this recent series, Kalnin has built environments of intersecting straight lines using perspective to create cityscapes where the spirits of the wilderness explore. As civilized man further encroaches on the wild and aggressively asserts his dominion over beast, fish and fowl, Kalnin recoups. He acts as ambassador and channels the spirits of the wilderness into urban regions. Animus power shines supreme through the foothold of his work.

Kalnin's natural images are not realistically rendered but abstracted to become more the symbol of the creature than a depiction. It is the Spirit that inhabits the picture - in many incarnations. Similar to native naming, *Bear* wanders through the picture planes in his various guises - *Yellow Bear*, *Great Bear* or *Bear from Mountain*. They are archetypes. They are spirits because they are occupying surreal spaces. Fish float above the monoliths like a crescent moon and this is because it is *Glowing Moon Fish*, the spirit. Jim Kalnin's deep and personal knowledge of the symbolic fields of nature comes honestly. Having lived for many years in the remote Canadian wilderness, beyond the buzz of electrical lines, before cell phones, on the site of the grave of a Franciscan monk, he has communed with the native spirits. His name was Feather. He continues to grow in his communication with nature making frequent expeditions into the wilderness as a fisherman. His perception of those who inhabit the woods and streams is clear-sighted and potent. His art practice is secure as he reworks his close connection with nature in his country studio, an old wooden church. The result - the artwork is informed.

Jim Kalnin's work has always been infused with messages from the earth. Whether he is sculpting with woven twigs shaped into geometric enclosures like dream catchers or building graphic cities with oil-stick on paper for his spirit acquaintances to explore, he helps us to connect with our own spirit.



Bear Migrations #1  
*mixed media on vellum*  
21 x 29 in  
2005

## Malcom Poynter

### Drawer's Selection

A close-up of the pieces from the 1998 series, *Autistic Cocoon*, by Malcolm Poynter, reveals the admired detail as a blanket covering of cars like a parking lot from nightmares or the traffic jam of the twentieth century. This is common man, stuck going to work or coming home. These heads are occupied by vehicular congestion. The eyes, that from a distance read as television screens are also cars, this time seen from above with the roofs forming rows of blank boxes with slightly rounded corners. The associations are numerous: mankind lost in the business of his comings and goings, the eventual choking pollution of progress, the scurry to stay in the game or, just like the never-ending background of motor vehicles - the impossibility of comprehending modernity. And this is only the ground, the skin on the head. The eyes are clichés, open or closed, the nose - a cartoon slash and with a tongue lolling out - or is it a deflated balloon? - man's dehumanization is capped. Yet, these are not overly depressing pictures. The childlike rendition of a big simple head, in story book colors or black and white with newspaper-transfer blur make it palatable (as it is, simply there). Mankind is caught in his ability to get there.



Malcolm Poynter - Autistic Cocoon  
*mixed media*  
58 x 36 in  
1988

## Tina Polawski

### Drawer's Selection

There is more to this than meets the eye. Tina Poplawski's images are prepared long before brush touches paper. The generation of the image begins in the wetlands.

The natural leaves, much like water lilies, vulnerable and extracted from their watery homes, quickly turn color and die. Tina collected pond leaves from her country habitat and carried them back to her Toronto studio in large Tupperware containers of water. Still, despite her coddling, they were shocked and changed. Poplawski's effect upon them has already been put into process. Her photographing the leaves passes them through another stage of transformation; with the willful act of freezing their existence in time. Then there is the culling, the digital manipulations and the choice of format and composition. Tina goes for a simple, dramatic memorable showcase of leafy individuality. Now, her hand comes into play with the combination of her natural talent and the nurturing that she has exposed her ability to; Tina Poplawski is a very good watercolorist.

Quantity reinforces the impact. There were originally twenty leaves (with their colors now restored to vitality by water) which were presented on their twenty pristine white 'leaves' of paper.

Once established as unique objects and divorced from their habitat, the images grow once again, this time with associative properties. The trail of nibbles that the bugs left as they ate their meandering pathways through the leaves, can be compared to electrical, technological, digital or mathematical systems or programs. As formal shapes, each leaf glows like a semi-precious stone as it lies on its delicate shadow. Since being exposed to Tina Poplawski's artfulness, the humble wet leaves overshadowed their origins and became works of art.



Topography of Small Nibbles #7A  
watercolour & acrylic topcoat on Winsor Newton paper  
22 x 22 in  
2004-05

## Birgit Ruff

Drawer's Selection

The "Chemical Wedding" Series

Miniatures draw the viewer closer to the visual in order to participate in the intimacy. Persian miniatures utilized graphic elements, outline and low modeling to clarify the subject. Birgit Ruff does the opposite. Using the literary work *The Chemical Wedding* as her inspiration, she creates the illusion of deep recesses, pools, tunnels, forest glens and labyrinths within the small formats. Her colors are subtle and organic like vegetable dyes. The indigo blues, viridian greens, ochres, siennas and earth tones abide while the reds are cochineals like the backs of beetles. Framed in deep boxes and floating in their glass encasements just above the backing, their fragility is enhanced. They seem too delicate to touch. We might crush the fragile complexity with our clumsy fleshy fingers.

Birgit Ruff has painted with roses. She has pressed their pretty petals on paper until they have surrendered to her manipulations and formed a mandala.

In larger works, organic content with tendrils, organs, veins, leaves and florets map internal systems while the ecological reigns with assurance. There are sexual allusions, not just in her use of the male and female reproductive systems as subjects, but in the generative association of her forms. With rhythmic appropriateness, connections are made between the parts and the whole. The work is balanced, vibrant and at peace, reassuring us in our modern stress that this earthly existence is a nourishing, wondrous one.



By The Well Water  
watercolor, acrylic, collage and graphite  
3.5 x 2.5 in  
2003

## Bryan Ryley

### Drawer's Selection

To leave the mark of individuality, a sense of the intellect and spirit, is to wax poetic. Abstraction reveals what is left behind, a track of energy. Abstraction indicates the state of mind that the artist inhabited while he assumed the creative responsibility. Bryan Ryley, with a practiced hand, leaves indicators and passes over the flame of insight to the viewer .

Ryley has never tied down the field of possibilities with inconsequential dribble. Throughout series past, he has held a strict abstract agenda, giving us paint, pencil, paper, canvas a "medium is the message" type of artist. He would allow himself the indiscretion of a collaged element now and again as in one series when he included the paint labels from the cans in the artworks. There have also been repetitive shapes and formats to orient from; The Four Seasons, for instance, where broad color fields with circles of relative size presented an associative palette in large formats, like modern picture windows letting through a vision of nature.

Starting with a digital printed image from a photograph of saddhus, Bryan Ryley works through a number of 'medium moves' that vacillate between obfuscation and clarification. He lays a milky substance over the surface that places a blur on the image of the holy men so that it becomes difficult to focus on their physical existence and replaces that frozen moment with a melt down.

He exerts his written hand and brings civilized thoughts from seemingly disconnected sources but once the connections are made, the information is vast. T.S. Elliot, e.e.cummings, and Ferlingetti (from Yonkers near where Bryan Ryley did his Masters at Pratt) began the Beat Movement and eventually opened the City Lights Book Store in San Francisco. The often playful, usually more dissident, verse of e.e. cummings (who was also, although not acclaimed as such, a painter) with his lack of punctuation and capitals developed the model of abstract poetry. T.S. Elliot's existential philosophy was the engine that drove abstract expressionism. Ryley gives his T.S. Elliot piece a plus and a minus sign, loaded with pushes and pulls.

Bryan's work gives us an overview of the intangible. He encourages reflection.



Competing With El Greco, e.e. cummings  
digital print, mixed media, pencil  
paper 22x 30in, image 11.5x15in  
2003

## Alphonse van Woerkom

### Drawer's Selection

This series of drawings from Alphonse Van Woerkom are based on Goya's *Disasters of War*, the same etchings that the Chapman brothers vandalized by painting over the heads of the victims with clown and puppy faces. Alphonse's treatment, admirably, grants dignity while reclaiming the classic compositions by introducing contemporary, pertinent subject matter. His adept depictions evoke the dark qualities of the original etchings and combine the serious content with the brutally brazen wit of a political cartoonist.

Van Woerkom, while working for the Toronto Star in 1970, received the prestigious International Political Cartoon Award from the Salon du Caricature, Montreal. He moved to New York where he developed the Op Ed page for the New York times. He has been editorial and political cartoonist for The New York Times Book Review, Newsday, De Gelderlander, and the Northern Centinel where he is currently staff cartoonist.

His illustrations of unflinching social commentary and macabre eroticism were published by Random House as *Face to Face*, 1973 and *Common Life*, 1976. From an acquired cynicism of life in the big apple, comes work that is hip and current in content while seated in fluent ability.



Baghdad Video Clip II  
*charcoal powder, conte pencil, white crayon*  
14 x 17 in  
2005

## Tom Wren

### Inaugural Drawer's Selection

Tom Wren is a bad boy. He makes fun of people. He puts beards on ladies and dresses men up in polka dotted dresses with yellow knee highs. Sometimes, he's even mean to his characters - scratching out their faces and spattering blobs of muck on them. Tom Wren's surfaces in the developed works reference the patinas of time, stressed and seemingly dirtied. They appear to have been left out in the rain or soiled by the oily touch of ancient fingers.

Living in Vancouver East, near the denizens and misfits, he harnesses the fringes and spans. He also empathizes and it is in his ability to grant dignity that his work touches us, much as the classic comedies lent relief to the tragedies and gave voice to feelings too tender to speak of seriously.

Studies for Fashion Victims pokes fun at the industry, but not at the people. The little blue-gray characters are proud of how they look - insanely proud. Their clothes, the fashion, are inconsequential. They know that they look terrific and their faces, as the focus of Wren's attention, declare it. Whether it is a sultry one eyed 'come hither' glance, a gleeful, skipping run for the picture, a smiling declaration of individuality, or the humble, stooped pride of an aging profile; these Fashion Victims provoke ardor. They're doted upon.

An avatar of alternative imagery, Tom Wren's work resonates (his characters are all too familiar) and serves as a reminder of our unsubstantial posturing.



Study for Fashion Victims #1  
watercolor on paper  
6 x 4 in  
2005

## Attila Richard Lukacs by Patric Lehmann

### Drawer's Selection

*Boy With Green Glove*, 1998, by Attila Richard Lukacs was printed in New York City over a sixteen month period by Alexander Heinrici at Fine Art Printing. The works are silk-screened in eighteen colors in an edition of forty. Each of the prints have been extensively hand-painted by the artist with varnish, oil paint and tar, making the print completely unique. The works are on four ply museum board. This image of a nude boy wearing only one bright green glove casts a shadow. This shadow has been executed in a deep layer of hand applied tar. The tar has been etched with prose which reads as follows: "The boy looked at the angel. The boy fell in love with the angel's face." Prominent in the upper right quadrant of the work is a bright red oil imprint of Lukacs' right hand. The red hand-print is a prominent and frequent leit motif found in Luckacs' more important works and is a reminder of the Reagan era where AIDS, already having killed millions of people, was the unspoken word. Several protest groups during the Reagan era used the red hand as their sword stating, "Reagan has the blood of millions on his hands". Protestors would often paint their hands red.

The edition was published by Lehmann Leskiw Editions, Toronto, *Courtesy of Lehmann Leskiw Fine Art*



Boy With The Green Glove  
Edition of 40 unique, 18 color silkscreen, varnish, acrylic paint and tar  
76"x60"  
1998

## Narrative?, March 18 - April 22, 2006

Interrogating narrative has been the concern of art historians ever since the end of the Renaissance when the meaning of the religious iconography was understood by everyone laymen and the initiated alike. Now, as we attempt to grab a handle of commonality in the many diverse narratives that run through our multi-ethnic/racial/gender/political/ fantastical contemporary story telling, *Headbones, The Drawers* assembles a selection of works on paper and questions the narrative intent, the couching of the tale and the interpretation.



Ruth Waldman, Yellow Monster, pencil on paper, 24x18 in. (61x46 cm), 2002

## Daniel David

### Narrative?

There is a classical form of drawing that brings to mind all that is wondrous about the discipline. It occurs when depiction, invention, inspiration and subject matter coalesce at that point where a simple pencil meets with the paper and transcendence takes place. The humble materials are lifted from their physical earthbound corporeality to become magic. The uninitiated exclaim. The brotherhood of drawers become silent, satisfied once again for they are nourished by the show of excellence and the empathetic moment is relished. This is the result of Daniel David's drawings.

There is wholesomeness in his work even when the subject is unusual. The figures look healthy so that what they are doing (a beautiful woman licking a bed post, or Marilyn Monroe raising an arm beside a bowl of berries,) despite the sexual connotations, appears normal. They have the look of contentment that comes from having led balanced lives so that the captured moment with its implications of eroticism are understandable. Even the banana, that when peeled shows up as a penis, is a healthy specimen, fatty colored, shining and proud.

Daniel David uses a light paper that accepts the color with unblemished lucidity. The application of the paint or the pencil is not always completely finished so that we are left in the realm of technique rather than crossing over to be fooled by illusionism. Even when the drawing is complete, there is something missing and after searching for that mysterious disconnect, it leaps out - modernity. The subjects are slightly old fashioned as if they still believe in something just as Daniel David believes in classical drawing.

With a renaissance hand, romantic subject matter, surrealist juxtaposition of elements and the clean, critical, aloof, presentation of a detached ironist, Daniel David can be called a true postmodernist. He liberally borrows from the ages and returns a converted contemporary sensual slant with psychological innuendos. The only diversion from this categorization is the focus for unlike the dissipation of repetitive imagery and blanket compositions of the postmodern format. Daniel David's work specifically addresses, and in turn coaxes, the viewer to contemplate a specific situation. The narrative is Daniel David's own, with his personal codification of symbolism luring us into his world, revealing while obfuscating.



Untitled  
oil and graphite on paper  
22"x18"  
2000

## Jen Dyck Narrative?

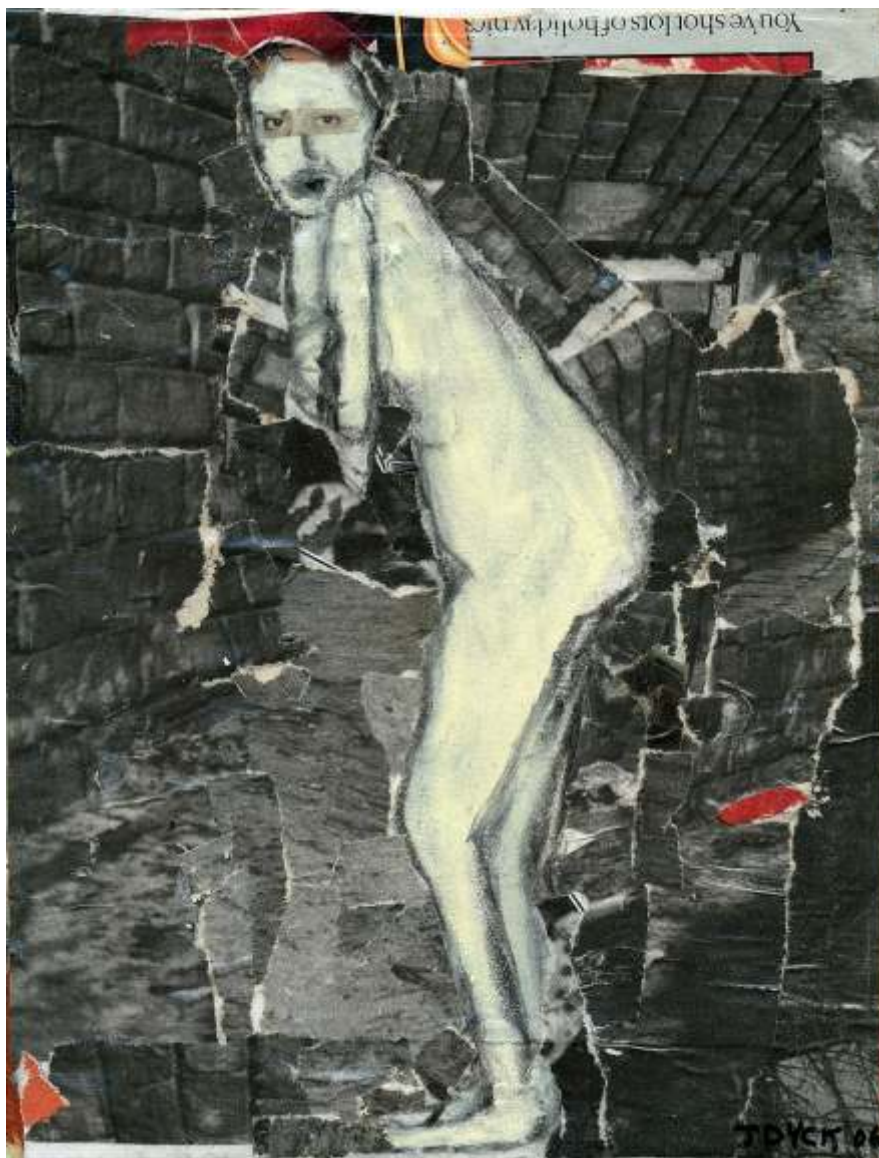
Jen Dyck's work remind us of the human condition, slightly rickety, unsure and trembling with anticipation. The surface is a tad messy. Pieces wrinkle, flip up at the edges and the layering is patched. Variables of textures, patterns, rips and tears echo the contemporary overload of stuff. Throughout the confusion of dealing with surface, the figures go about their lives with simple descriptions as titles. In *Carrying* a man holds a woman in his arms with the antecedent of having picked her up (past) inextricably attached to the inevitability of putting her down (future).

Jen Dyck's figures sport the patina of living. Caught in the moment as if in a snap shot, they are surprised in their acts and look out of their smeared existence with vulnerable emotions. These are the photographs that are discarded, that never go to press or are filed at the bottom of the box where private moments, once recorded, are left out of the album. Jen Dyck, retrieves them, pays attention to them, scrubs and scribbles them back to life and passes the abandoned passage of time over for fresh inspection.

The handling of the surface is extreme; bashed, blurred and blowing. Dyck's attempt to get to the bottom of existence appears frantic. She uses an energetic line, a free and loose stroke. She paints with collage using the ripped paper as strokes and even modeling with the application. She pastes on her paint using an approximation of placement so that the figures feel as if they have shifted during her capture. The subdued colors are complex, a riot of depth, a painterly pleasure field, like a de Kooning painting.

The figures lack perfection. They need orthodontic work, a fitness schedule, new clothes, money, a comfortable place or help carrying their load. This is Dyck's formidable talent: her work identifies individuality as well as imperfections on all levels through the choice of subject, materials and handling.

She refreshes the homily "for all your faults I love you still, but you're never still."



Surprised Nude  
collage & mixed media on board  
9"x7"  
2005

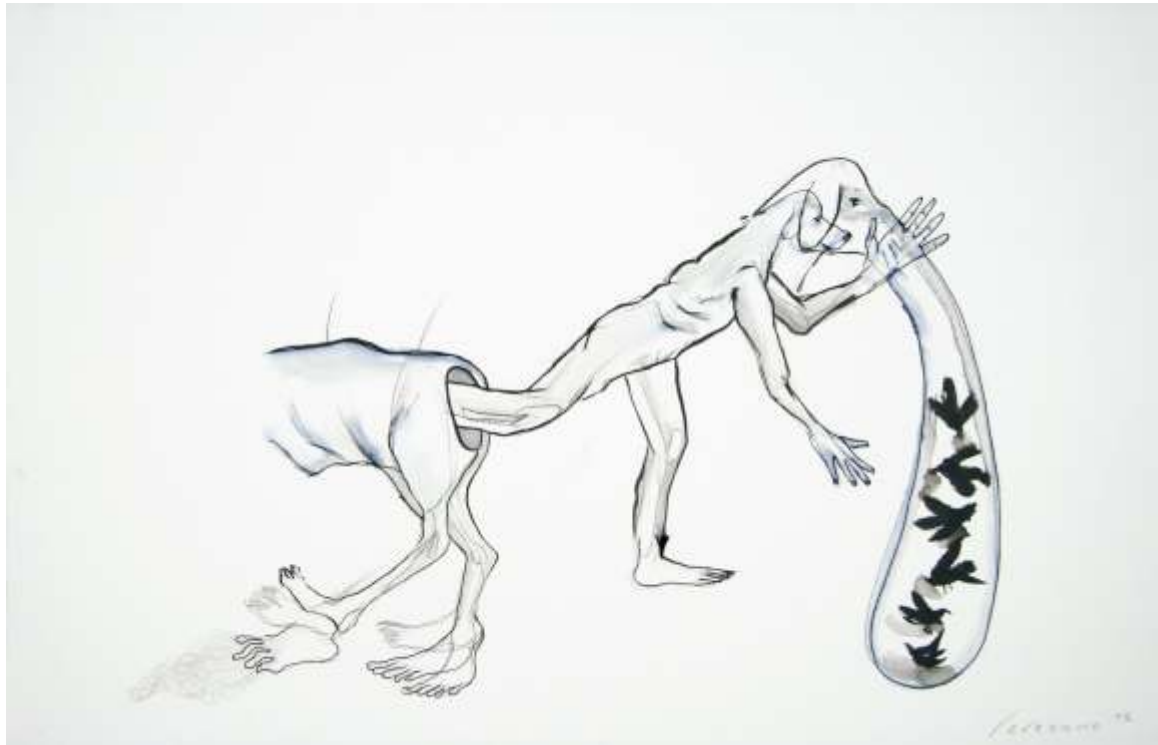
## Erik Jerezano

### Narrative?

Eric Jerezano made them up. He brought forth memories from his image bank and gave them physical presence. He gave form to hybridized creatures, bred from another culture and birthed through a channel that extended from his Mexican roots to present itself as an adoptable creation. Then he made them do things. He allowed them to develop right before our eyes, to transform from one fantastic being into another. Like a masterful shaman who guides the uninitiated through a transformation rite, Jerezano hints at how they came to be but like smoke before magical mirrors, the line, modeling and tints obliterate the exact manner of change. The perception is fogged so that what has transpired is not a surety. Jerezano remains the grand magician who holds the secret knowledge. The way these new creatures appear remains a mystery known only to the initiated.

Alakazam! A mediumistic evolution took place. Ritual magic, with the attendant masks, is coupled to the wonder of making marks on paper. With second sight, Jerezano communicated from the subterranean depths of the psyche. We had been invited to view the rites of passage but we are left with a feeling of suspense as if their may be yet another change.

There is a purity to the private tales of wonder that are played out upon the paper, as if a child had become so involved in his fantasy that it grew beyond his proportions and spoke back to him. This is a visual language a few steps removed from hieroglyphics and although the reading allows us entry into a narrative, the meaning is not clear. Jerezano offers us more information than can be ordered as he awes with the mutations of his characters.



Untitled 2: Fables Without Morals  
pastel, ink, pencil  
13"x20"  
2005

## Judith Jurica

### Narrative?

This is a piece taken from a larger piece. The coloration is simple, a background in one color and a design in another. The pattern is floral and sometimes there is a bird. The design is modeled, only slightly. The title, 'toile' helps to orient the pattern to the cloth (toile de jouy) that was painted with romantic scenes from the eighteenth century. The cloth, often used as wall coverings called up visions from beyond the walls, just as frescoes had done or the large tapestries of the Renaissance. The little scenes depicting leisure settings for gracious lifestyles give the illusion of an endless repetition of perfect gardens where nature is ruled in and instead of the awkward crooks and curves of untamed wilderness, the flora and fauna are unruffled, designed and veering close to geometrics. These designs were placed on daily objects, cups, bowls, window boxes, fabric for dresses, book covers, tables and chairs. Women, home bound and beautifying decorated their lives. They painted landscapes and flowers. Judith Jurica's choice of 'toile' as title and subject was not without suggestions and subliminal references. Jurica has painted gardens with the hand of an Emily Carr, planting stone sculptures of Venus within the verdurous growth. Now she has gone one step further with her subtle feminism. She is painting just a portion of a garden, once removed from reality. She is painting that place where women have imagined something beyond their walls or their bolts of fabrics. She is depicting a piece taken from a larger piece that means far more than a flower or a designed bird.

Like wallpaper patterns from Europe or charming oil cloths from Mexico, the simple statement of a patch of design pulled from a larger whole, is a loaded one. It evokes a gender bias (part of a woman's world) and the words that have described shut-ins and their relationships to the wallpaper. We can enlarge upon the segment we are given and make more of it than that which is physically before us. We can attribute origin and ethnicity. Closer inspection of the broad backgrounds and bold patterns shows that they are alive, bouncing with the energy of the rendering, pencil crayoned backdrops and lines that have been left by the traces of Judith Jurica's consciousness as she rounded the curve or jabbed at the angles.



Russet Raid  
*tinted gesso, graphite, coloured pencil*  
30"x22"  
2005

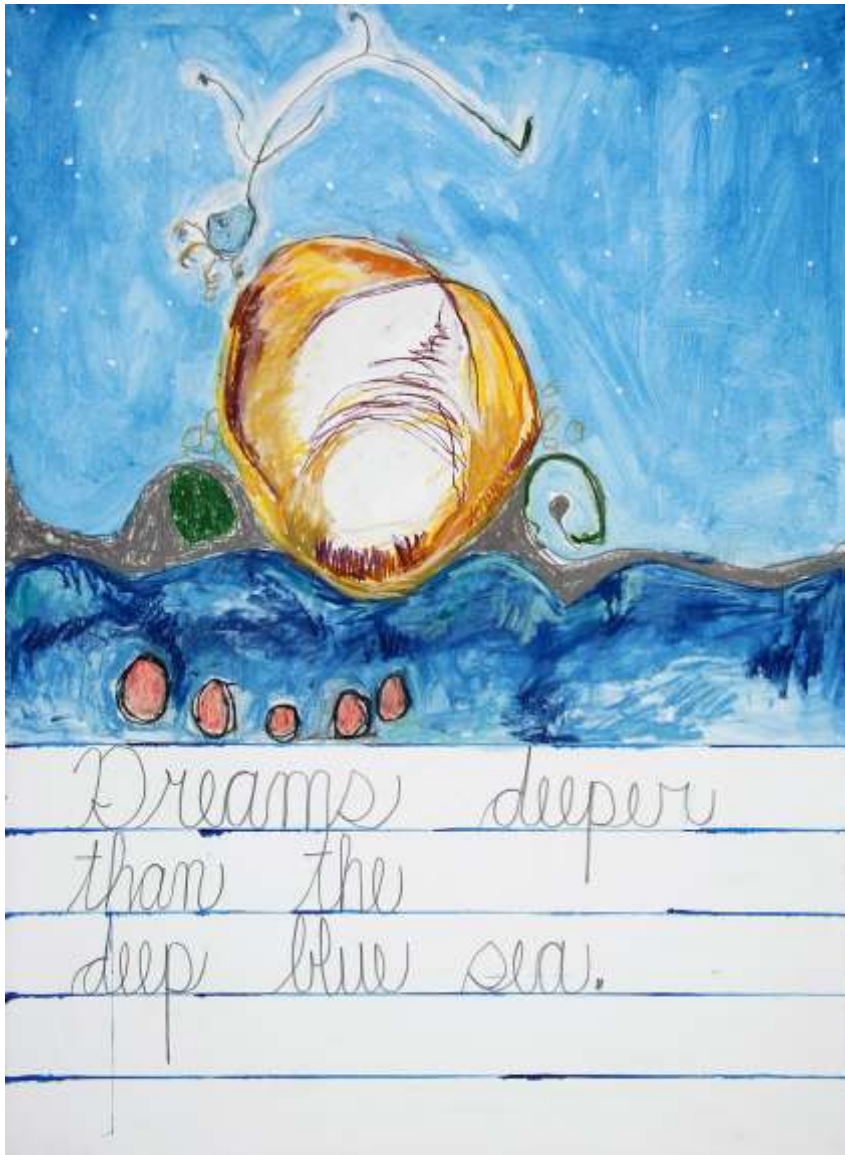
## Wanda Lock

### Narrative?

Wanda Lock's work is ethereal yet grounded, playful and lively but contained. The work is whimsical with associations to the joy of pure abstraction but there is an underlying reference. It is a feminism that is inescapable and Lock seals the hints of a maternal perspective within a determined, firm association with the realm of children when she rules half of her page as if it was a school book and writes in the cursive hand of a child. The work is associative and she has forced the association with this addition of wobbly writing. The text, with the exaggerated curves of a nascent scribe, reveal the wonder of the act of writing while at the same time demonstrating the task of having to communicate with such a laborious method. Perhaps that is why the message is more evocative than precise. The voice is difficult to pin down. Is it a child who is telling us something or is it an adult clothing more sophisticated emotions?

Interpreting the visuals is influenced by the text and with the writing being so large, it is impossible to look at the work without reading it. When "running up hill to the green green grass" is the written statement and there is a happily colored blue sky and four attempts at humanization at the bottom of what could be a hill; when there's a balloon floating and a bouncy story book expectancy - it's an abrupt detour to read the title *Searching for Casa Nova* and then realize that this is an adult who is putting out the messages.

The visuals cannot be interpreted as truly naïve for they rise above the inadequate abilities of a child who is trying to depict (striving to make drawings that 'look like . . .'). The sunny work enters the intellectually complex coding of pure abstraction. More 'Cy Twombly' than innocent, Wanda Lock's work challenges while enhancing - similar to the profound dynamics between the upkeep and the blessings of raising children.



Searching for Casa Nova: journal entry #1  
mixed media on paper  
22"x30", 38x56cm  
1999

## Jesus Mora

### Narrative?

'Alien' has the overriding association of 'strange' because we link the word to outer space but it is also applied to foreigners who are not yet a subject of the land in which they are living. A method of dealing with alienation is to live with mementos from the homeland. To bring signification of the other culture into the framework of the new land not only comforts the individual but also displays the wealth of his heritage. Jesus Mora's work is rich with references to Mexico. They are also projections onto paper of alien universes, free floating without the orientation of gravity yet bejeweled with historical symbols. When placed in the context of the watercolor space, patterns taken from Mayan temples look like a code from another planet and seem to reinforce the rumors that the ancient civilization came from outer space. The cosmic tales of an ancient invasion that float like rumors around our sci-fi awareness come alive in Mora's work.

A similar free association comes from Jesus Mora's use of corn silk. Like a super fine brush, the silk leaves marks that appear to be tunnels made by a burrower. They resemble inscribed Mayan and Aztec gold. Made from maize they form mazes and the possibility that the ancient alphabet might have been born from a similar happenstance seems a possibility.

Despite the invitation to fantasize, the work is grounded. Jesus Mora's water color scrolls have the atmospheric softness of a Chinese brush painting. On top of this, Jesus records his transplanted memories of other places. The pencil and ink marks attach themselves to the floating gelatinous masses as if they are reproducing in ethereal space. They sprout. They peak out at us. The clouds of gentle tonalities seem to part and small beings are disturbed, caught by a fleeting glimpse like a microscopic revelation.

It is difficult to encapsulate effervescence. Jesus Mora's art, like a fizzy drink delivered a little warm and then shaken with the excitement of opening, broadcasts sparkles.



Jellyfish  
watercolour and ink on paper  
14"x10"  
2002

## Shauna Oddleifson

### Narrative?

Shauna Oddleifson's little girl has no guilt. Nor does Shauna as she scratches onto an etching plate or onto the oil stick ground and produces the images of innocence gone awry. Art when it voices violence serves the function of informing as well as clearing the conscience, much like the role of the confessional. This is not to imply that Shauna has left in her wake a myriad of dead little girl-friends but she may nonetheless have helped to clear the cosmic unconsciousness of some of the repercussive strain caused by our collective sins. The little girl wants more than she can have (greed) and connives into position (avarice) so that she is able to kill (murder) to get (steal) what she wants. Then she walks away from her crimes with the same smile on her face that she had when she walked in. This detached perpetration of wrong-doings is paralleled in wars, politics, business and numerous social situations so that the metaphoric allusions are blaringly relevant.

The work raises questions on many levels. Psychologically, the little girl by killing a female (a rival in Freudian terms as is 'the mother' to every little girl) gains first place in the hierarchy and is then able to command the attention of the male which leads to reproduction and hence the furthering of the species. Is this little girl that complex or is she simply *mean*? The competitive nature of mating with all of the trappings of beautification and wealth is cut to the quick with one foul swoop by Shauna Oddleifson's predatory female. There is a push off a slide, a knife in a belly, hair snipped or a tie to a tree as the little girl stands with a hammer in hand or digs the grave with a benign look of satisfaction. Is the gender pertinent? Since it's always a girl, it is. Does this say that women are wicked and conniving? The artist is a woman. She is simply using her own voice. This is where the simplicity lies and it is reinforced within the depiction a naïve primitive drawing style.

The psychological clearing is through a 'safe' medium. It is better to draw the fantasy than act it out. It is also mentally healthy to observe. As observer, the reaction is not one of disgust, but a hearty, somewhat maniacal glee. The acts are absurd. This little girl is just *too bad*, *too outrageous*. Identification is through a comic reaction. These little art works of little girls doing naughty, bad, nasty things are fun.

Perhaps it is because of the innocence implied in the child-like rendering, the timorous scratches, that Shauna Oddleifson's little girls don't alienate but rather - they draw in. The viewer becomes complicit in the bad girl's world for they are given the idea for the nasty act and then watch as the naughty child carries it out. The aftermath is the crowning evil, however, for the act is rarely fulfilling. There is more often than not just sheer waste as the outcome. A visual parable of cupidity with an eerie echo in our times.



Teddy Bear (part 1,2,3)  
oil stick on paper  
three panels, 5.5"x7.5" each  
2000

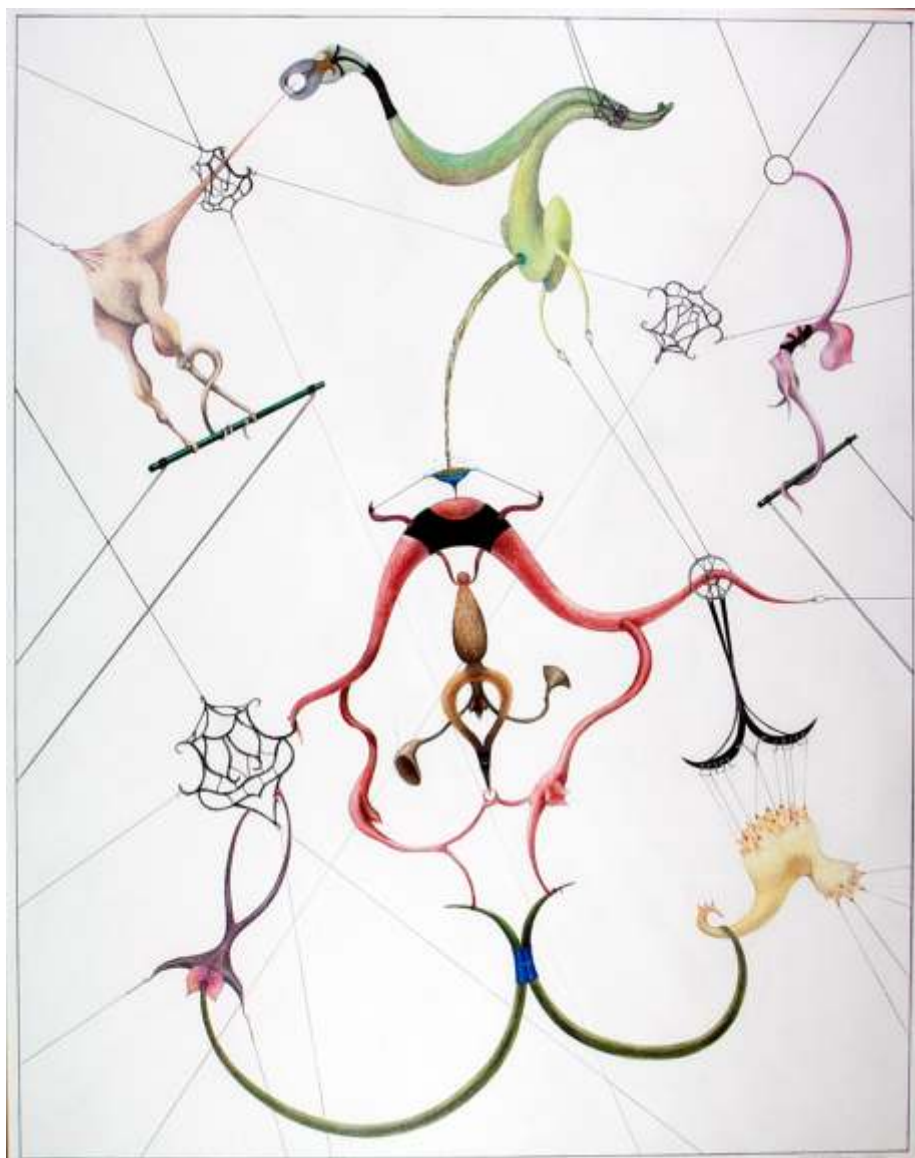
## Ruth Waldman

### Narrative?

With allusions to bondage, Ruth Waldman's trussed biomorphic forms are both playful and memorable like a good session of bondage carried out by an ardent lover. The forms, unattractive beings, provoke a fascination with their grotesqueness that is tempered by the range of colors (melon, mauve, tangerine, turquoise and pink). The saccharine tints, fine trussing, filigree couplings and curvaceous shapes draw one in for closer inspection, trusting that there will be pleasantries. But on inspection, the harnesses, pierces, lacings and pricks appear tighter and sharper. The colors describe flesh, filtered to fool and attract so that the plight of the misshapen is examined with delighted curiosity and titillated wonder. Having examined the strung-out little beings (even on large formats the characters are small), the residual taste is still not bitter; if anything it is sweeter, a near-morbid fascination. The delicate treatment of the rendering creates awe rather than revulsion despite the bulbous extrusions or stretched and wrinkled flaps.

The sexual innuendo is pointed. Corsets finely sculpt the bulbous forms. Skirts are parted, legs are spread and organs exposed. Veins reveal the pulse of excitement. Swellings plump up with juices. The manipulation of body parts is carried out with elegant trappings of torture, clean and precise.

The illusions to art history are many. There are flat floating memories of Paul Klee's zany creatures, Bosch's organic sprouting tendrils minus the moral overtones, Kandinsky's curves or medieval tapestries. Dr. Seuss is invoked with his illustrative charm gone wild in an orgy. Mechanical guy wires hold the balance in place within a white pristine space that suggests more beyond the borders of the paper. Who or what is exerting the tension?



Circus  
colored pencil on paper  
24"x18"  
2002

## Srdjan Segan

### Narrative?

It is such a long expanse - a magnificent stretch of paper like a royal welcome into drawing. The figures appear light for they are made of paper. They can be suspended by tape despite the monolithic proportions.

There will always be a part of these figures that is beyond focus so that the comparison of the sublime to a giant where human capacities cannot perceive his head is apt. Srdjan Segan's monochromatic giants require a physical exertion on the part of the viewer in order to comprehend them. A focused reading of the figures from any one point is impossible. Standing at the feet, the head will constantly be a blur. The body of the viewer must enter into the process of realization. It is necessary to move around or along these pieces, to walk the length of them, or if they are hung from the ceiling, to circle around their backs as if they were a piece of sculpture. Since Srdjan Segan is also a sculptor; it is not by accident that the roundness of perception has been acknowledged.

In the smaller works, the scale works similarly. The lankiness of the figure, slung like a bungee cord or a taut bow, because it has become so long also expands the imagined space that the paper represents. Srdjan creates a room for the preposterous elongations.

These figures are not comfortable. Vises and screws confine like medieval instruments of torture. The belly spills outside of the skin. The man or woman rumbles with the pain of sentience. It is an oppressive contrast to the thrill of the size. Monuments usually celebrate the grandeur of man not the amplification of man's failings. But that which is visceral and potentially unpalatable, having grown, becomes acceptable, even admirable. It is impossible to be ambivalent as the visuals physically project into space to connect.

A master of illusions to the sublime, Srdjan Segan shares his Eastern European roots. Within these bold black and white pieces, there exists a testimony to the enduring struggles of mankind, an affirmation of monumentality and an exhibition of a natural draftsmanship.



Installation  
*Headbones*, *The Drawers* project room was generously provided by:  
The Jain Family and Gykan Enterprises as part of *Atria Developments*  
2006

## Scott Waters

### Narrative?

A boyish commentary covers the floral wallpaper with insistence. It is an adamant insertion of masculinity onto domestic fussiness. The submarines, planes, burning fields and black clouds of smoke with the seemingly strategic placement of the visuals (as if they are engaged in battle) are energetically more important than the back drop. Even the birds and animals feel rugged as if they were a memory from a boy scout outing. The overlays are brilliantly painted and the admiration of a facile hand creates another layering as the adept rendering connotes talent and practice. The military imagery upon the feminine patterns manipulates our gender precepts with the slight confusion of a confrontation with a cross-dresser. The work has an out-of-sync component that doesn't quite allow the allusions to the hallucinations of a bed-ridden boy to rest in the land of simple imaginative ruminating. There is social commentary behind the juxtapositions.

Based on his life as a soldier and accurate to the extent of verging on illustration, the loose handling of the ground (taped and ragged edged wallpaper) with its imperfect familiarity sets up the scenes. It is an invitation to further the narrative. The individual pieces can be placed strategically as well. There is room for a second creation, a pitting of machines with the wilderness as they are hung. Unlike the solidity of a mural or fresco and yet not quite a picture hanging on a wall, the wallpaper panels further the metaphors as they act, as wallpaper was intended, as wall dressings.

Whose room is this? A schizophrenic psyche is present.



Death From Above  
acrylic and tape on wallpaper  
17"x23"  
2004

## Results Of The Headhunt, April 22 - May 23, 2006

### A Selection of Heads

There are artists who are known for their heads - Chuck Close, Alex Katz, Angus Bungay, Cynthia Karalla or Ann Kipling where a primary source of their research and practice has been the human physiognomy. They are hanging on our walls, a result of the headhunt. This generation of heads came after the tradition of portraiture where egoism and historical record-keeping motivated the use of heads as subject.

*Headbones, The Drawers* presents a portrait attributed to Sir Joshua Reynolds and documents the search for it's authenticity, but this is not a portrait show. *The Results of the Headhunt* brings forward a selection from artists who have succumbed to the irresistible urge to headhunt, to have a head to hang up, 'a head of one's own' to examine with all of the ramifications of expression, execution, subject, and association that they embody.



Harold Klunder, Untitled, gesso, ink watercolor, 32x23 in., 1983



Gord Smith, Untitled, ink on paper, 23.5x18 inches, c.1950

## Sergio Finamore

### Results of the Headhunt

Within the spirit of the wild west and with a hint of Picasso's deft execution, Sergio Finamore, who comes from the group of edgy Vancouver artists associated with the Grunt Gallery and the original Headbones show "Golden Memories," delivers a deep visual commentary with a minimum of well placed, lucid components. With elegant expressive lines, he wows with the physical twists and turns of figures that are heads from back to front and head to toe. These dominant heads mutate within their own bodies as well as joining in with other heads. Mentally pertinent and boldly secure in the right to contort, Finamore's drawings cut to the chase.

The action of the heads is the focus of Finamore's discussion although the way that they are depicted acting out places the whole scenario in a far more sophisticated context. On a pristine, snowy-white sheet of paper, manufactured to support elevated imagery, surely, if the barely-cream bed is any indication of who should lay on it - Sergio draws with controlled, spare lines. They are so rarified as to insinuate that to say more would be uncouth and that to say just this much is in extremely good taste. On some, he carries this heightened status a step further into a quantifiable obfuscation with a restraining black wash firmly cutting down on any voyeurism that might be provoked by his cavorting heads. By setting the action in this elevated arena of appreciation, Finamore seemingly presumes that no matter how refined, the action still revolves around inanities - the head dipping into the underwear for a peek or the prance of a self conscious head with the tongue of another in tow. With muscular thighs, square jaws and well toned arms (what more could an active head need?) the determined yank of the leader on the squirming tongue of the led, can be a metaphor for many relationships. Read literally, the voice of one is held under control by another. Read metaphorically, there it is - the sexual power elements to most human dynamics striding towards the picture plane. If they seem about to cross over into virtual reality, well, really, there's little cause for apprehension for they've already done so! The identification is easy for the rendition is succinct with just enough tongue-in-cheek to make the statements of compromise and bewilderment, palatable. The embarrassment is ameliorated by a "there, but for fortune goes you or I" sentiment.



"Happy Time"  
ink on paper  
22 x 15 in  
2006

## Rae Johnson

### Results of the Headhunt

These drawings, depicting Rae Johnson's daughter, bring the subject towards us with a tentative introduction and then pull back and fold the image into a misty backdrop. They grant a glimpse of youthful beauty and then retract the offering as if by exposing too much the gift of identification will be misused. The movement (coming forward and then backing off) is caught up in coolness, more like the frosty smoke of dry ice than the shimmer of a heat wave that one might be more inclined to associate with young loveliness. Instead, there is a trace of melancholy in the dark circles around the eyes. The face itself, with a milky white obliteration of gesso, hints at the inevitability of aging - a revelation that hangs around young adults, originating not from them but from the glance of the looker, the glance imbedded in maturity and unavoidably tainting all of the crowning vistas grey. With the technical expertise (Rae Johnson is an accomplished painter) to exercise the criticism of a full spectrum, her determined use of black and white harkens back to an aesthetic that deals in memories, simpler statements of worth and a more easily satisfied record keeping. Is this work so infused with attachment that the overriding slowness in the image is the result of a hesitation to give over her child? Is the artist balking at gifting these images of her daughter to the adult world of fine arts where it may be coolly examined by strangers?

Rae Johnson drips and smears quietly but effectively. She holds the intrusion at arm's length. Just as Gerhard Richter's blur seems the by-product of fast motion, so Rae Johnson's blur seems like the frame has slowed down. The voices, were the heads to speak, would be muffled and lugubrious. There is a dream-like quality in the lack of focus with a semblance of psychic fear, like a visitation from Edward Munch while perusing faded photographs of lost family.

In the digital series, the fleeting capture of private disaster is made even more unbelievable by the wax glazes that Rae Johnson uses to place her hand print on digitally altered television stills. Rae's "sensualization" of the public moment doesn't necessarily reveal what it is that is being witnessed. She seems to mistrust the media's coverage and so delivers an even more dubious detour from reality without giving the route back to the main road.

As layered emotionally and psychologically as it is physically, the work tunes Munchian angst into a current channel.



Joslyn Head #6  
acrylic on paper  
30 x 22 in  
2006

## Harold Klunder

### Results of the Headhunt

Solidly rooted in the abstract, secure with traditional mediums and referencing historical precedents as part of his daily art practice, Harold Klunder's work, despite this directness, is as mysterious as the masks of primitive people.

This selection of heads exudes a mysterious attraction like the gut wrenching pull of an impossible seduction that comes with a love affair. Because the works are seated within familiar formats of modernism and because this is a route best understood by other artists, the appeal of a Klunder is tinged by a particular brand of narcissism parented by creativity and intellectualism. To 'catch' a Klunder requires the initiation that comes from inclusion in the rarified club of those who understand the language of abstract expressionism. If this comprehension is intuitive it is the subjective response of a creative mind to the piece of art. If the understanding is intellectual, it is swayed from the pursuit of unnecessary objectivity towards a more visceral understanding of the work through the adamant physicality. Either approach or, more likely a combination of both, brings about the same result - a touch that awakens areas in the psyche that needed the robust brush stroke or the painterly gesture in order to be roused. Once wakened the draw to cross over from the confines of individualism and into the realms of the rich unknown are hard to resist. All that is part of the world of painting and drawing - the messiness, the joy, the working out, the past imperfect that cries out to be held down with a definitive "yes!" while the smell of oils and charcoal affect reason - becomes irresistible.

Harold Klunder is an artist's artist. Standing in front of a Klunder is an opportunity to understand the urge for abstraction. It is summed up simply as 'freedom of expression'. A "Klunder" makes an artist out of a viewer for he introduces a complicit atmosphere. Within these heads, there is the visual documentation of a searching mind. There is the wrapping up of the discovery, the point when the search has been satisfied and the case can be closed, for this time, in this drawing, before the next search takes place.

Consumed by expression, Harold Klunder creates works on paper that are rife with spirits, demons and psychological phantoms that present haunting auras and leave a memorable after draft.



Untitled  
gesso, watercolour, ink, oilstick on paper  
22 x 22 in  
2002

## Judith Page

### Results of the Headhunt

The title 'Finalists' suggests a group near the end of a competitive process that will eventually reveal who are at the top of the list - the real prize winners. Their faces are adolescent, a period when insecurity reigns as the body plummets into the changes brought on by unaccustomed adult physiques. The dress and demeanor of adulthood is adopted while the small pleasures of childhood are quashed in order to prepare for assimilation into the adult world of getting and winning. It is a time when competition, with the attendant awareness of measures of worthiness, takes over from the self consumed assurance of childhood needs.

These finalists were competing to be Mouseketeers. Walt Disney searched the public schools of America to find them, insisting that the Mousketeers be 'regular kids' and not actors. With a best-foot-forward look on their face, these kids locked horns in order to see who would score the highest in contests of talent, articulation and charm so that they might have the honor of wearing mouse ears, appearing on television and becoming the admired idols of their peers. What an American dream! What a measure of value! What an honor, to don vermin ears and profess allegiance with a rousing military chorus to a cartoon mouse.

Judith Page translates sixties' phenomena into images of beauty and beastliness. Her renditions of proud competitors hoping to please invoke a nostalgic examination of American myth making. The glamorization of childhood fixations is paired with the culturally driven desire to deconstruct and make sense of things. When Page places a ghostly pale, pepto-bismol glaze over the faces of the American hopefuls of yesteryear, she clarifies the differences between the expectations of a nation programmed to believe in success and one that has had to accept the embarrassments of not making it to the last round untainted. The banner that was to be held 'high, high, high, high' is fluttering limply. The stuffed toy pride is sticky and if these are the finalists, the losers might be in pretty poor shape.

The adolescent pride of the Mouseketeer contestants reflected the comparative innocence of the sixties. These faces invoke compassion and pity rather than contumely. However, to look into the eyes of dreams and see the gawky reflection of an ironic present glazing the pupil is an awkward revelation.



Finalist #25  
gesso, acrylic, tar gel and graphite on paper  
9.75 x 7.75 in  
2005/06

## Lorraine Pritchard

### Results of the Headhunt

With a vague appropriation that has more to do with invention than extraction, Lorraine Pritchard's dedication to passing life through the sieve of fine arts results in oxymoronic glibness. With an ability to deal with a breadth of topics, the excitement of her original creative instinct animates life-at-hand. Lorraine takes found objects, crusty with the vestiges of time and reclaims them with a freedom that reveals a liberated consciousness. She draws upon everything, looking, processing and working with a range of materials that support a lovely regenerative cycle of existence.

Lorraine Pritchard has generated her images by going on a creative journey. The route is not clear but the destination, the work of art, is a positive place. The paper grows in stature after each application, the successive additions bringing about a balance between the light surface and the intrusion of marks upon its virgin blankness. The subject matter, in this case heads, is made easier than they were when they existed as fuller corporeal heads. They are airier, not tied so firmly to the excuses that physicality makes to keep at bay a visitation of flightiness. Responsible to the page, to the pencil or watercolor, but not held in check by the translation from ideas to signification, Lorraine Pritchard's drawings bring to mind release. There is the evidence of good intention in these sensitive, witty revelations. With an economy of energetic lines, like nerves bouncing impulse from the paper to an aura, Pritchard has created sustained seminal assurances that there are ties between myriad objects and fine arts.

The sculptural heads embody much the same lightness. They are playful combinations of materials and common objects that have lost the semblance of their original usage and been ennobled with a sentient semblance. It is, once again, an extraction of weight through the change from common purpose to a successful isomorphism. The dissimilar ancestry of the elements have a second chance to prove themselves as worthy of existing once they have converged in the sculptures. Cement, a building material with inherently unrefined potential to define, makes a quantum leap to animation when, for instance, the trowels stop being used to spread and instead become eyes. A spark of life stirs as the cement solidifies. A new tribal hierarchy of protectors is born from a totemic gathering of spare parts, discarded remnants of renovations and garden tools.



Untitled  
ink, gouache, charcoal, acrylic, pencil on washi  
12.5 x 12.25 in  
2004

## Gord Smith

### Results of the Headhunt

Gord Smith scribbled and muddied these heads like the creator in an 'off' or even flippant mood. This slip in omnipotence encompassed the breadth and width of being human. Like a mouthful, masticated and regurgitated, the senses discombobulate. Despite the thorough painterly pummeling, the images don't give cause for worry. They are, instead, amusing, like a pie in the face. This is not a statement reflecting victimization but empowerment. The drawings strike with the totalitarianism of a grand freedom gesture. Gord Smith, in a mental release of frustration messed up these faces and with the inherent right of a young man to let go of strictures, was liberated. The drawings cross over the lines of social restraint. The act is indulgent. The artist, being true to himself, gives back a statement of integrity.

Gord Smith is best known for his sculpture. Based on theoretical constructs that he has perfected throughout his formidable career and with a head of modernistic steam, he has forged a three dimensional legacy. The strength of the sculptural work is founded on a life long practice of two dimensional work such as these heads, works on paper from the fifties. They bare the true grit of the times, when the plastic surface was being explored with uncommon ferocity. Dark, intense depictions, they reveal a gamut of emotions, from ludicrous to enigmatic.

These are the drawings of an artist who has since passed beyond the moments that inspired their creation to arrive at a more logical, less emotional expression. They are like fertilizer, messy and scatological; they contributed to healthy growth. They are infantile - honest, uncontrived, immediate and impossible to duplicate at a later stage in life. They cleared out the stuck matter of an emotional moment and plopped it upon paper, freeing the psyche and passing the dross on to be viewed, a testament to humanness. They are an aesthetic turn-around for they read as powerful, strong, commanding, mature and wise beyond their years. They reflect uninhibited visual understanding and unabashed frankness.



Untitled  
India ink on paper  
24 x18 in  
circa 1950

## Jenny Wing Yee Tong

### Results of the Headhunt

The placement of a donkey's head on a human body is imbedded in the western lore of fairytales, enchantment and children's stories. For example, Shakespeare had Oberon, king of the forest, bring the fairy Queen Titania back under his amorous sway by placing the braying beast's head upon a player's shoulders and tricking her into an embarrassing liaison with the donkey. Pinocchio was pulled from a path of wrong living by the example of truant boys transformed into donkeys. A brash voice, far from mellifluous, stupidity, slowness and stubbornness are the poor beast's attributes. Its position within the beastly hierarchy has been that of a peon - one of toil and basic portage. But there is also a magical aspect to a donkey that might be based on its potential for transformation. Being so lowly, like frog to prince, the donkey, from its rung down the ladder of evolution when it comes to human enchantments, might be raised and transformed.

The subjects are fabulous, fable-lesque, from fables that Wing Yee has spun from a combination of eastern and western legends. When the butterfly's wing, dusted by fairies, reflects the light of the moon or sun shine bounces on the back of a beetle, Jenny Wing Yee Tong's colors were created. With the pastel overtones of Degas' palette, filaments of luminosity describe fantasies. There are many layers of translucent paint on thin membranes of paper. The Wing Yee palette is primarily pastel. The dense dark fur and solid structure of the donkey when placed in more ethereal contexts stands out as a firm reminder of the propensity to ignore the humble animal. While Jenny's donkey heads maintain their footing within the ephemeral, gossamer environments where candelabras are the pivot for décor, allusions to tales yet untold abound. Wing Yee, with a surefooted delicacy wends her painterly way through nuances of conciliation and the cares of existence dissipate with the flutter of an eyelash or a butterfly kiss preserved on paper, still fragile and dewy with belief, dispelling all of our excuses of superiority. Wing Yee embraces the donkey and in doing so is a catalyst for the frog to turn princely.



The Fatalist  
*Mixed media on vellum*  
36 x 24 in  
2005

## A Selection of Heads

### Results of the Headhunt

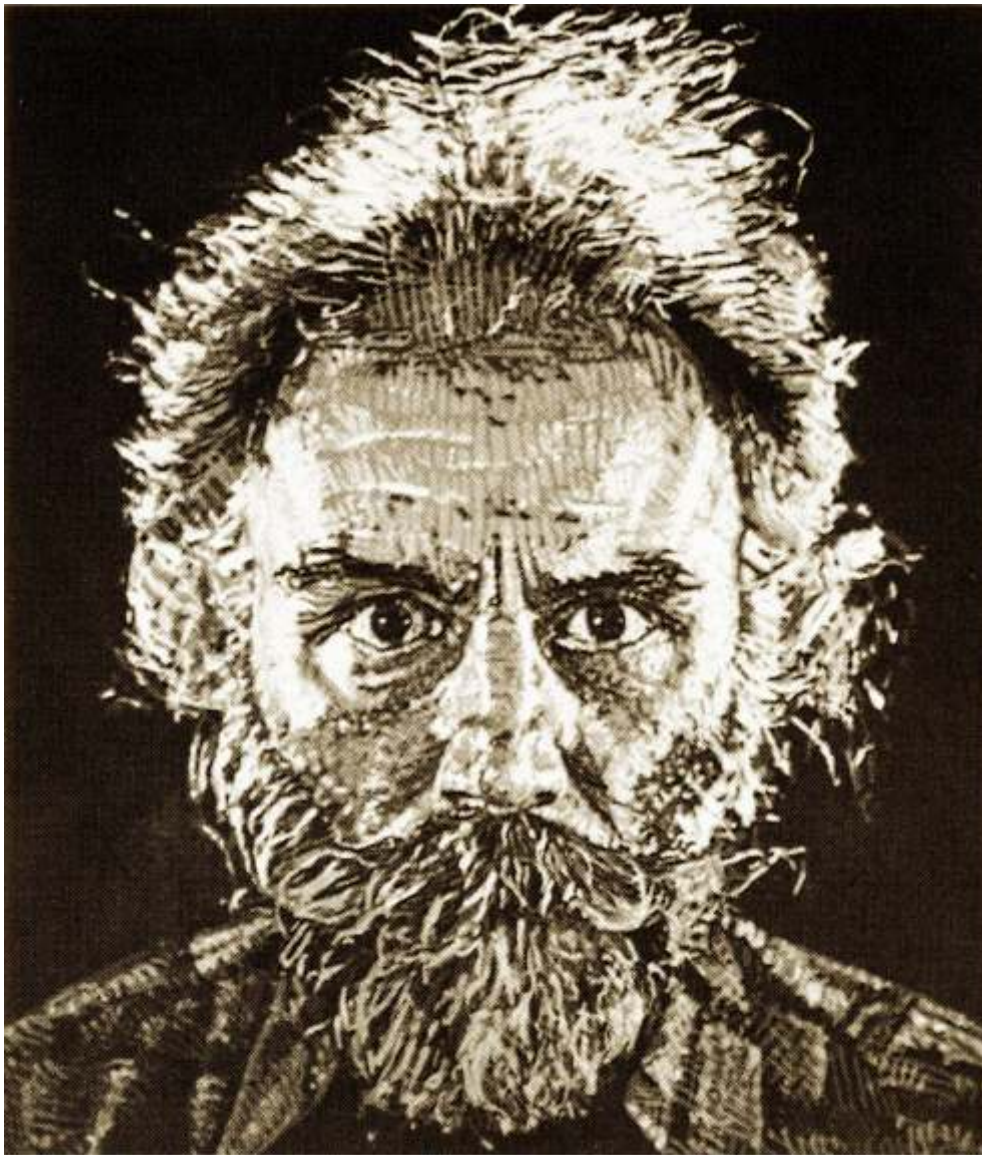
It feels important, as if the grand art historian is taking notes from on high. There are heads that are already in the limelight. Chuck Close is present with his hand having cut the lino blocks for a self portrait and a frizzle hair rendition of Lucas Samara.

Mehrad Meraji, with Chuck Close bravado, has rendered himself staring out with more confidence than his young years would signal. Hanging beside him, his father, also an artist, confronts with the same uncompromising gaze.

Gertrude Kearns, known for her strong abstract work, turned to portraits with commitment this year with the John Bentley Mays portraits. The well recognized visage of the art critic, whose eyes have scanned so many Torontonians art works, now locks with frontal formality.

Cherry Hood is another luminary. Her large watercolor heads of bleary eyed children clutch at the heart strings.

In many respects Oliver Girling's "Smoke and Mirrors" sums it up. The recognizable artwork, Picasso-esque lines, Matisse patterns, a woman (the muse) and the whole practice of making art - is it substantial, essential, virtually pertinent or is it smoke and mirrors?



Chuck Close - Lucas, 1988

*Reduction block linocut*

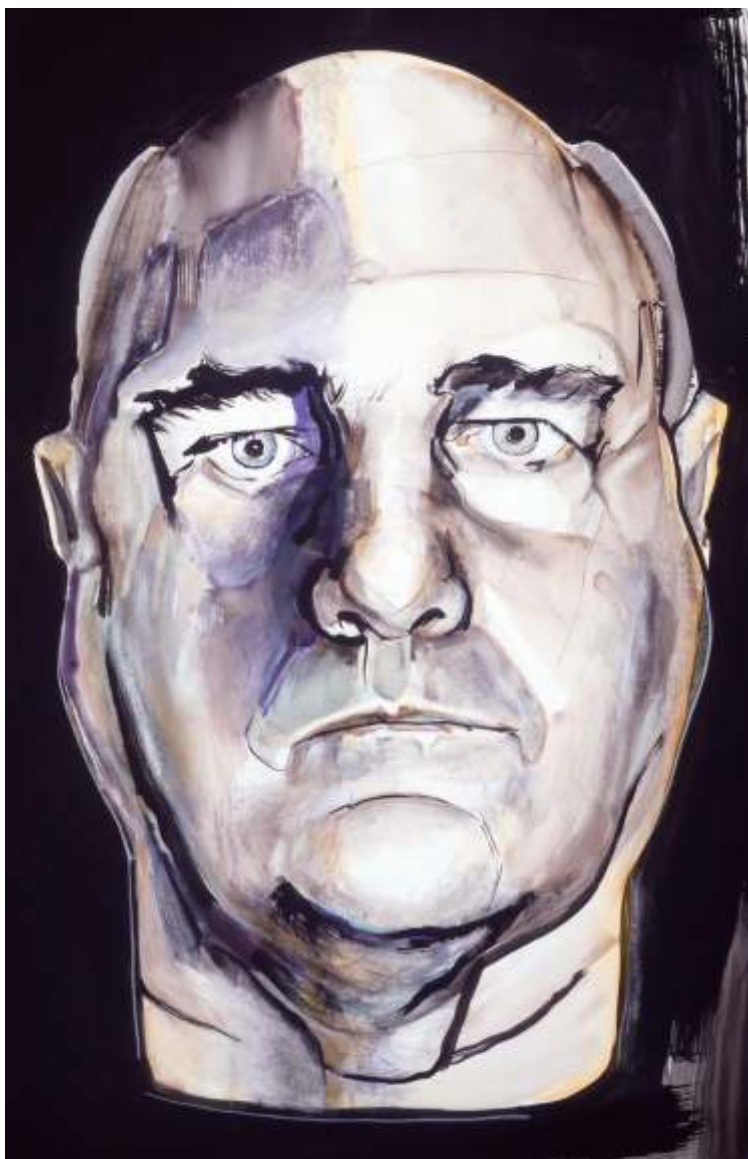
*Paper Size: 31 x 22 inches*

*Image Size: 14 1/4 x 12 1/4 inches*

*Edition of 50, Published by Pace Editions, Inc.*



Mehrad Meraji - The Father  
Charcoal on paper  
38 x 28 in  
2005

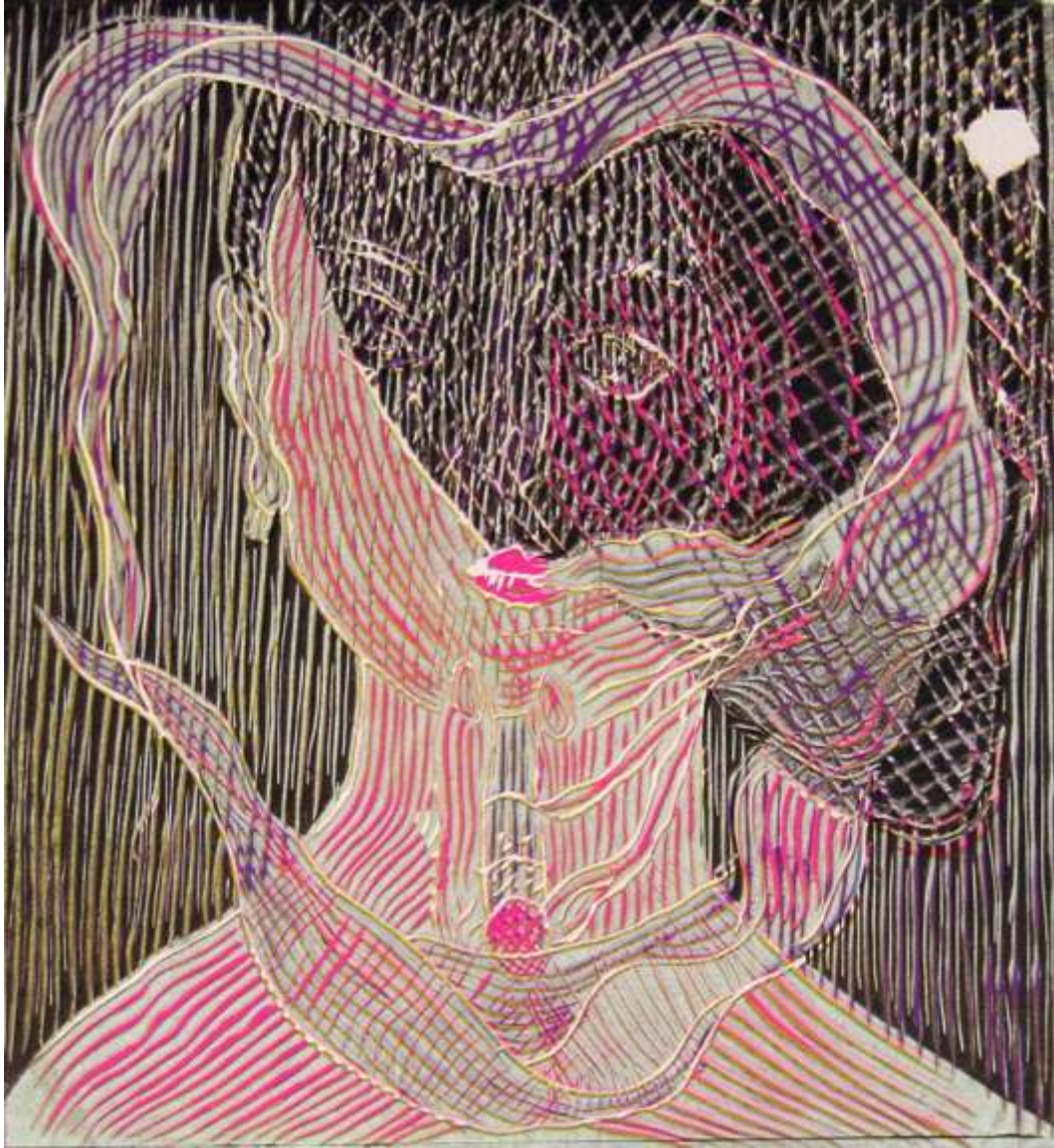


Gertrude Kearns - #9  
The John Bentley Mays Portraits  
Ink & acrylic  
60 x 40 in, 2005  
Courtesy: Lehmann Leskiw Fine Art



Cherry Hood - Untitled  
Watercolour on paper  
30 x 24 in  
2004

Courtesy: Lehmann Leskiw Fine Art



Right - She Smokes My Brand  
*Multi-colour wood block print, Edition Proof*  
14.5 x 15.5 in  
1988

## Situation, Positioning, Location, May 25 - June 24, 2006

As summer approaches and the nomad movements of urbanites seek their country respites, *Headbones, The Drawers* traces the imagery that comes from our personal situations, which affected through positioning, results in location. Primarily landscape based, this exhibition extrapolates on an essentially vague theme and links the works of ten diverse oeuvres.



Front: Daphne Gerou, *Scout Party*, graphite on paper, 30x40 in., 2005

## Daniel Anhorn

### Situation, Positioning, Location

Everything is allowed and all is possible when the hand is accomplished and the future bright. Borrowing from everywhere, the world is a treasure trove of images and meaning easily embedded in the disciplines of fine art. There is a transmittable thrill in Anhorn's Volkswagen vans, in the rendition of Gollum holding his ears, even in the straight and precise architectonic renderings of snow fences or show jumps.

The Volkswagens, bigger than a toy, but not quite as big as the real thing, offer the opportunity to peruse the ability to cruise. What could be a more succinct way to encapsulate the freedom of being on the move than to use the visual of a Volkswagen van? Ripe with nostalgia, wearing the badges of adventure in every knick and dent, the Volkswagen van is a signifier of a time when the weight of responsibility was light enough to be able to shed it from the shoulders and flee for greener pastures. There is wobbliness in the execution, a shimmer of movement or the nearness of anthropomorphic transformation. The vans have character. Their slightly fuzzy windows, bouncy wheels and wonky accessories grant them personalities. These are the vans that were named by their owners with a "good old" used as the term of endearment.

The clear and aloof precision in the fences and howitzer pad are proof that the allowance for characterization is granted only with permission from the artist. The discipline required to detail the howitzer pad, although constrained and an evident labor to execute, is delivered with such a mechanical semblance that the effort doesn't get in the way of the appreciation of the visual. The admiration at work-well-done remains intact, doesn't impart strain but rather, a fascination with the strange superimposition of construction on the landscape - a "what a piece of work is man" sensation. That the fences are designed to hold back avalanches is an example of exercising control over natural phenomena, yet the presentation is unburdened by didactics. There isn't a point of view, but a visual affirmation of the right to curiosity.

Anhorn can draw - tight, cool and precise or with wit and embellishment. The way to change the situation, in Anhorn's work, comes from the object utilized to facilitate the change.



Volkswagen (Red)  
watercolor pencil on paper  
26 x 40 in  
2005

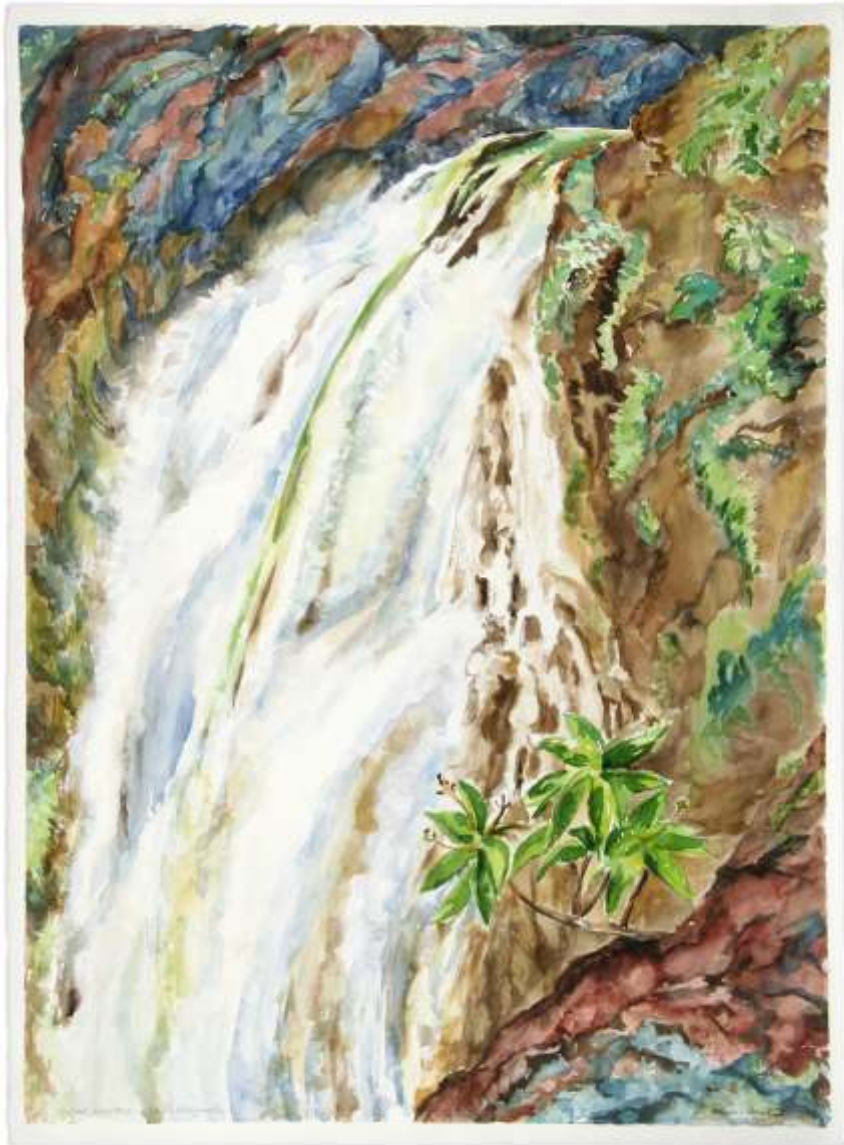
## Susan Austad

### Situation, Positioning, Location

From the heart of the art scene in New York City to the lush tropical forests of the Dominican Republic, both influences are immediately perceived in Susan Austad's watercolors. In her large scale works, she has taken the familiar technique further and branched off into sculpture, bringing the scenes off the walls, building canvas constructions. These grew into wire mesh assemblages and then large wall sculptures utilizing light. But the watercolors, the humble beginnings when the hand was directly linked to the magic of place and translated the exotic natural setting into a work on paper, a piece of art - *these* are the pure conduits, where nature and art conjoin.

Austad's work is spiritual. Actively in tune with the culture of the D.R., she has visited the gushing waterfall, painted and captured it in its rushing as she stilled the formidable flow with the watercolor medium. The importance of the location grew in eminence as Susan Austad painted. Salto Jimenoa is close to where Susan and her husband, Ramon, a Dominican, have built an artist's retreat that focuses on Taino ceramics, an ancient form of pottery that centers on the potent myths of their location.

In these works on paper, Austad repeatedly returns to research the visuals of the earth in its cleansing, vital aspect (the waterfall) and in doing so brings the spirituality of the location into the realm of another sacred practice - art as a manifestation of the spirit of creation. The message is amazingly simple; the earth as an entity holds more beauty, richness and inspiration than man in all of his comings and goings, dealings and entrepreneurialism, can grasp. The closest example of the phenomenology of this natural beauty is the work of art. Each color a gem, like the rainbows formed by the sprays of waterfalls, there is peace and harmony in these works without the slightest sensation of those attributes being trite. Austad's validation of the correct order of the universe embedded in natural phenomenon reaches a transcendent, Blake-like realization of spirituality. To sit before San Jimeon with her watercolors and the sophistication of an informed artistic discipline and yet be pure enough to just *paint* it, goes above and beyond the largely jaded awareness of the New York art scene. The work, therefore, resonates with belief and affirms natural rites.



Salto Baiguate  
watercolor on Arches paper  
30 x 22.5 in  
1993

## Daphne Gerou

### Situation, Positioning, Location

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. It's not only the hunted amongst the animals, but the hunters are also upset and prowling. Wolves course through the woods or skulk along the beach, instinctually cautioned and aware of the impending necessity to change their natural ways and morph to fit the surely imminent apocalypse.

Even the lights in the cottage seem feeble and defenseless, the railway now deserted, outmoded or only unoccupied until the next rush of noise and pollution spills over onto gentility. Like the family in the forest, held captive by robbers in the Grimm's fairy tale "The Musicians of Bremen", the animals are watching the plight of humanity and scheming a way to balance the wrongs.

There is not hopelessness in the vista, however. The bunnies, outfitted and naturally silent, appear organized in their bid to adjust their dilemma. But their uniforms are more like a child's, a boxy fresh cut, and their weapons appear plastic and surreal. "Would that, could that" gentle fluffy white bunny ever shoot anything? The logical response - "not here, not there, not anywhere."

Yes, the bunnies are on the move - as are the wolves and the beaver. 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 signaling 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". *All* are environmentally threatened, the beasts and man, alike. The lights are on in the little cottage in the woods, but the occupants have been trussed by their own demise.



Hide and Seek  
*graphite on paper*  
30 x 40 in  
2006

## Margie Kelk

### Situation, Positioning, Location

Turning subtle Chinese brush work away from lovely depictions of flora and fauna to brave the unflinching realization of environmental pollution, Kelk takes a position and the situation is made clear - the world, lovely as it is, is ailing from its exposure to urbanization.

Three accordion books titled *Systems: Digestive, Circulatory, Auditory*, address the permutations of her relationship to China. Rich Fog Micro Publishing, *Headbones, The Drawers*' in-house printing and publishing company, worked in collaboration with Kelk in order to reformat the original books into a series that will eventually be a four part project with the involuntary systems of the body used as a metaphor to examine the health of the body of the planet. *Headbones, The Drawers* is presenting the first three - *Auditory, Circulatory and Digestive*.

A 'tidy-up' resulted when the books were regularized in size and framed by their embossed covers bearing the Chinese symbol of Margie Kelk's name. The inconsistent surfaces of collaged pages became consistent within the mechanical printing process. They 'stabilized' (to continue with the language of health) as they were now strong enough to receive a second treatment. This was an actual physical necessity for the first books, visual journals made in situ and hence beginning to fray from handling, were in dire need of revitalization if they were to survive. Hence, Kelk made a decision - to print in a limited edition and transcend the mortal nature of the materials by reproducing them and giving them a second or third chance to live.

Each printed book has been doctored. The reproduced visuals have been repainted by Kelk so that each book is, in turn, a new original. The ailment (the encroaching toxicity) was reexamined and an application made to revitalize the 'system'. In this second visit to the material, made from an objectified position, she has formulated a diagnosis. With extreme concern for the balance of the whole and the impact that her superimposition will have on her initial visual analysis, she has drawn and painted a new layer over the former impressions. Realizing that each new life must be utterly individual she has created, not twins, but siblings for the first fragile off-springs.



Systems - Auditory  
detail from accordion fold artist book  
mixed media with hand painting, edition 4  
2005/06

## Peter Reginato

### Situation, Positioning, Location

With a cartoon-like rendering forming bulbous profiles that appear to have been morphed from reason into realms of fancy, Reginato melds the lightness of being into the weighty resonance of sculpture. Despite the biomorphic associations, Peter Reginato's work stays solidly rooted in the plastic realms. He builds perspective into the drawings so that certain elements appear to recede into the distance (small goes back, big forward because they are juxtaposed to do so). When turned into sculpture he retains this perspective so that not only is there the three dimensional, *actual* receding into space but also the implied. This makes for playfulness, a hip trickiness that lends character to the forms.

Modernist design with the freedom of combinations between hard edge and organic, bring to mind the historical masters, Brancusi, Calder, Arp, Kandinski and Paul Klee. There is a surrealist notion present with the landscape relationship a dream one, not necessarily attached or bound by gravity - an affair rather than a marriage. The outlines and candy colors are pop. Reginato has managed to encompass the most important influences of this age and brand the combination without losing freshness. Conversely, within the gaiety of the forms, there is a very large presence implied. The confidence of a confirmed modern style supports the bursts of fun with the virile implications of a masculine hand.

By presenting his vision as sculpture, often massive, he commands serious attention that recycles back into the drawings for once acquainted with Reginato's work, it is difficult not to think of sculpture. Twists and turns traversed through space, juts, holes and architectonics - all inherent in the third dimension - bring the conversation that the artists has engaged with the work into the concepts of situations, positioning and location. From his bank of relevant knowledge of art history and an awareness of his fashioning, Reginato has gathered diverse trends under an umbrella so styled that it declares it's maker on first glance. The work is firmly located amongst the mass of contemporary fine art. It is easily located. It has inspired a nomenclature. A 'reginato'. Clearly positioned.



8-28-03  
tempera and charcoal on matteboard  
32 x 40 in

## Robin Tewes

### Situation, Positioning, Location

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 - the furniture is mid-range, even the size seems 'normal' - 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 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 the ink blot images. A timorous stance has been taken to the intrusive presence. 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.



"Pink on Pink"

Robin Turner '96

Pink on Pink  
gouache on 29x23 inch paper  
Image size 10.75 x 9.5 inches  
1996

## John Torreano

### Situation, Positioning, Location

“Lucy in the sky with diamonds”, “like a diamond in the sky”, or “diamonds are a girl's best friend” are popular well worn phrases. Gems have powerful associations. In Torreano's paintings and sculptures there are three dimensional facsimiles of emeralds, sapphires, rubies, topazes and other precious gems whose names are exotic and conjure visions of wealth and grandeur. In the works on paper, Torreano's watercolor gems are unattached, floating free and where there is a dark blue background - constellations and their relation to the signs of the zodiac, birthstones and destiny is an obvious reference to clairvoyant research.

Torreano's search in the jewel box also has a scientific, engineering orientation. He relates to cuts and facets. He has chosen a subject that has an infinite number of variables to explore - an inner and outer definition of space, color, reflection, transparency and opaqueness. Monetary association aside, a gem is, with austere physical complexity, challenging subject matter. It is the ultimate still life. As an artist, Torreano takes his comparatively rough tools and with his experience, he undertakes the fashioning of light, the depiction of miraculous substance.

Torreano's gem obsession has not hypnotized his objectivity. He presents the gems with distance. He grants space to his renderings with a conscious displaying of his collection so that each jewel is presented on the paper like a painting on a wall in a white cube gallery. The floating gem next door doesn't interfere with the appreciation of the gem-at-hand. It is, however, somewhat compromised by the attraction of the neighboring jewel with its seductive allure providing fertile ground for new longings. The response is a fervent reminder of the Gollum theory; “my precious” was the term that the lop-eared creature gave to the object that had captured his desire. Torreano's gems are a gentle reminder of our desire to possess, a desire that can overtake reason and stew in the head with smoldering insistence. But as we ponder, the wonder of physical phenomenology quells with the intervention of fine art.



Gems  
watercolor and pencil on paper  
22.5x30 in  
1996

## Lorne Wagman

### Situation, Positioning, Location

The 'bounty of the hunt' paintings that proliferated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Jean Baptiste Simeon Chardin, Jean Baptiste Weenix or Frans Snyder turned to dead animals as subject matter with the romanticism of the kill associated with the pride of man in his dominion over the birds and the beasts. Lorne Wagman's "Dead Rabbit", lying as if it had tripped and fallen mid-stride in a playful leap through the field, is the direct opposite. Rather than lordling above the bestiary, Wagman's work identifies. It is evident even when it is flora rather than fauna. It requires the dedication of close encounters to understand and record the squiggles and squirms of the bush. With the sensitive lines of a competent draftsman, Lorne Wagman passes over to those not calm enough to spend the time observing the comings and goings of nature or to those not brave enough to endure the outdoor distractions of weather - a complex eco system where weeds have a spot as relevant as death and trees become symbols for the sublime.

Lorne double-lines the miniscule and hence it assumes a greater significance. A blade of grass is outlined rather than rendered with a singular line. There is the memory of a hymn - "God sees the little sparrows fall" in the renderings for there is equanimity in place. Whether it is a weed, rock or cloying lichen, each is treated like an individual. These are crowds of portraits with the identity of each element as important as the mass. Each patch is different from the next attesting to the attention paid in the divine creation. "The humble shall inherit the earth." There are many biblical notions in this work for who but one who is sufficiently humble to listen and look would be granted the particular powers of observation to discern between blades or leaves or branches? With the rigor of a monk-like discipline and unwavering focus, Wagman conducts his practice in sync with his lifestyle and does indeed inherit great riches - the talent to communicate the concerns of the creator through his art.



Rock & Moss  
watercolour on paper  
22 x 30 in  
2005

## Charles Yuen

### Situation, Positioning, Location

He has it in perspective; he's got it right; this is the plight of modern man. Not that modern man is bucking against his plight. There is a passive, almost blissful, acceptance of the conditions. The future doesn't appear bleak, really, just bland with the only color being noxious spottings of a color directly opposite puce and more poisonous than lime fluorescent, the color of fantasy germs.

In the placid demeanors there is a Buddhist acceptance. These humanoids with their perfect posture are unruffled by technological, modernist, industrial intrusions. They walk the middle way, balanced and unperturbed. They appear to reject the problems of contemporary existence, quite simply, with no visible signs of distress. *Turtle* tells it all. With ease a man sits in the full lotus position atop a turtle, the slow moving beast with little semblance of progress. The man's arms are raised above his head without straining to form the symbol of infinity. But there are no hands with which to create on this body of no beginning and no end. Is mankind tied by his situation? Is his position hopeless? Or has he solved the puzzle of existence and become a parcel of acceptance, living side by side with pollution, greed and the corroded values that daze.

By inserting the figure into the picture plane and placing that figure in relation to landscape or the flotsam and jetsam of contemporary existence, Charles Yuen pulls forth a semblance of order from the chaos of existence. The situations that he places his figures in don't solve the problems of modernity, but the many layers and complexities of location are placed up-front to be examined. Yuen withholds as he reveals and if this seems confusing, it sums up the truth of sentience - the connections between the elements of the here and now are no more than what is presented to us, the sensation of the moment.

That the drawing style is primitive or childlike reinforces the statement. There isn't condemnation or judgment in these renderings of man in his alienation; nor is there a morbid fascination. It is with a sense of calm that the figures confront their fate as if they have an intrinsic preparation for the outcome. Like children, their imagination can only envision so much. As in coaching a child not to accept rides from strangers, there is a message that something bad could happen, but there is not a specific explanation of that disaster. The resulting apprehension is vague and mysterious with a perverse curiosity at the nature of the lurking evil.



Turtle Man  
India ink and fluorescent acrylic on paper  
13 x 10 in.  
2006

## Ben Woolfitt

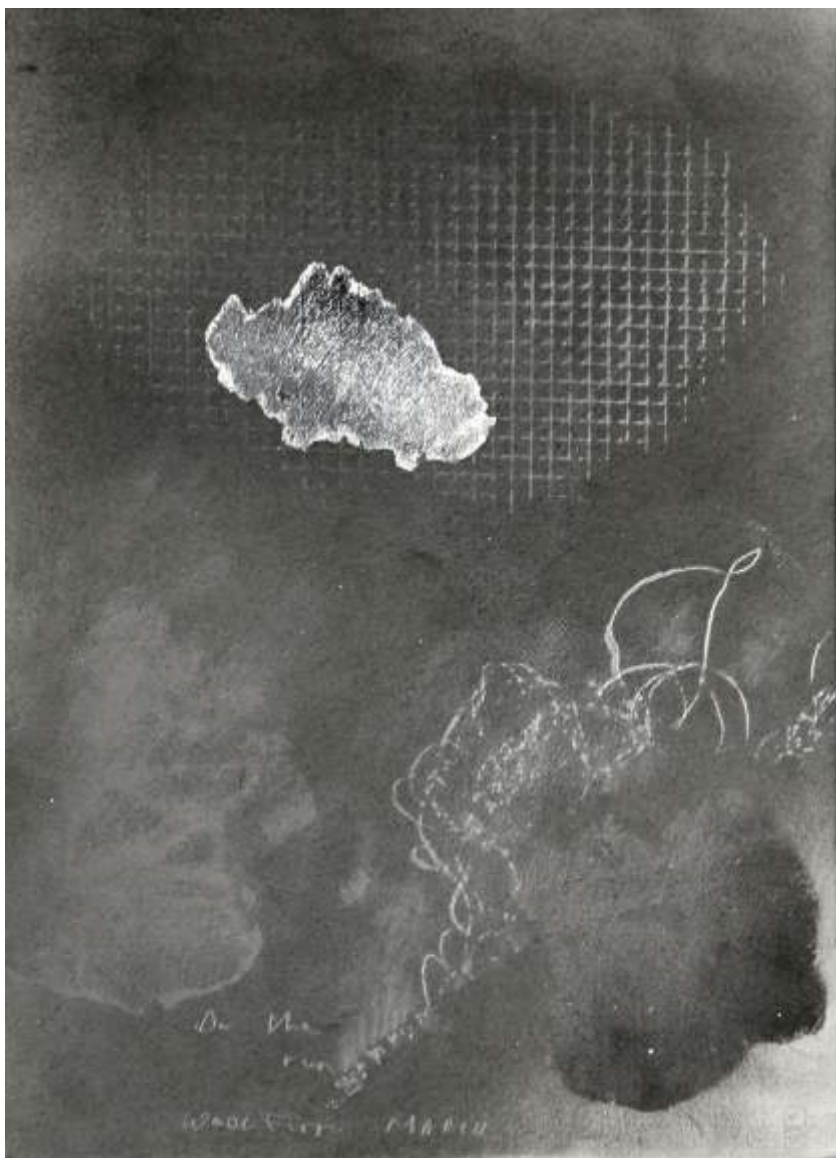
### Situation, Positioning, Location

The drama of a thunder storm with forks of lightening, the dense dark muffle of graphite with the impressions of leaves, netting and threads forming map-like areas over which silver clouds lurk or spinning tornadoes whisk upwards to explode like fireworks - Ben Woolfitt's drawings evoke rather than depict.

When coal dust is rubbed until it turns silver, alchemy is at work. Ben Woolfitt's wizardry runs through his practice. In the early dawn light he opens his great book and sparks ignite with the rubbing and scribing of abstract diagrams. The result begs to be deciphered as if the dark, rubbed impressions are pulsing beneath the surface of the paper, a nether illumination. There are illusions to magic in the imagery as well, the poof of the wand, a strike of lightening as cosmic forces come into play or the faint light cast by an elfin leaf glowing with fairy dust. There are stellar associations, sci-fi and x-ray perceptions. Art, comparable to the philosopher's stone, is the transformative tool that changes base matter into gold. Ben Woolfitt turns graphite into silver. From his early morning consciousness, he plants the seeds of impending dusk. These works, torn from the binding of the daily-kept journals of images (each morning, as the cities sleep, he records the nuance of dreams beginning to cool) are like an anthropologist's link to an undiscovered civilization or the interpretations of a priest as he ponders the resurrection.

The drawings shed. The graphite is still fresh and falls on the handlers. The pages have a brittle aspect as if they have been rubbed enough and can take no more manipulating or as if they are black and blue from bruising. Their surface is nearly reflective for Woolfitt has burnished the surface until it glows like coal before it ignites into flame. They are poetic pieces. They demand a poetic explanation. They beg for protection.

This is an abstract moment, a confrontation with sorcery funneling the inclination to make sense of natural phenomena. The work thrills with the materials. The silver foil glitters. The pencil ensorcells. The situation is difficult to pin down, the positioning is abstract and the location is universal.



On The Run  
graphite and silver foil on paper  
14 x 21 in  
2006



## Beauty & Obsession, September 7 - October 10, 2006

Beauty and Obsession meet each other in the realms of love and art, realms where an allowance is made for the indiscretion of indulgences. *Headbones, The Drawers* addresses Beauty and Obsession through the subject, the technique, the aesthetic and the body in the works of Aleks Bartosik, Carin Covin, Johann Feught, Alan Glicksman, Catherine Hahn, Shelagh Keeley, Jodi Panas, Heidi Thompson, Gord Smith, and Kerry Stevens. Each of these artists has their approach and specific concern where the obsessive nature of creating art is placed at the beck and call of our notions of Beauty.



Gord Smith, *Universe*, wood dowel, 22x10x10 in., 2005

## Aleks Bartosik

### Beauty & Obsession

These are provoking drawings, rebellious stances that push unconventional beauty into our face. They are pugilistic with the boxing gloves loaded - clenched fists ready to punch. They're masochistic and appeal to the sadistic side of our psyche, that unacknowledged cry to be beaten and receive the full brunt of nastiness and humiliation. Aleks Bartosik reconciles the opposites of human grossness and glamour with the dramatic brashness of size and theatrical composition. Primarily focusing on fleshy female nudes with bland skin who are caught in awkward positions that suggest a tangential perversity, they, nonetheless, exude a sexy allure and it is in this respect that 'unconventional beauty' comes into play. They appeal to the fascination of a big naughtiness like a Roman overindulgence that is so over-the-top that it is destined to implode but tastes delicious until that final cut is made.

Alice went down the rabbit hole and in Wonderland she met up with grotesques, exaggerations of the world as she had left it. There was always a resemblance to the 'real' world but the skewing raised questions, entrapments, predicaments and drugged perceptions that begged to be acknowledged. Alice, a pretty little blonde girl, confronted the unusual, fascinated with the revelations. Aleks Bartosik is taking a similar trip and allowing herself to be tempted to explore. Whenever "why not?" is asked, she indulges her curiosity and hence furthers the voyeuristic interests of the viewers. The presentation of her compromised females - fat and clumsy, pinioned and stuck, gloved for battle but hung, or small before a beastly headless adversary, allows the contemplation of gothic possibilities without a self-righteous prod. There is no moral. There is no need to rescue. There is only the shock, the recoil, and then the step forward for a closer inspection.



Learning To Conform  
*conte, pencil, oil stick on paper*  
225 x 150 cm  
2003

## Carin Covin

### Beauty & Obsession

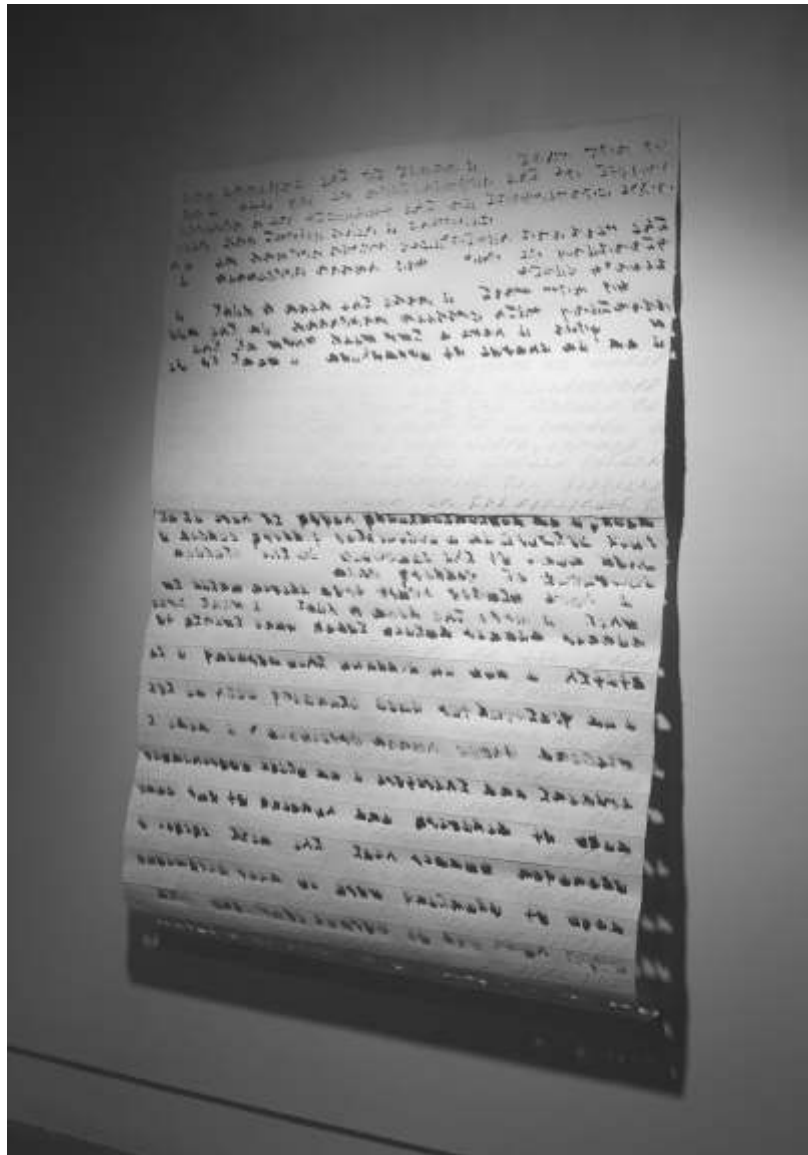
Historically, the first scripts grew out of patterns, simplified shapes that roughly depicted things from the physical world. They were scratched into mud or sand with twigs, gouged onto wood and wall or chiseled from stone. They contained messages, communicating between humans. Carin Covin's work has previously dealt with patterns, repetition of shapes that often formed an all-over field. This new body of work implies messages for although the marks read as shapes - the origin of the shape seems to be letters. On light paper, sewn with white filmy thread or cut away like lace; they, nonetheless, have a weighty significance and the actual profiles of the 'letters' resemble inscriptions from tombs or temples, from the Western or the Eastern worlds, from ancient to present languages, and seem to be derived from familiar yet foreign scripts. The placement of the origin of this muffled talk is impossible without a dictionary to guide translation. There is, however, a sacred tome intonation, a secret spell aura, as if these are magic words that could be a key to understanding and have been strategically placed before our neophyte vision to decipher.

The removal of the letter-like shapes, cut from the paper with precision, pasted on new strips, or sewn on character by character, furthers the impression of a ritualistic handling of the material. Clearly, it was a painstaking task, a labor of love, to make these pieces, like the names of lovers carved as a public announcement of private passion.

Covin's letters are like birds flying in straight lines. They can create shadows, the light can shine through them, they have dimension and they could come loose and drop to earth if they weren't stitched into place.

These pieces have a wondrous effect. The simple white or graphite gray has ceremonious associations; weddings, Far Eastern death rituals, Catholic convocations, christenings, and then there are the natural associations; snow flakes, crystals, icing, spider webs, moths, doves. The dove is very present for there seems to be a peaceful missive delivered within these beautiful pages.

Poetry and song as it veers to the purity of abstraction has similarities with Carin Covin's paper pieces when they take the tangential turn from description to impressionism. These pieces are flights of flocking, feathery, whispers. They bring words to mind and the love of beauty to heart.



Word Spoken  
hand-cut paper collage  
72 x 44.5 in  
2005

## Alan Glicksman

### Beauty & Obsession

The quotidian round is inescapable. It is a task itself, work, to get rid of the niggling characters who constantly converse in the head. Alan Glicksman upsets the apple cart. He spills the beans. He regurgitates the cud. The brainy babble takes shape and the permutations of comings and goings, getting and winning, continue to agitate but from a different vantage point. The characters are frozen in their freaky symbolism on the pristine page. It's up to the viewer to make sense; if that's the aim of the exercise - to make sense. Perhaps it makes sense just to get it out.

Glicksman's work is an intimate disclosure like a telling of secrets that takes a weight off the mind. Yet 'All' is not revealed. It is an overload of information without the key to the map from which to take bearings. Where does one go with all of this? This brings the question back to whether or not the quotation from the Glicksman pen, the confession from the Glicksman brush, has to be dealt with or whether it's physical manifestation, as an art piece, is sufficient. The 'subject', the outpourings of the artist, is now the 'object' and a drawing is presented.

Alan Glicksman uses some symbols repetitively; the light bulb, honey bees, dinosaurs, reptiles with many legs and there are even recognizable Glicksman portraits in the line up. The perspective is either an overall field of characters or a shallow side view, much like a Roman relief. The historical associations are numerous and yet don't logistically jibe; Egyptian papyrus and tomb paintings, Roman temple friezes, aboriginal textiles, Aztec iconography, Picasso's paintings (Guernica-like imagery with the big floating heads on the strung-out necks and the female profiles). The work is as informed as it is referential. It's also pertinent, for even if the exact and precise meaning of the symbolism is missed, there are universal clues; the biggest one being the recognition of the mind space. The world that Alan Glicksman has depicted is the one that most of us live in where variety flickers in quick takes to a crazy cacophonous sound track that almost overwhelms - but not quite! We take it in, daily, and Glicksman puts it out, daily. His work is the testimony of a man who lives as an artist, making art from his life, talking about that which he knows.



Recent Times  
ink on paper, three panels  
40 x 78 in  
1997

## Johann Feught

### Beauty & Obsession

There is enclosure, an architectural reference that suggests a grander site than our frontier-land contemporary metropolis. There is romance and longing harkening back to a time and place where buildings served the dual purpose of shelter and edification. The portals depicted in Johan Feught's work have stately proportions, classical references that translate into other disciplines. Act One, Act Two, Act Three and Act Four suggest theatrical scenarios. A stage is implied as the foot of the portico drops outside of the area that would be the proscenium and crosses into the implied space of the viewer like a cultivated invitation to join the beautiful realm of saturated color. The work is abstract but suggestive. The suggestion is clarified in the title and yet the symbolism is universal and really needs no explanation for the aura has been created. In Neptune's View, the atmosphere is marine, in Lover's View, it is a combination of petals and thorns, time-worn metaphors of love that are renewed by Feught's psychedelic palette.

The pieces are impeccably built, and in the crafting of space bear witness to all that makes Johann Feught's work a sophisticated experience. The construction is faultless. There is not a crack in the fabrication, all is perfect, and hence the reception of the sensual is gracious. There is dignity - in the presentation of elements, in the soaring arches and columns that awaken memories of other vaulted interiors; churches, Palladian villas, and old European mansions. The music played in these exquisite settings would have to be classical and the dress formal for the surroundings would lift the spirit and inspire ascension.

As the spires and spines of architectonic lines veer heaven-wards, the saturated colors in Johann Feught's work sing with a celestial harmony. These are lofty pieces that speak of great things within the humble confines of a piece of paper. Even the blacks are melodious, deep bassoon depths of black, lamp black, sooty deposits of burning fire, black as deep as a velvet night.

The European structures that comprise the subject are haunting and the over-all effect is beautiful with the poignancy of human emotional vulnerability adding to the wonder of existence.



act two ...

/4

NEPTUNES VIEW

act two...Neptunes View  
*intaglio-type & colograph, Ed. 3/4*  
46 x 30 in  
2003

## Shelagh Keeley

### Beauty & Obsession

There is a confidence that comes with maturity, when identity is not a question and the personification of self is generous like a monarch bequeathing treasures. Shelagh Keeley extrapolates this generosity to include intimate disclosures and yet retains her regal posture with an elegant hand. She accomplishes all of this with a spare-ness that denies the temptation to display opulence. These drawings, made in Paris, bring a cosmopolitan sophistication from the boudoir to the cultured foreground of gallery spaces.

The collaged black and white photographs have seeped into the creamy matt texture of the paper and faded to a nostalgic tone in tune with their era. The vessels, so purple they're almost black, have a velvety, summer-night sheen. Each drawing is an invitation to enter and the empty vessels, both heart and womb floating on the bone surface, have an ambient relationship to the plops of gold. The gold dots puddle in places so that the application of the paint appears to have been extravagant, a luxurious act with liquid gold to spare, dropped from on high; a veritable libation. The words, an energetic script in pencil, seem like a hasty note or a passionate missive where the important words leap out - "Sapho", "erotic", "flesh".

This is the work of a woman who is speaking of lovers in the plural like a connoisseur, a woman who is very feminine and who has *lived* in France. This is the world of Colette and Anais Nin, the realm of libertines - Paris! - where corsets, garters and their neighborly association to white naked skin is held in rightful esteem. The very word "lingerie" is said the French way, in the language of love and seduction, showing just enough to titillate and still being sufficiently in control, almost aloof, able to proceed with an objectivity that lends art to the act.

Keeley's visual metaphors are rich and yet subtle, deft yet emotive, in extremely good taste and absolutely discrete. Like the show of a slim ankle by a lady.



From The Erotic Notebook - Paris  
collage, gouache, pencil  
25.5 x 20 in  
1995

## Jodi Panas

### Beauty & Obsession

Jodi Panas looks right through you, in the manner of the expression. She puts on x-ray vision and then reveals what she has seen - on paper. Her skeletal frameworks are not the way we are used to imagining it as a structure, holding our body up, protecting the organs and then padded out with flesh and skin. The Panas skeleton is pared down to a few pivotal bones that have a tenuous role as either support or protector. They are further inhibited in strength by the oil that has been applied to the drawing which makes the paper transparent so that where the bones cross over the oil, they are rendered more delicate. An exposure to light from behind the drawing gives an even *more* transparent effect. There is another aspect, that of the handling of the line, that brings a brittle quality along with it. The outlines are sharp and within each bone there's another structure that supports the bone itself, drawn with crosshatched or meticulously descriptive lines.

The suspension of a head, or the added confusion of a body that is not naturally part of this brittle framework, brings a new psychological dimension into the drawing. The question of identity now arises, the suspicion of fraud, of trickery creeps into the picture - a butterfly does *not* have a skeleton, the dangling, primitively executed head hanging from the scythe-like bone resembles a shamanic ritual instrument, a bird appears to have a skeleton made up of feathers. Despite the out-of sync revelations, there is a familiarity in the strange juxtapositions, as if a cosmic link has been made between the outside world and the subconscious.

It is this subliminal psychological reference that pushes the drawings from a classification of illustration into one of high art. The power to probe the mind of the viewer and strip bare some of the artifice to reveal the fragility of our human psyche is part of the structure that Jodi Panas' psychological narrative hangs upon. Unwilling to rest with the superficial or natural configuration, Panas draws a new framework on which to hang her voodoo. It's white magic because the end result is beautiful, sophisticated and illumined.



An Explanation Of The Fragility Of Butterflies  
*pencil on paper*  
39 x 27.5 in  
2004

## Heidi Thompson

### Beauty & Obsession

There is a move from sentience to cognizance that depends on the breadth of the imagination. Heidi Thompson's color field paintings on paper provide springboards to launch flights of fancy that gel into an understanding of the absolute physicality of the particular art object. It seems a weighty description of the link between the perception of one of these pieces and the knowledge that can be gleaned from them, but *this is how they work*.

The immediate impression is a sensate response - to the glory of the color, the texture, and the edges of the paper raggedly containing the color field to the sensation of viewing the art piece. The contemplation of the sensation brings *past* associations into play the patinas of old Tuscan walls, astronomical photographs, mineral deposits, the dried up bottom of an evaporated fountain, mold, lichens, a rusty, barnacled prow of a recently retrieved shipwreck - wherever the individual mind has lodged a similar field of color and texture. Then, there is the tangential potential derived from the immediate visual and the associations that they *create*; new visions like the figures and worlds that we imagine in the clouds, a bonfire or a peeling patch of debris. The response is again completely individual and Heidi Thompson has granted the room to move in a number of associative directions. The color field becomes a launching pad for 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 relationship with the artwork. This pure seeing, because of human cognizance, causes an emotion - a thrill, perhaps, at 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 pure abstraction.

Pure abstraction is a physical presence that often catches our attention (the patina, wall or rust, for instance) and yet it doesn't fade into disinterest over time. And so it is with a Heidi Thompson painting. The wonder continues and the piece pulses a new version of the vision with each encounter.



Rare Earth  
*acrylic and silica sand on paper*  
30 x 22.5 in  
2006

## Gord Smith

### Beauty & Obsession

Shape-shifting, changing the shape, extrapolating or creating a new shape from an already existing shape and, in doing so, regenerating life. It is the essence of procreation. It is the quest for perfection and the furthering of existence. It takes place every time an artist begins to work, but it takes place *literally* in the dowel sculptures of Gord Smith.

The extension is multi-fold. There is the basic transformation of the shape of the cylinder into the new shape by virtue of abandoning the cylinder as a singular entity and forcing it to be a module in a new order. There is the loss of one-ness as the cylindrical shape becomes just another small component in the make-up of a new whole. There is a philosophical connotation in this concept, in the idea of a single unit that becomes far more than itself only when it joins forces with other units similar to itself. It is a microcosmic importance that supercedes to the macrocosmic dynamic. There is even the simple concept of harmony and the realization that by yielding specific identity - the 'ego' of the object, it's sense of individuality - an expanded harmony results.

This is the essence of the creation of beauty and it circles around the concept of art as being that which is beautiful or of more than ordinary significance. The plebeian dowel is raised and becomes regal under the hands of a master. Gord Smith takes this essential geometrical form and aids in its progressive rise in stature. He fashions a new abstract form from a multitude of pure abstract forms. He conceptualizes this new order like a God contemplating the infinite possibilities of variables for newborns. He strokes and encourages the genesis and then he brings the new object up; he nurtures his creation, adding cell upon cell until it stands before him, proud and yet still rough and unfinished. He senses the fragile areas, the tenuous sensitivities, and he lends strength. He is open with them and lets the light shine through. Then he polishes his creation. He sands off the awkward edges. He rubs and burnishes the young surfaces so that they may reflect the pride of his inspiration.

He places them to be admired, knowing that they will be treasured, for their beauty inspires awe and wonder and worship follows close on the heels of wonder. They have lost much of their need for protective parenting or authorship. The pieces have lost their dowel-ness, their ordinary significance, and become that which is beautiful.



Galaxy  
wood dowel  
15 x 14 x 4 in  
2006

## Kerry Stevens

### Beauty & Obsession

The paper has the slip sheen of wet porcelain clay, a slightly opalescent gray. The brushed linear, flowing elements traverse the outer borders of the paper, every now and then curving or crossing over each. The central space is empty. And yet from the titles (all are titled "Torso") the central space is where the meat of the matter usually physically resides - the corporeal body, the torso. Kerry Stevens presents a conceptual composition, placing the depiction of a person, not center stage, but as a silhouette, yet not with the light from behind so that the body blocks and becomes a form, but as if only the shimmering line that enhances a body that is back lit - as if *only* this line of light has been recorded and not once, but several times as in a long exposure photograph of a moving body. Aura paintings and spirit photographs inhabit the same plane. There is also the suggestion of veins and body fluids in the viscous, milky lines.

The sculptural torsos, easily cupped in the palm, have an undisguised clay-ness and bring about biblical associations. The brushed patina on the gray clay form is an earth clay color. The size brings to mind creation stories for the figure in its diminutive dimension suggests God-like size in the creator. Kerry Stevens' hand has squeezed, molded, pinched and smoothed the torso, pressed a nipple. She twisted the clay so that one torso appears to be moving as it is cradled for examination in the hand. Fingers are seduced to caress and wander the delicate curves of this minute, flesh-like form. The wonder at the perfection of the small torso is a very similar response to that inspired by handling a new born.

The relationship between the paper works and the sculptures is strong as if they are a part of the same family. Their coloring supports the affiliation as well as the sensual disposition of the bodily forms as if they are part of a race that dances in acknowledgement of their creator.



Torso Study 3  
gouache on paper  
30 x 22 in  
2006

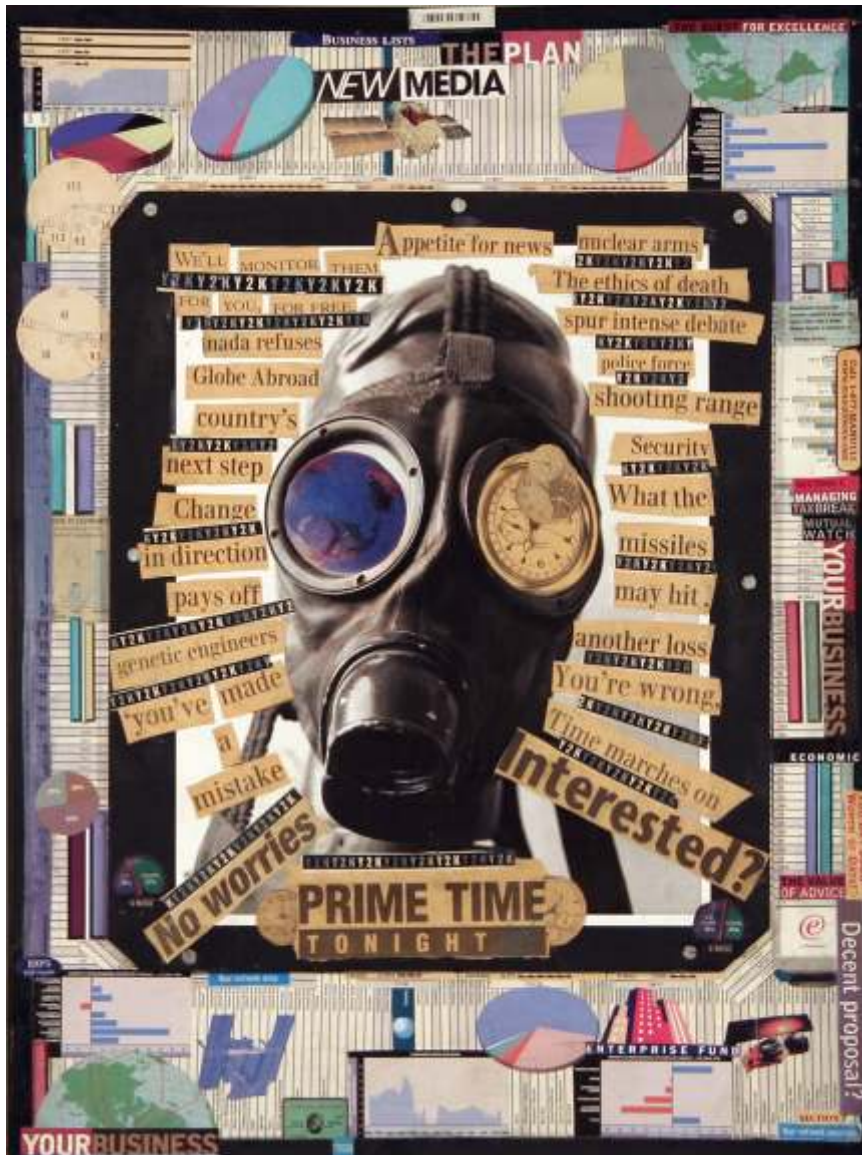
## Scott Ellis

### Headbones Alley Installation

Minding your own business doesn't leave as much room to be your brother's keeper as Scott Ellis needs to continue to edit his understanding of things. He strikes with a dogmatic lash and the resounding snap is hopefully going to cause someone to wake up. How many times does the world have to be told that what is happening is coming through, loud and clear and off center, before reaction sets in and the inevitable revolution begins? Maybe the revolution *has* begun, quietly, in the collaged imagery of Scott Ellis. If the world ends with a whimper rather than a bang it's because the meek have been told that they will inherit the earth and that noise, commotion and rabble rousing will be of no avail when the final tally is made. Scott knows this so he quietly snips and glues, allowing the muffled groan of art, with historical precedent, to once again speak its mind. It is repeating the words of the song of the sixties "Something is happening here and you don't know what it is, do you, Mr. Jones."

Scott Ellis' work is statement oriented, message saturated, obsessively executed and well researched. He has his nose to the ground, his ear to the wall and his artistic discipline intact so that what he over-hears can be retold from a scrutinized vantage point. His work is didactic, opinionated, monomaniacal, and obstinate in regard to the matter spoken of - and proud to be so! It is also open, embracing, tolerant, and consummated within the act of making art, a vested belief. There is heart, soul and passion behind these reconstructed media images. The context has changed. The pictures, accepted by the public relations boards that mediate world events have been cut out, rearranged and pasted into a brand new position with the result being *another* new world order, another dreaded acronym flipped!

It is not a philosophy where 'nothing is sacred' and all can be expropriated. It is a philosophy where *everything* is sacred, needing to be rescued and with the power of one, Scott Ellis, having been given the license to create, is upping the ante with a clarion wake-up call.

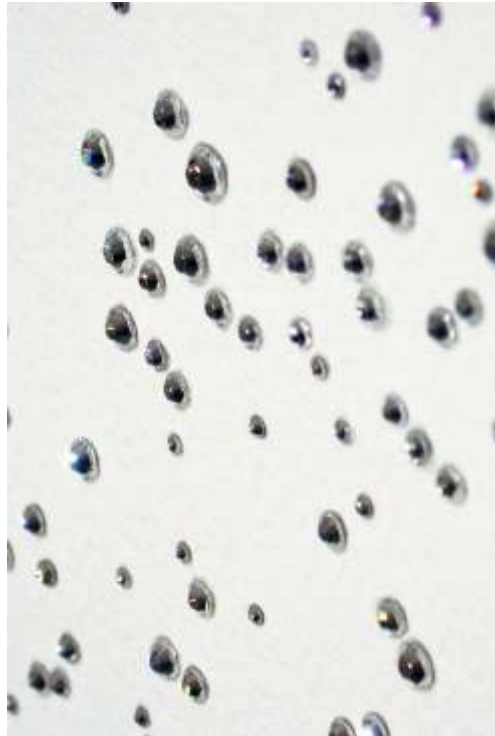


Sister Media  
collage & mixed media  
23 x 18.25 in  
1998



## X-Country Selection, October 12 - November 16, 2006

From July 1st to August 31st, *Headbones, The Drawers*, took to the road, driving from Quebec to British Columbia taking the Canadian route on the way there and the American on the return, exposing artworks presently held by *Headbones* from a portable drawer containing over one hundred works on paper and reviewing new work. From this exploratory viewing program, we have selected the works of ten artists for our "Cross Country Selection". The fact that Halloween falls within this show seems to have spookily worked its way into the content. From the skeletal sculptures of Stephan Bircher, to the macabre blood drawings of Daniel Erban, even extending into Sue Rusk with her Sonata series or John Noestheden's meticulously rendered night skies, the atmosphere in the gallery will be charged, 'all hallow', and in tune with the spirit of magic.



John Noestheden, (detail) *Diamond Drawing*, silver crystals, glue, paper 30x42 in., 2005

## Thomas Ackermann

### X-Country Selection

With an uninhibited brashness of line and characterization, Ackermann interprets current events and presents a cynical rendition of the powers-that-be as they conduct their pomp and ceremony from a convoluted platform rife with biblical, historical and sociological inferences. Witty and irreverent, Tom Ackermann's commentary is scathing and prophetic all in one fell messy swoop.

It might take time to understand the exact reference (for instance as to 'Cain and Able' in the double headed man) but the impression of fouled iconography is immediate. The energy has been changed from an image that is recognizable to a smirched version. The message inherent in the icon alters as Ackermann places it in a context that transforms the original message (eg: Pope equals holiness) into a message that is antithetical to the original (eg: Pope with 9/11 is an icon overlaid with a symbol that causes suspicion as to the sanctity). The recognizable is not always respectable as in *Abu Ghraib*, *The New World Order* where the malignant reigns from the outset and a deathly executioner, with an axe raised to chop, backs up the atrocities in the foreground. As the dense scribble of black charcoal further defiles the already black images that have been imprinted on our contemporary consciousness through the media, the shock is underscored by the title.

In *Able of War*, the soldier juxtaposed with the naked man (Tom in the buff) have a particularly poignant relationship. The brotherly biblical characters, conjoined as Able, never reconcile except through self destruction. The two headed Able grasps the hand of the vulnerable naked man and the clothed soldier's uniform denotes his rank and social status.

Ackermann's work could be read as unendingly negative were it not for the strength of execution of these pictures. There is a man, Tom Ackermann, behind the scenes who is ready to conquer the rats, dragons and power mongers. The force behind the gesture that pushes the medium - be it paint, charcoal, pen or latex rubber - around the pristine white page seems sufficiently strong to conquer these demonic trends. There is hope in the outcome of the scenarios as Tom Ackermann banishes the blackness by brandishing his artful sword.



"Icon #5  
30"x 22"  
charcoal on paper  
2006

## Stephan Bircher

### X-Country Selection

When the dead are raised, re-arranged, mixed together, slotted into recognizable activities, lit to their greatest advantage and then elevated to the status of Fine Arts by a mad creator; the dance of death begins with an oom-pa-pa that resonates with a sad familiarity. Viewing the antics that the skeletal hybrids are engaged in, *our* little lives become less fragile as we watch *them* - afloat on an ocean in a steel boat, whirling atop a carousel, showing off (revealing the private parts with no shame!) or posing on a precipice, ready to leap or take flight. The mutation from death to a reinvigorated life gives an immediate sense of relief that strikes back the fears of mortality and allows an appreciation of the moment - the exact moment in front of the sculpture - to over-ride the knowledge of our own inevitable end. This is the world of the Theater of the Absurd, black comics and satire where the weight of living with the awareness of death recedes in the immediacy of the wonderful moment.

The assemblages engage time despite the frozen moment on the stage of life, by virtue of the objects wedded to the recycled road-kill or neglected carcasses. Stephan Bircher claims objects from the past, as well as animals, and changes their character from the original form-follows-function to form-making-suggestions. He does this with the new beings that he fashions, their environment and the way we are directed to focus on them using lighting fixtures that also have had 'other lives.' This packrat version of claiming his art supplies is superseded by techniques and the assemblages rise into the world of fine art and phenomenal objects. These pieces are labored over with attention paid to details that went unnoticed in their original existence.

The creator has become a divine craftsman, like Giuseppe making his beloved Pinocchio or a watchmaker making it all tick. The dancing-death imagery, lit as if on the stage of life far after it's allotted term, shows the patience and care of a Swiss watchmaker. Originally from Switzerland, Stephen Bircher has worked as a lighting designer for many theatrical productions and now brings his expertise to bear on a world over which he has total control, from the writing of the script, to the set design, costuming, lighting and grand finale of the amazing macabre moment of fame.



Odyssey and Siren (detail)  
mixed media, found objects, bones  
16 x 17 x 22 in  
2006

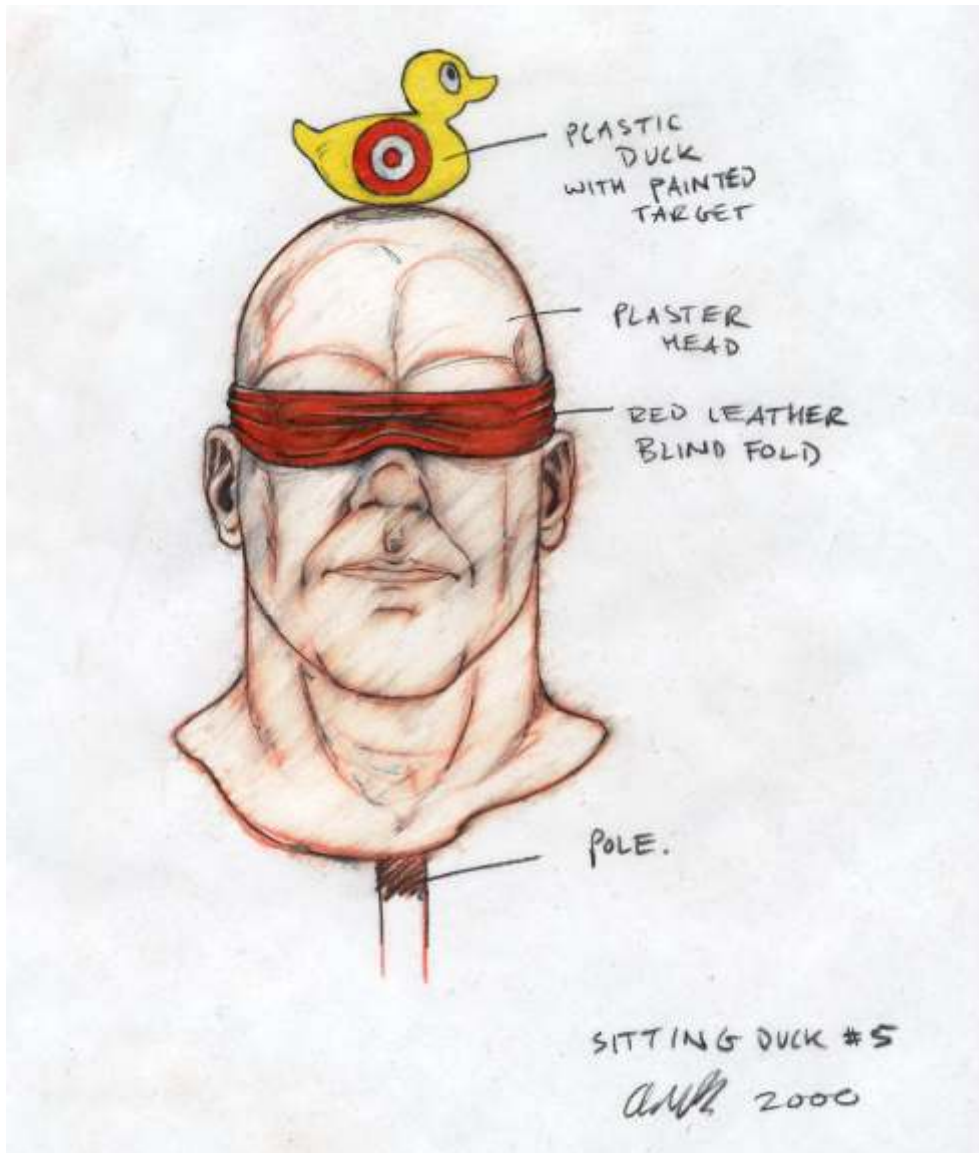
## Angus Bungay

### X-Country Selection

Skinheads with pates stripped of the vanity and diversity of hairstyles have become a symbol for masculinity. The shape of the skull is exposed and there is nothing to impede the vision; this is man ready for war as the shearing of locks increases rather than diminishes the illusion of strength and, unlike Samson, the contemporary reading of this minimal personal presentation is one that comes with an almost obligatory (if you know what's good for you!) sense of respect. Angus Bungay takes this 'soldier style' as a blank page and on the divested heads superimposes characters that are in support of, or at odds with, the original severity.

Trussed and leathered, spiked and tattooed, the heads remain maleficent. There is the implied drama of a ritual enacted in defense of an authority beyond our limited reference, a hierarchy imposing sentence on the skinhead. Blind folded, eyes and mouth taped shut, features obliterated by a leather patch - all allude to a discipline that has been metered out by a power outside of our normal understanding. But when the same stern heads (furrowed brow, thin pinched lips; isn't that a sign that an individual is untrustworthy?) are colored with the designs following the contours of the head like face paint - they lose the commanding edge. The status quo shifts and the viewer is the dictator. Ridicule creeps in. There is a ducky quite obviously perched on the skinhead's pate and all that's missing is the squirt gun in hand to blow the bully away.

The traditional role of the clown, to poke fun at that which is sometimes too heavy to comprehend except through humor, comes into play and the fire becomes a friendly round of rubber bullets. The humor is hip. The ground is level and the draftsmanship admirable and because there is sufficient menace remaining in the imagery to command respect, the rights of individuality remain undisputed. Masculine imagery is balanced by a healthy attack of silliness - a yellow rubber ducky perched on the head of the immutable warrior.



Sitting Duck #5  
pencil on vellum  
11 x 8.5 in  
2000

## Daniel Erban

### X-Country Selection

Perpetuating images of horror in their simplest primitive imaginings, almost as if they were done by a child which makes the horror more horrific, 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.

The 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 or thick hand-made tablets, Daniel 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 specters of nightmares.



The Adulation Of My Juices  
ink on matte board  
60 x 40 in  
2002

## Mary Hrbacek

### X-Country Selection

The tree has become an important symbol as the diminishing returns of earth draw an ecological picture that shows our historical rape and pillage of the mighty forests as part and parcel of the present demise. The ozone is weakened but even sadder, the wonder at the grand old-growth tree where generations are recorded in the widening circumferences that make up the trunk is becoming a rare experience. It is little surprise that with the simpatico that humanity has with the tree, the tree could be depicted in such a way as to display characteristics that resemble humans. Mary Hrbacek brings trees from the botanical into the human plane as she vests them with characterizations that veer on definitive personalities. She grants the gnarled barked elders or the young nubile budding trees a combination of respect and consideration. She identifies the origin; Brooklyn trees, Chinese trees, trees in Viareggio or Central Park, trees from Vermont. She titles each tree and in doing so furthers her interpretation of the familiar shapes.

Family trees, growing from the central trunk and showing the connections of the limbs and the mutual support that the branches lend to the whole parallel the symbolic in Hrbacek's *World Tree Series*.

With a sure dense line and the added isolation of particular framing, the trunks and limbs begin to dance, waving their arms in the air and striding from their rooted existence into a new domain where fixedness is transcended. Without dwelling on unnecessary details of bark or lichen growth, Hrbacek picks the facets that will further advance this new illusion of freedom. That her studio, in Harlem, is stationary (rooted) within the concrete thicket of the famous city is significant and that the rendering is strong, hip, assertive and almost 'jive' is just the attitude needed to gain sufficient notice within the barrage of city slickness. Hrbacek's trees may have originated in Italy or China but they have been adapted to the Western world and a new brave American life under the graphic tutelage of Hrbacek. They are like the pastiche of New Yorkers, hanging out in Central Park or Williamsburg or bringing to the cultural plain the freshness of Vermont or the exotic heritage of the Orient and Europe. Their origins lending strength to their new adaptation, they have become a new breed of tree, a generation removed from their homeland existing in the art scene with a competitive presence.



Hanging Suspended, Viareggio, Italy  
charcoal on paper  
30 x 22 in  
2001

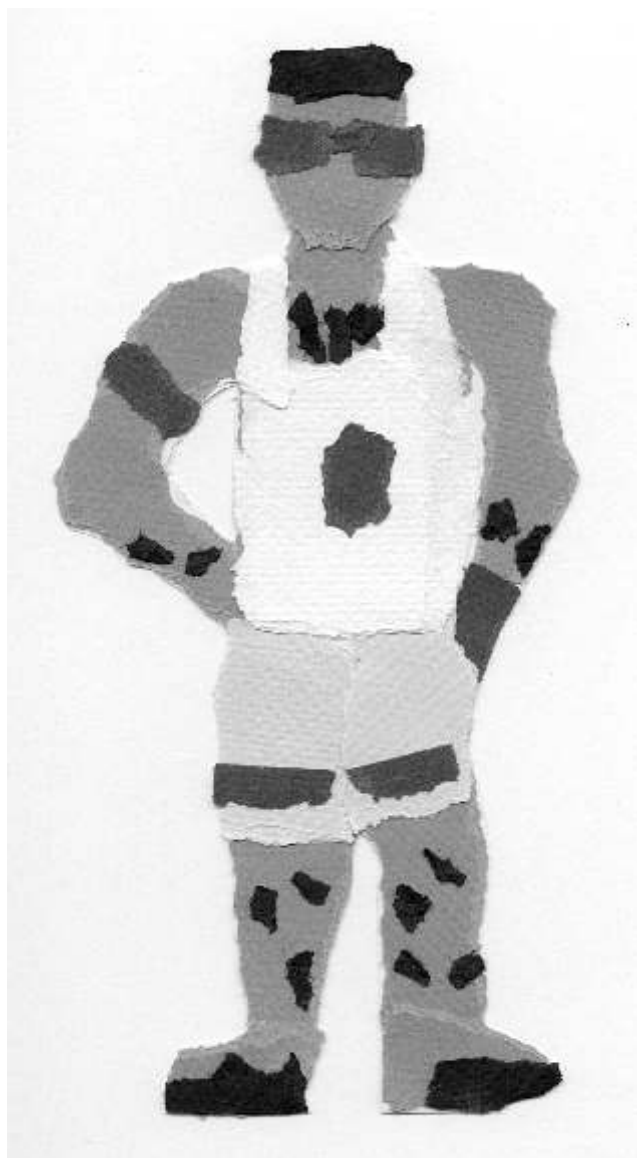
## Michael Lane

### X-Country Selection

Michael Lane is understating individuality with Lilliputian depictions of his friends and acquaintances. He pays scant attention to the cut of their clothes or fitness of figures as he rips the fabric from which he forms his beings from his seemingly distracted, god-like position as creator. There is a throw-away aspect in the fabrication that is similar to a 'cast-off' line in a theatre production - a statement that is necessary to the unfolding of the drama but is treated as if it is of little importance so as not to draw focus away from a central theme. Michael Lane's figures are like the legends on a map that give an encapsulated version of the larger topography, a key to the chaotic jumble of possibilities. Nostalgically reminiscent of family photographs from the fifties, they break into a contemporary exposition with the style of dress replete with hipster fishnets, shades and army-fatigue beach-wear that draw the formerly innocuous characters into the twenty first century.

They make their tiny lives known; sparrows whose falls have been noted and commemorated. They become collectibles, small enough to carry away from a spacious gallery in a purse or pocket with a reclamation back to the land of the living, rescued from the sanctified hallowed halls of the realms of fine arts and adopted like a puppy from the SPCA. They have a tattered semblance to better days, a re-hashed attempt at the dignity of more aristocratic beginnings. They cry out like the little man who turned into a fly "Help me, pick me up, and take me with you!" They are as animated as the unanimated can be, transcending above the humble lot of ripped paper and paste to strut and gesticulate.

"Michael Lane's Friends" are able to be wooed away from their original maker and protector into the homes of strangers. Lane fashioned them to win hearts, hoping they would fly off the walls, light little birds that they are, into better homes to live in the company that they were destined for - to be placed cheek by jowl, in great art collections where they will hob-nob with their peers.



Friend 1  
collage  
9 x 5 in  
2006

## Jefferson Little

### X-Country Selection

Jefferson Little animates nostalgia. He borrows images from the past and refreshes them, repeats them, twists the context and takes the mind away from the original object just enough so as to preserve the identity of the image and yet offer back an isolated interpretation that renders the object somewhat strange. That there is a reference to childhood, either through the vintage of the object, the actual use of toys as subject or in the faded formats of the hand colored prints: reinforces the nostalgia. From the past, he reasserts the object into a composition that results in a peculiar quaintness or queerness as it resides in isolation or suspension or repetition.

The psychology of objective reality - what is real, what do we change between the confrontation and the translation? - is brought into play and the ordinary becomes surreal. The darts, hovering in space are motionless yet charged with the potential to move and seemingly not as a trajectory towards a single point but in a formation like a military commando unit. This animates them. The composition gives them an unusual potential for a future. Jefferson Little turns the switch between the stillness of the frozen moment and the next thing about to happen. The rubber stamps are an example. The image is a stamp, held in place by a rubber outline and then stamped in position and colored. This gives individuality to the module as it is treated with extra care. With a minimum of suggestion as to the context, (the open plain of the darts, the haloed peephole of the hobby horses, the misty atmosphere where the blinking-eye-houses are suspended), Little breathes new life into the old familiarities. In doing so, the vitality in the animation ensues and that which was once trustworthy and held in its place awakens to new possibilities. There is a slight discomfort present as if these depictions might act out in a manner that is unusual and surprise with a voice of their own. It is the moment when the toys under the Christmas tree begin to dance.



Heart Darts  
stamp print, charcoal, conte & coloured pencil  
14 x 20 in., Edition - 4/5 A.P.  
2006

## Khaled Mansur

### X-Country Selection

Fresh from New York with a constructivist edge and an eye for the city-scape, Khaled Mansur's eerily empty visions have the formalism of De Chirico pressed closer to the viewing glass so that the tiniest scratch on the urban patina has the potential to attract attention. These are cool pieces, dispassionate observations of our boxed condition where the nuances between surfaces possess a sophisticated relationship to a cultured love of urbanity.

It's difficult to reconcile the ultra modern with the grit that settles on the surface and to succeed at melding the two opposites together so that each is equally important. It necessitates a meeting between the microcosm and the macrocosm, like the awareness of the presence of a floating human hair falling in front of the facade of the Guggenheim. With bold modern compositions that verge on design (and with the addition of veneer painting harkening to the cubists), Mansur's flat renditions of urban landscapes bring a third component into the mix - a quiet, meditative, assured sense of stillness. Perhaps it's the absence of the human component, that element that tends to cause visual confusion; or the reference to the sea and wide open spaces that the broad bands of color suggest for any glimpse of recognizable landscape stays in the distance as if seen from another shore or through a window from a cool interior. The closer shapes press right against the glass and the scratches, thread-like lines and etchings claim precedent over that which is too far away to comprehend with surety.

There is the serenity of a Hockney, the distracted 'ennui' of a Vermeer, the sense of regularity and order of Ingres with the hint of more at stake, an invitation to a closer inspection and Khaled Mansur rewards the eye to brain synapse with a scratch on the patina that charms by it's exquisite placement.

A great connoisseur is objective for it is in the respectful gaze that absolute assessment takes place without the blur of emotionality interfering with the purity of the appreciation. Mansur sets up this objective condition. His modern frames are Courbosier-style with the pristine nature of modernity is ready(chrome sans fingerprints and designer tailoring) for a space where the highly cultivated live. Nothing is out-of-place. Only the whisper of dust, fanned almost out of existence by the cool breeze of objectivity, cries out to be noticed, like an organic invisible man in a Ray Bradbury science fiction.



"Day Dream"  
acrylic on paper  
22 x 30 in  
2005

## John Noestheden

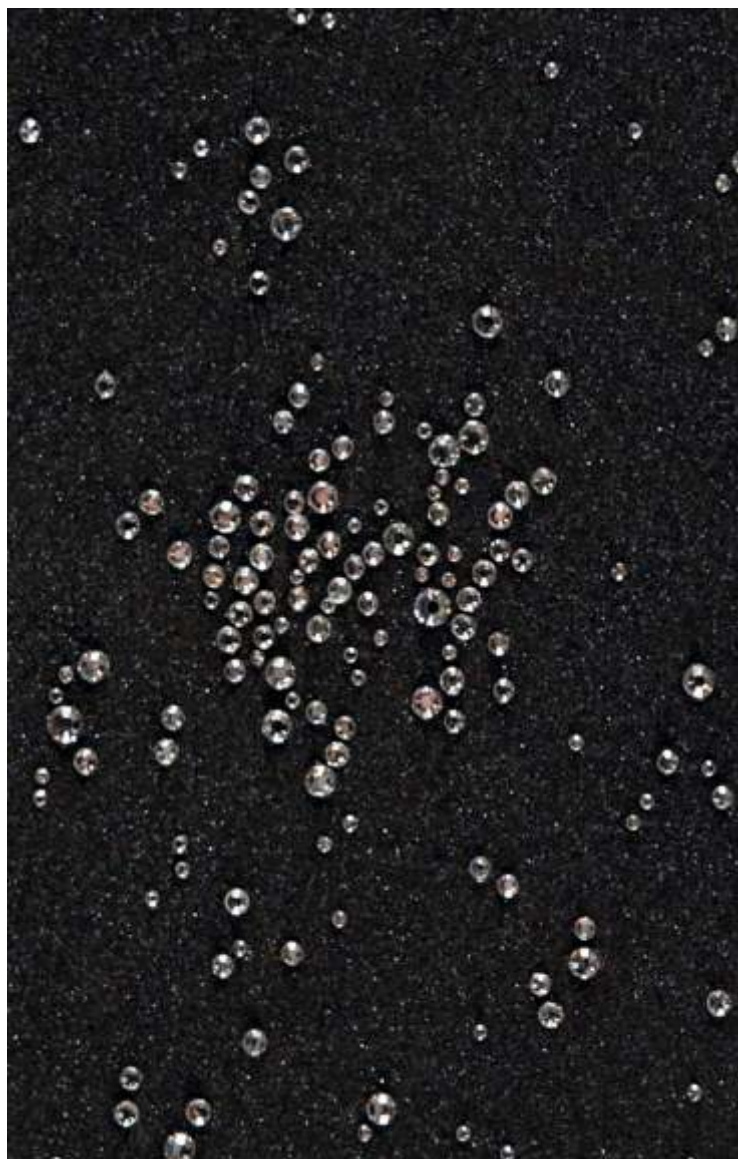
### X-Country Selection

The sparkling surface overwhelms the conceptual base and so it is with any great work of art. What is it that we revere - the *Bellini* or the *Madonna*, the *Picasso* or the profound sorrow of *Guernica*, the *Twombly* or the battle, *Lepanto*? The phenomenal object, the work of art, although it may have been born of grand concepts, is the enduring physicality that provokes awe. And so it is with a *Noestheden*.

The initial source of inspiration and configuration is the night sky under which man has stood marveling for eons. As a subject, astronomy contains the secrets of the origin of life coupled with the overwhelming concept of infinite space. The imagination must stretch to encompass the possibility of life forms, perhaps intelligent ones that go beyond our limited philosophies. From this great source, John Noestheden brings the imagery closer by using illustrations and star maps of star systems as his base material - the night sky interpreted through the knowledge of man. Then he extracts a small section of the depiction and magnifies it using it as an inflated model of some detail of the universe. He meticulously transcribes the details, first in pencil and then in ink, paint or crystals and presents his examination. The result is an abstract wonder, a phenomenally beautiful object, perhaps as wondrous as the night sky.

John's hand, in service to his conceptual master plan, also raises admiration for the making of these sparkling drawings or fanatically precise ink renderings is almost beyond comprehension. Such exactitude! The art of pasting the tiny crystals onto the paper in rigidly-adhered-to images, (the crystals had been dispersed by vibration systems, as in the universe) and the painstaking task that it must have been, provokes awe. But the most incredible aspect of Noestheden's work is the leap that he made from concept into material and the resulting work of art. If ever that term 'work of art' can be applied, it is in the presence of a Noestheden silver crystal drawing.

Noestheden's work, abstract at first reading, is actually representational. John captures the wonder of the night sky. It is necessary, like standing under the canopy of stars, to experience the work first-hand, for as the viewer moves around, the tiny diamond-like crystals sparkle and bounce off the retina as if they were receiving an electrical pulse. It is the phenomenology of binocular vision, a resultant visual illusion as one eye sees, then the next follows, just as the light from space is often old light from an extinguished source.



Cluster #4 (detail)  
*titanium ore, silver crystals, glue*  
30 x 22 in  
2006

## Sue Rusk

### X-Country Selection

Sue Rusk's expressionistic Sonate series based on classical music is far from a classic rendition of the topic. When the violin becomes more present than the musician and the composer combined, when the physical embodiment of the Sonate extends beyond the violin and is represented with all of the attendant emotions that have come to the listener, and when that audio message is turned into a work of art, finally arrested in one movement, the sonata completes itself in a stillness that can be heard. Sue Rusk's works on paper exude music from the page through the paint with the abstract expressionist gestures of a master painter as theatrical as a symphony conductor.

These are grand romantic pieces. Romance is visceral and sometimes uncomfortable. Passions are juicy. Emotions create leakage in the body, crying, sweating and blood rushing in novel directions as the heart pumps, as the feelings generate energy. It is a journey through time. So is a Sonata. The music seduces, buoys, coyly flirts and backs away as it completes the contrasting movements. The instruments speak, whisper, and cry at each other. The violins in Sue Rusk's Sonate series do not stay still. There is an aura extending beyond the periphery of the instrument that mixes in with the atmosphere - visible sound waves pulsing outwards.

The treatment of the surface runs between sweet caresses and touches which are not as gentle. The colors are Titianesque russets, Cimabue cyans, Merovingian gingers, Veronese roses and Francis Bacon beiges. The tactility in the paint or the addition of canvas strips, sticks or collage supports the lushness, an impression that if it was to become one millimeter more gorgeous, the heart would burst. These violins are stripped to the flesh and bones. Rife with associative shapes - the heart pierced by an arrow to the violin with the bow, the music score to dancers and high-wire walkers or the red shoes to the Wizard of Oz - Sue Rusk's work delivers enchantment.



Sonate 45 - 19  
collage, mixed media on paper  
40 x 26 in  
2002



Inde-Picks, November 16 - December 9, 2006

With the recommendations and commentaries from perspectives other than our own, Headbones Gallery is stirring the mix by inviting curators to select or comment on a phenomenal drawer. This refreshing show that ignites through spontaneous combustion once again attests to the wisdom of 'two heads'.

Artist followed by Curator: David Pirrie by Julie Oakes, Osvaldo Ramirez Castillo by Zachari Logan, Dakota McFadzean by David Garneau, Robert Malinowski by Monika Burman, Andy Moon Wilson by Andrea Pollan, Ron Giii by Oliver Girling, Guy Boutin by Daniel Erban, and Charles Bronson by Headbones.



Osvaldo Castillo, detail, *Nationalissimo*, mylar drawing, 36x48 in., 2006

## Charles Bronson by Headbones Inde-Picks (Independent Curator's Selection)

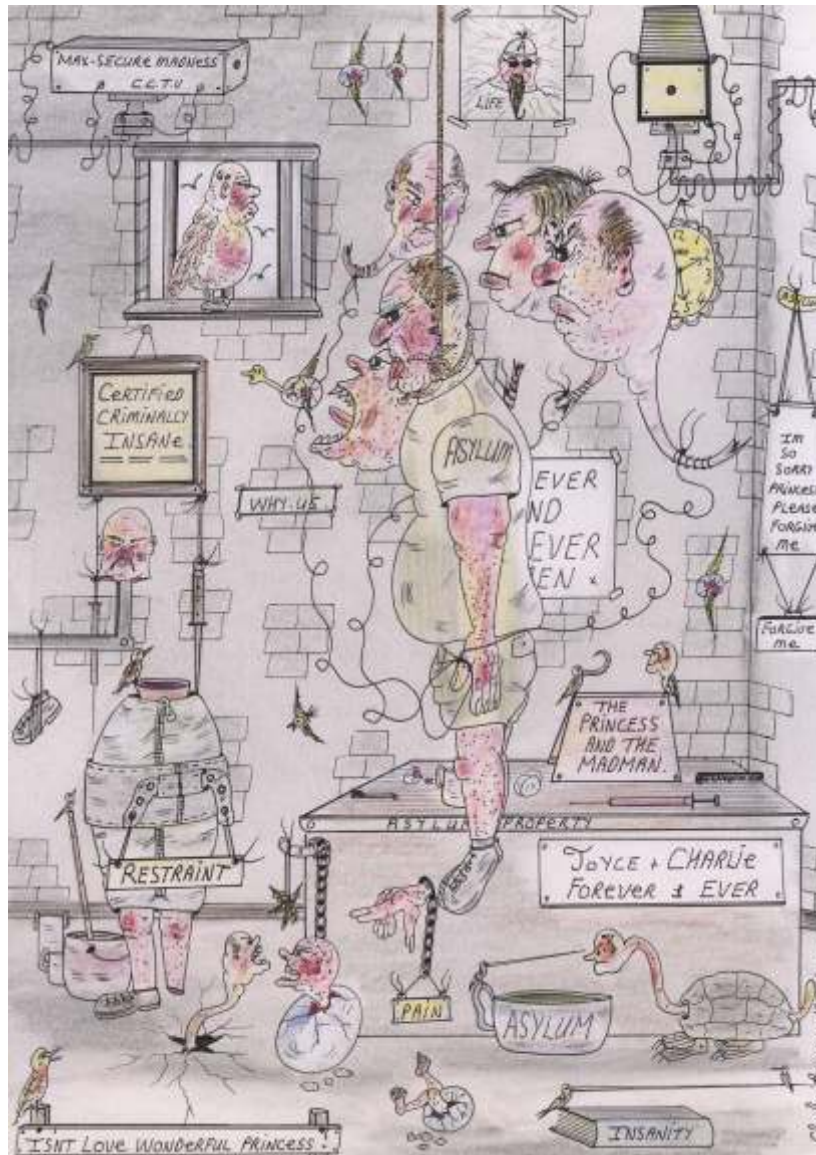
Confined to a place that rests uneasily between the world of visual arts and some "8x10" cell in the United Kingdom, Charles Bronson's drawings are trying to get out. These drawings can be considered to be on a parallel discourse to the life of the man, himself. Bronson is sentenced to life in prison and is awaiting parole. Solitarily confined for twenty seven years and given minimal art supplies, the artist has created these powerful drawings that depict the life and world of a caged "Madman."

Bronson's drawings tell stories of what it is like 'inside', and for an Outsider, they are compelling. His depictions do not appear to be only about his interpretation from inside the cell or whatever prison he happens to be in, but, also from inside his mind. Charles has created his own vocabulary and identifiable style. Imagery such as closed circuit television cameras, brick or block walls, cracked or broken eggs, birds, turtles, insects, rodents, bald men, ropes, nooses and chains - repeated from drawing to drawing - form the artist's signature. And, like any good story teller, the metaphors abound.

A creative freedom exists in a place where liberties are few. Anything goes when transcribed to paper. Freedom of expression resonates between the walls of Charles Bronson's drawings. With rules crying to be broken, the crimes can and do exist on the artist's page.

An interesting juxtaposition occurs in the drawings where content and style contrast each other. From the context of solitary prison confinement, the pencil work seems to have a therapeutic sense and to exude meditative and soothing qualities. The drawings are sensitive when relating to the palette, line and pencil work. A point of transition then takes place with obsessive controlled coloring. Then by contrast, the imagery is abrasive, forceful, provocative and even gruesome.

Are crimes still being perpetrated? The jury is deliberating on ten of Charles Bronson's prison drawings; on trial, at Headbones Gallery, Toronto.



Isn't Love Wonderful  
pencil and ink on paper  
11.75 x 8.25 in  
1998

## Guy Boutin by Daniel Erban

Inde-Picks (Independent Curator's Selection)

For the past twenty years Guy Boutin has been intensely involve in drawings as a primary visual investigation. His method of working is to use a brush with acrylic paint directly and spontaneously on paper. The size of his work spans from small to huge mural. As a result, Mr Boutin has developed a unique and recognizable style that has been consciously and deliberately appropriated by many artists in Quebec.

Every time Guy Boutin works he draws faces and these faces are the vehicles of his narratives. One of his narratives is based on relationships like the post-modern narrative of the artist and his model.

Guy Boutin does not decorate, he tells stories. He narrates the tragedy and excitements that he sees around himself in the present tense. In the body of work that I chose for this show the artist is always present and the other person is always represented as the model.

This approach produces a strong, personal and convincing body of work that helps us come to terms with relationship, both consensual and none consensual - a relationship between violent, distressing or difficult situations that we constantly witness everyday.

Mr Boutin has studied art in the early 80`s at UQAM, Université du Quebec à Montreal. Right from the beginning of his career, he developed a unique approach to drawings that has been very influential in the graphical narratives in Quebec visual culture, and that has swept the province since the demise of the Hard Edge base Art of the sixty and early seventies.

The best way to understand his art is to notice the presence of the random marks and stains as a dominating visual vocabulary. The sense of spontaneity and control that we feel keeps everything urgent and new.

Since the weakening of art reporting, art criticism and art documentation in Canada that has occurred from the seventies to the present times, it is difficult to understand what is happening in contemporary Quebec art. For this reason I wanted to know more about his art. When visiting Guy's studio I was confronted with thousands of artworks. Works on paper and works on canvas. I was excited to see an artist as intense as can possibly be imagined and for this reason I am convinced more than ever that this artist is an influential figure in the Quebec art scene.



Regard  
acrylic on paper  
40 x 26 in  
2001

## Oswaldo Ramirez Castillo by Zachari Logan

Inde-Picks (Independent Curator's Selection)

With a sensuous and menacing propinquity, the work of Oswaldo Ramirez Castillo at once arrests, pulling the viewer into a nightmarish story filled with phantasmagoric monsters and iconic images of popular, political and religious figures, elicited through a sequence of fragmented memories. In a way cinematic, reminiscent of Terry Gilliam's film *Brazil*, these drawings also invoke references to both Francisco Goya's *Disasters of War* etchings and his *Black Paintings* along with other historic political works, such as, Theodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*. Like the works of these great artists, Castillo draws on themes of psychosis, suffering and mortality in states of flux, illustrated on paper as personal and collective recountings.

Castillo's Drawings are consummately drafted, unflinchingly visceral sites of personal identity and history, a history lived defiant of sterile versions that have been politically endorsed. Each character has been hauntingly realized, a part of the narrative whether in a state of grotesque majesty or tragic subjection adding to the creation of a mythic landscape. The dissemination of chaos in these drawings exposes the clumsiness and utter depravity with which lived experiences intersect and inform the world around us. The myriad of creatures and mutations of bodies both trussed and in a state of violent domination transfix a notion of evolution wrought out of pain and loss. These masterfully constructed renderings act as psychic stage-sets, sites of confrontation with the past, and are brave acts of remembering.



El Mozote Exodus  
Mylar drawing  
36x48 inches  
2005

## Ron Giii by Oliver Girling Inde-Picks (Independent Curator's Selection)

Where to begin? At the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve and Pinch-me and the whole nine yards. Usually thought to have been located in the fertile delta between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in northern Iraq, there is nevertheless another good candidate in the same country, namely the marshlands of the south, historical home to the so-called Marsh Arabs. Home to countless species of birds, otters, turtles and other freshwater creatures, it remained a natural paradise over the course of millennia. That is, until Saddam Hussein, in a fit of genus- and genocidal pique, drained the marshes in the early 1980's, monstrous payback to the residents for a failed rebellion against his rule that had been encouraged (but not supported) by the Americans.

Can we spare a thought for the marshes, the marsh people, the Iraqis? Ron can, and that's why my thoughts about his work begin with *The Marsh People Iraq 2004*. It's a rare "cameo" in the show, that is, head and shoulders shot, the head surrounded as usual with a saturated oil halo, but here the halo also bleeds down the page where the rest of the body would have been. The top of the skull is separated from the face, perhaps a skullcap or a kefyra-furrow in the man's brow; his raccoon-eyes peering into the middle distance. His ears and narrow nose are terra-cotta, his mouth a thin, sensual slit.

Rauschenberg once said of his "Combine" pieces that they were invitations to look away from the artwork, at something or anything in the gallery other than the wild chaos of his assemblage. Gillespie invites us to *think* away, using an opposite strategy: all his heads are stylized and simplified, so that the artist gains access to a wide range of subjects under the imprint of this hieratic human presence. Zoological, geometric, pathological, the faces are sometimes those of Gericault's asylum inmates, but also by turns eager and gormless, idiots savant and Savonarola.

*The Desert Night Air 1963* is a pool on a blinding white expanse of Fabriano, recrudescence of cold-pressed linseed bearding the face orb with the concentric circular hat. The fisheyes wave over a weathervane nose that could've wandered out of Paul Klee circa 1930, but it's about the '60's, the great first years of independence for many African countries. The face is confident, inquisitive; what does history hold in store?

*Too Roberta Smith* is the art critic, looker and seer, magnificent expanse of unwrinkled forehead; intelligence inherent in sight. The palpable generosity of those who toil in the ocular salt mines. *Mr. Kim/Sherbourne and Queen* is a posthumous tribute to a Korean convenience-store owner near that corner who was murdered in his shop. An Elizabethan ruffled collar offers a light magnificence to this modest man, under the obligatory halo; and is it his fatal wound we see in the oil lozenge near the bottom of the page?

*Les Archades the3rd year* is one record of a reading adventure, Walter Benjamin's fantastic Arcades project. Brains are roiled and sparkling with silver highlights; and the iconic flat nose has acquired a mini-bridge, as if actually smelling the words on the sensual page.



Too Roberta Smith  
*pastel & sanguine on paper*  
30 x 22 in  
2004

## Robert Malinowski by Monika Burman

Inde-Picks (Independent Curator's Selection)  
Off The Top Of My Head

When I was young I often wondered if I thought about something long enough, hard enough, if it would materialize. Eyes clenched shut, hands clasped, face turned up to the sky - this notion is still so wondrous.

That same lightness of sentiment is present in the work of Robert Malinowski. Robert's finely drawn work, like spun sugar on a page, constructs an addictive fiction around what thoughts might actually look like, and how they might behave when free to roam outside our heads. There are brainstorm, epiphanies, daydreams, pre-occupations, apprehensions, all translated into simple, beautiful images with wit and humour.

Robert draws his images from the experience of the relationships he has in his life. While this is an obvious statement, Robert's interpretation is exceptional. His drawings are refreshingly casual and open, with a minimal modern composition. These are not forethoughts for paintings; they provide all the temporal stimulation we seek with line, shape, black, white and grey.

The particularly detailed rendering of the figures, with their evocative body language, are juxtaposed against the free-flowing symbols that obscure and abstract the head and face of the figure. Without a specific identity on any of the figures, as viewers, we're allowed to contextualize the image in our own experience, we're allowed to know that person as a familiar (without a) face.

The symbols that Robert uses in his drawings: hearts, flowers, arrows, numbers, letters and words, literalize thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Whether it's the awkward first impressions of two people sitting on a bench, the bold readiness to love, or the languid acceptance of time passing, seeing that communication expressed in universal iconography can at least, put a smile on your face, and at most, make you curious about what your thoughts could tell about who you are.

Would your mind spill out into a mess of tiny flowers? Would it explode in a cascade of words and letters? Or would you be overwhelmed by the slings and arrows of life? Robert Malinowski's drawings make me wonder about all of it, with my eyes open.



Considering (part 2)  
*pencil on paper (detail)*  
22 x 30 in  
2006

## Dakota McFadzean by David Garneau

Inde-Picks (Independent Curator's Selection)

When he worked at the University of Regina Library, Dakota McFadzean often stumbled across porn magazines sandwiched between academic books. He was fascinated by the weird juxtaposition: private texts hidden among public ones; oozing libido contaminating the dry brain food. Were these fugitives jokes? The act of a sex maniac hoping to shock and pervert? An act of generosity? Whatever the reason, the surprising gesture became a source of inspiration.

Dakota's hollow books are one-of-a-kind artist books with comically racy drawings on the dust jackets. Little Red Riding Hood, for instance, enters her grandmother's house on the front cover and shares a post-coital smoke with the Big Bad Wolf on the back. The excavated interiors hold items related to the covers, for example, cigarette butts for the taboo couple. The books were properly catalogued and sent into circulation by the University of Regina Library! Patrons could enjoy them on site or check them out and take them home. Some added to or replaced the secreted items. Someone even provided a condom for Little and Big.

Dakota's naughty behaviour has recently extended to altering thrift store art. He takes these second hand images of third rate art and adds a perverse touch: a giant octopus sinks a ship; bleeding men in top hats and frock coats haunt the streets of postcard villages; deformed changlings replace babies in otherwise sweet domestic scenes.

In both operations, Dakota makes small subversions into the routine world and our habitual imaginaries. He scratches the thin surface of the real to allow the dream and nightmare realms to leak into the daylight. Creeping fears and pleasures populate his pictures with forbidden and desired possibilities. His nonsense is delightful, but it is his sense keeps me coming back. While some pieces are absurdities, many are jokes, irruptions from the unconscious, symptoms seeking resolution.

The porn in the library is funny because a library is supposed to be a place of the mind, not the bawdy. Deformed babies elicit anxious laughter because that possibility is every parent's anxiety. The fables we read to children are bowdlerized versions of much more frank and instructive folk tales. Still, despite the cleansing, Little Red Riding Hood endures because there is something vaguely sexy and taboo going on between Little Red and Big Bad. In his twisted drawings, Dakota returns some of the repressed for our elucidation, edification and general delight.



Hollow Book - front & back (Faerie Circle)  
book, paper, ink, watercolor  
7.5 x 5.5 x 1.5 in  
2005

## David Pirrie by Julie Oakes

Inde-Picks (Independent Curator's Selection)

David Pirrie's carefully rendered remains of vehicular accidents, in pencil on vellum, over-laid with a grid and presented as art resonate with psychological and cultural implications. The motor vehicle is an icon that signifies positive as well as negative traits. The automobile is a symbol of wealth, status, style and even sexiness. Right down to the utilitarian vehicles for transportation - the eighteen-wheeler for example has become a pop trope, inspiring songs, literature, art and even looking like art with graphic, chrome and illuminated accessorizing. The motor vehicle is a necessity, a habit of convenience and a privilege. Yet it has also created immense repercussions on the environment and the need for oil has America at war with Iraq.

The extension of the image of the automobile into wreckage - the dead body of all that the automotive industry has come to stand for - has a metonymic meaning. David Pirrie's drawings reduce the bulky, twisted steel and rubber carcass to a comprehensible size. It is comparable to a small crucifix, a reminder of mortality and hence a prompt from which to formulate living. This sense of life's transience is especially poignant in the crumpled bus. It is empty and has been abandoned, for it is not only useless in its vehicular capacity, but it also was the container of lives that were lost as it transformed from a transportation for people to a smashed death trap. The viewer is, after all, still amongst the living, examining the tiny depiction of the remains of an accident that happened outside of his immediate ken. It has no identity other than a culturally pervasive, violent possibility of how death can occur. The drawings are remarkable examples of the ability to resurrect, from an image associated with death, a conceptual awe at man's trajectory from his discovery of the wheel to this contemporary, conceptual translation of where it has led him. This work speaks of the pity of progress, the fragility of human accomplishments and yet the sophistication of the overview of Pirrie's analysis grants a divine perspective on our condition.

Picture the artist, David Pirrie, looking at the photographs of the wrecked vehicles, carefully drawing them, paying them attention, with a modeling that caresses the images. The work becomes distanced, divided into little squares with a weak yellow grid and then it passes from his hand and is brought out to be examined.



Risk analysis 865D2  
graphite on mylar  
7 x 9 in  
05/06

## Andy Moon Wilson by Andrea Pollan Inde-Picks (Independent Curator's Selection)

Raucous and pulling no punches, Andy Moon Wilson's drawings have been attracting much attention across the United States due partially to the masterful drawing expertise that he brings to his work and partially to their raging adolescent content. A non-stop drawing machine, Moon Wilson states, "I am compelled to draw almost without cessation. Whenever I am not actively drawing, I am thinking about drawing. Drawing is the spigot from which my thoughts flow. The drawings themselves are artifacts of the moment in time in which they were made. They are a documentation of my particular state of mind, my concerns, preoccupations and attitude at that moment."

The artist cites visual influences as diverse as gothic architecture, Persian carpet design, modernist decorative motifs, industrial design, T-shirt and CD cover graphics, and obsessive drawings done by both historic and outsider artists. For Moon Wilson, "Everything is an influence. Every response to stimuli registered by my consciousness since birth has influenced who I am as a person, and therefore influences my work." Both highbrow and lowbrow, Moon Wilson's aesthetic is also formed by theories and histories of international ornament and design, cartooning, politics, war, macho weaponry, car culture, binge drinking, loner/loser culture, private ranting, and random provocative crazy shit.

His various bodies of work include tiny drawings done on mixed media and placed in Baggies. These provide a drug-like "fix" of punchy art to an avid art fan or collector. Another installation of small-scaled drawings is "The Dude Project," in which the artist drew on hundreds of archival post-it notes and installed them in the bathroom of Curator's Office space at the Scope Miami art fair in 2005. He is currently at work on several thousand intricate business card drawings that focus on corporate and personal identity.

Larger works are mesmerizingly complex and feature a blend of obsessive pictorialism, cryptic formulae, nano-architecture, and the occasional appearances of his loser dude protagonists. Moon Wilson calls these intricate works "meditations on architecture, ornament and craftsmanship." These are done on office-size 11" x 8.5" paper to allude to an employee goofing off at work, albeit with extreme *horror-vacui* results.



Baggie Drawing  
ink on paper, plastic baggie  
3.5 x 2.5 in  
2005

## Gord Smith, "Amen" by Julie Oakes Inde-Picks (Independent Curator's Selection)

The cross is probably the most loaded symbol in the Western world. It is the simple intersection of the horizontal and the vertical, the horizontal associated with earthly existence (the horizon) and the vertical being the connection between earth and heaven.

Geometrically, two lines crossing turn the first dimension into the second dimension. Gord Smith's sculptural treatment of this dimensional change ranges from traditional to modern and yet never entirely sheds the religious signification. Even when textured and crusty or luminously polished, they can't be just shapes for they are crosses. Although each one is entirely new, in this nascent creation there resides age-old meaning.

The structure that the fifteen crosses are housed in is an altar: it cannot be read otherwise, but it is a very different altar from the traditional. The triangular mirror at the top reveals that the sequence, with one cross at the front apex of the triangular platform and five in the back row, also forms a perfect triangle. The mirror allows the viewer to look directly down upon the crosses - this is a godlike perspective. It shrinks the significance of the classic proportion of the Roman cross where the horizontal cross bar is placed closer to the top than to the bottom, thus creating the illusion of greater height for in Gord Smith's *Amen*, from the bird's eye mirrored reflection, there is the opposite illusion - that this symbol can be dwarfed if granted an omnipotent perspective.

Historically, especially within the Christian tradition, the cross embodies spiritual and philosophical ideologies. It is the icon of icons. Under this symbol, wars have been fought, lives have been lost and buried, couples have been wed, new-borns blessed and crimes confessed. There are war crosses and peace crosses in Gord Smith's *Amen*. These are not 'good' and 'bad' signifiers but a far more profound naming that reflects the dynamic interplay of opposites within each man.

*Amen* is a piece that exemplifies the grand creation of an artist who needed to make a masterpiece and was gutsy enough to tackle the Cross - not just once but fifteen times! Then he cast the crosses in bronze so that they are able to endure the passage of time and placed them within a framework that enables common man to access multiple divine concepts.



Amen, edition 3  
wood, steel, fifteen bronze crosses  
length 89 x depth 26 x height 41 in  
1995

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