



Christian Bernard Singer

Eco-Installations: Dressing Mother Earth

The Drawers - Headbones Gallery

Contemporary Drawing, Sculpture and Works on Paper

REVIVIFIED

April 3 - April 29, 2008

Christian Bernard Singer

Eco-Installations: Dressing Mother Earth

Commentary by Julie Oakes

Christian Bernard Singer - Eco-Installations: Dressing Mother Earth
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Cover Image:
Christian Bernard Singer - Detail of Cosmogony II, Moss Installation at Headbones Gallery, Toronto, 2008

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Christian Bernard Singer

REVIVIFIED

Man has exerted his dominion over the earth, carving out roads, digging, shaping, and reinventing paradise in his own image. Too often the interception is abrasive and the earth suffers from the manipulations. Not so with Christian Bernard Singer's thoughtful relationship with nature. As he creates his installations in the natural settings of forest and meadow, under his hand the perfection of nature is further realised as the spotlight of his sensitivity plays up the contours and colors as if he is dressing mother earth in raiments fair in order to show off her graceful figure to full advantage.

A little patch of earth at its best—lush, green, soft, light, pliable, transportable, easily sustainable, beautiful—moss. Floating paper pieces hover like angels or spirits that have gotten away from sweet bodies. Mysteriously suspended like dry leaves momentarily arrested in dreamy falls, they appear to be in the process of a return to mother earth in order to continue to exist in the preordained harmony that is endemic to nature. They are still, hanging in the silence between being and becoming. They are talking in whispers, communicating messages so gentle yet they are heard visually, seen audibly, tasted through the fingers, and smelled through the eyes. The world of Christian Bernard Singer is overwhelmingly poetic. It provokes swoons.

The crisp definition of architectonic space is broken by a visual mirage, a displacement of the unfamiliar upon the objective reality of walls, floors, ceilings and segues between them—the stairs, passageways, corners and portals. The gallery is changed from the expected into the inspired. It is a form of culture shock, an objectification of sensibilities so that the subjective overtakes reasoning and the sensation becomes the prime means of understanding. Singer's installations are like other countries, foreign lands. Things are not as they have been. There are unaccustomed translations of ordinary juxtapositions. It is a 'trippy' feeling much akin to travelling. The installation brings about heightened awareness of place. It is delightful, not jarring, a pleasant surprise akin to eco-tourism.

In Thailand, the Bahamas, Hawaii, and other such exotic places, the outside flows into the inside. A shower can be taken surrounded by flowers, for instance, or food and drink eaten beside mossy embankments. The transition between the dwelling and the environment, the interior and the exterior is easily made. The weather is warm. There is no need to box in. Christian Bernard Singer helps us out in our Northern clime and forces the issue by bringing the mossy side into the gallery. After a long winter, the relief of the intrusion is as rich as verdi-gris on copper and as refreshing as a walk up a magic viridian staircase in a midsummer night's dream.

Julie Oakes

Cosmogony, 2003
Living mosses, paper.
Artsite, Wellsville, NY



***Fallen Mosses*, 2003**

Installation in response, and tribute, to Polly Apfelbaum's "Fallen Paintings."
Pin cushion mosses, 90' x 45'
Artsite, Wellsville, New York



***Fallen Mosses II*, 2004**

7 varieties of indigenous mosses, pine needles, dye. 77' long.
Phillips Creek State Park, NY



***Untitled Meandering*, 2005-07**

Achillea Tomentosa, dyed pine needles, earth mound.
Kiwi Sculpture Garden Project (Edward Day Gallery)



***Bodies of Land (Version 5)*, 2001**

Mosses, wax, floatation supports, pond.
Frechette Pond, Alfred, NY.



***Bodies of Land (Version 8)*, 2001**

Mosses, wax, floatation supports pond.
Frechette Pond, Alfred, NY.



Circles, 2005

Trees, mosses, leaves.

Shore|Lines Project, MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie



Circles (detail), 2005

Trees, mosses, leaves.

Shore|Lines Project, MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie



***Initiation/Spring*, 2002**

Mosses, found mattress springs, wire.
Turner Gallery, Alfred, NY.



Initiation/Spring (detail), 2003

Mosses, found mattress springs, wire.
Artiste, Wellsville, NY.



***Runner*, 2004**

Living mosses, thread, burlap.
Fish Tank Gallery, New York City



Enclosure III, 2005

Living mosses, cast glass, earth, plastic, wood.
Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo



Enclosure III (detail), 2005

Living mosses, cast glass, earth, plastic, wood.
Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo



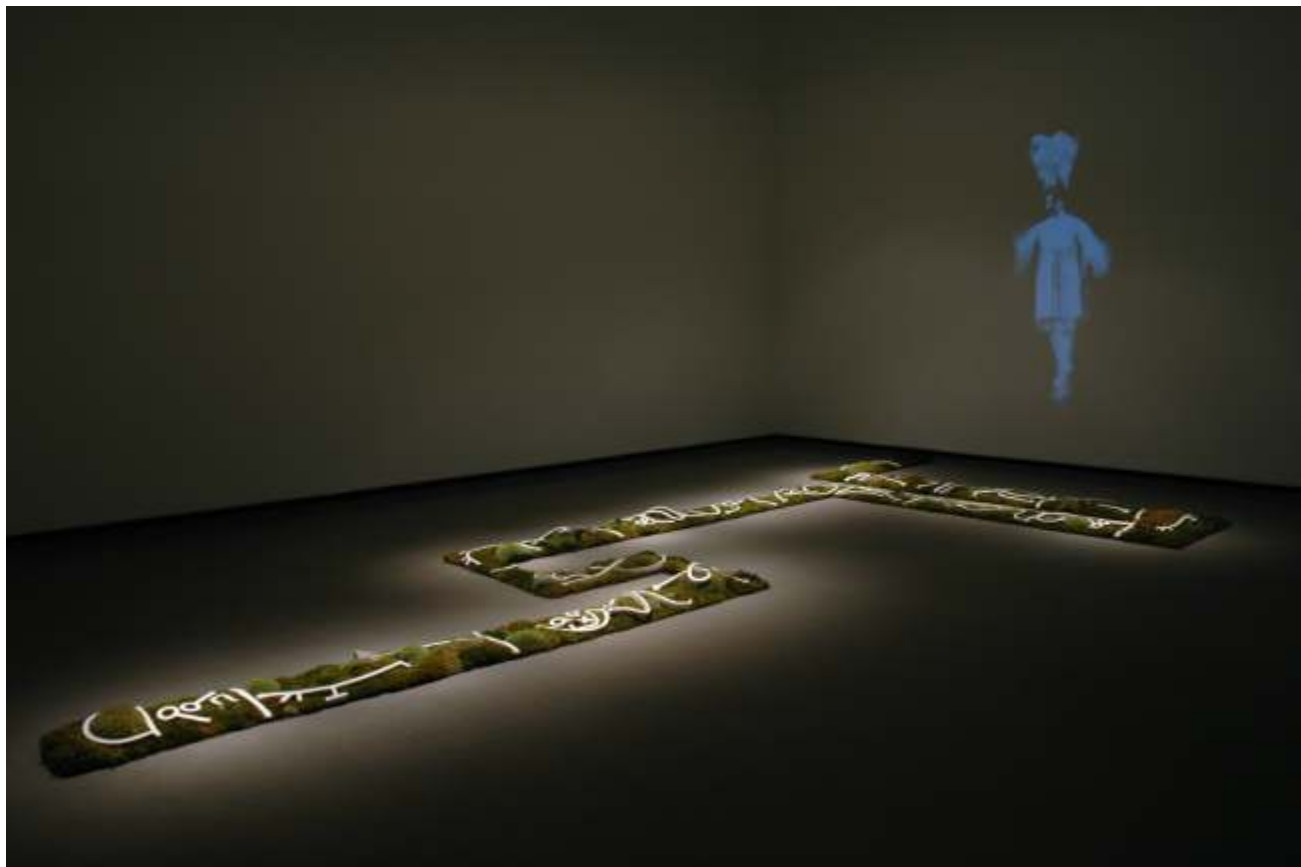
***Chaconne de Paeton*, 2005**

Living mosses, clay, engobe, video projection
Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo



***Chaconne de Paeton*, 2007**

Living mosses, clay, engobe, video projection
MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina.



Chaconne de Paeton (detail), 2007

Living mosses, clay, engobe
MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina.



Indigen, 2008

(From Cabinets of Curiosities series)

Mosses, clay, wood, found window.
Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo



Still Life I, 2008
Bronze, driftwood
Headbones Gallery Installation, Toronto



Christian Bernard Singer

Biography

Born in 1962 in Paris, France, Christian Bernard Singer was raised in New York City where he began as a company dancer with Laura Foreman's Composers and Choreographers Theater. He lives and works in Toronto, Canada.

Education

- 2003 MFA - Sculpture, New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University
- 2000 A.O.C.A.D. Fine Art, Ontario College of Art and Design
- 1999 École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris

Solo Exhibitions

- 2008 Cabinets of Curiosities, *Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo, ON*
- 2005 Tessellated Anamnesis: Patterns for Unforgetting, *Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo, ON*
- 2003 *Recent Sculptures and Paintings*, This Ain't The Rosedale Library/Gallery, Toronto
Chronicles of Being, Fosdick-Nelson Gallery at Artsite, Wellsville, NY
Sarabande/Contrepoint, Robert Turner Gallery, Alfred, NY
- 2002 *Initiation/Spring*, Robert Turner Gallery, Alfred, NY
- 2000 The Hidden Phallus, *Art System Gallery, Toronto*

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2008 Upcoming: *1st Chinese Biennial 2008 Beijing*, Sense 99 Art Centre, Beijing, China
Upcoming: *1st International Biennial of Contemporary Art: Art with Roots in the Earth*, Universidad Autónoma Chapingo, Mexico
Revivified, Headbones Gallery, Toronto
- 2007 *Mobile Structures - Dialogues between Ceramics and Architecture in Canadian Art*, Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey, BC
Cirrostratus (OCAD Material Art & Design faculty exhibition), Ontario Crafts Council, Toronto
Mobile Structures - Dialogues between Ceramics and Architecture in Canadian Art, MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina
- 2006 *Kiwi Sculpture Garden Project*, Kiwi Gardens (Perth) / Edward Day Gallery (Toronto), ON
- 2005 *Shore/Lines: Responding to Place*, MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie, ON
Kiwi Sculpture Garden Project, Kiwi Gardens (Perth) / Edward Day Gallery (Toronto), ON
- 2004 *Second Nature*, Fish Tank Gallery, New York, NY
Wish You Were Here, A.I.R. Gallery, New York, NY

- 2002 Experimental Television Center (video screening), Newark Valley, NY
Film/Video Fest at Alfred University, Alfred, NY
- 2001 *New Work in Glass*, Artsite, Wellsville, NY
Oscillating Perspectives, Artsite, Wellsville, NY
Northern Lights, The Jewish Education Alliance, Savannah, Georgia
Northern Lights, The Gordon Center, Nashville, Tennessee
A Love Story, Mercer Union Gallery, Toronto
- 2000 *Erotica 21*, Art System Gallery, Toronto (featured in Project Room)
Art/Party, Art System Gallery, Toronto
- 1999 *Portes Ouvertes 1999*, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris
Supérette du sexe - "Un Printemps Bizarre" festival, La Flèche d'Or, Paris
- 1997 *Eros/Erotica*, The Simcoe Gallery, Toronto

Performance / Dance

- 1987 Choreographer, *Noye's Fludde*, The North Toronto Children's Choir
- 1979 Dancer, Laura Foreman's ChoreoConcerts Repertory Company, New York. *New Collaborative Art/Video/Sound Installation-Environment*, Robert Rauschenberg's chapel/studio.
- 1970-74 Company Dancer, Composers and Choreographers Theater, New York. *Spaces* performed at Bryant Park Library. *Signals II* performances include: The New School Dance Festival, The Cubiculo Theater, Judson Memorial Church, The Museum of Modern Art (Sculpture Garden).

Juried Awards, Honours and Grants

- 2006 Visual Artist Project Grant, Ontario Arts Council
- 2004 Exhibition Assistance Grant, Ontario Arts Council (Recommender: Visual Arts Ontario)
- 2002 NYSCC Alfred University Graduate Fellowship and Full Tuition Grant
- 2001 NYSCC Alfred University Graduate Fellowship and Full Tuition Grant
- 2000 Dorothy Hoover Award for Visual Work and Written Research
Louis Odette Sculpture Award
- 1999 International Exchange Study Grant
Ontario College of Art and Design Tuition Bursary, Toronto, Canada
- 1998 Dora Wechler Memorial Fund Award for Ceramics
Charles Magee Memorial Tuition Scholarship for Drawing/Painting
- 1995 Inter/Access Artist-in-Residence

Publications

Articles, Reviews and Interviews

- Group Show: Surrey Art Gallery. artreview.ca Canadian Art News Network, September, 2007.
- Vancouver Sun (caption and photo), September 21, 2007.
- Boissonnault, Mélanye. Interview: "Les arts et les autres." Radio-Canada, 12 June, 2007.
- Therrien, Dany. *Reportage: Christian Bernard Singer*. Art Circuit, TV Radio-Canada, 3 March, 2007.
- Schlosser, Bryan. *Singer: MacKenzie Art Gallery*. Arts & Life, Leader-Post. 27 January, 2007.
- Messadié, Janine. Interview: "Estiva - Les arts et les autres." Radio-Canada, 5 July, 2006.
- McElroy, Gil. "Reviews." *Sculpture Magazine*, March, 2006.
- Young, Kathryn. "Art in the Garden: Adding artistic flourishes to greenery goes back to Roman times." The Ottawa Citizen, Sat., 3 September, 2005, p. J7.
- Chun, Belinda. "Installation meets earth-works in New York native's secret gardens." ThisWay, Issue No. 1, 2006.
- Messadié, Janine. Interview: "Estiva - Les arts et les autres." Radio-Canada, 27 June, 2005.
- MacDonnell Eichhorn, Virginia. "New Work: Christian Bernard Singer." Samplesize.ca, May, 2005.
- Hall, Lauren. "Layered Meanings." Echo Weekly, 31 March 6 April, 2005.
- Demers, Véronique. "Christian Singer allie l'art à l'environnement." Le Régional, 30 March 5 April, 2005.
- DeGroot, Martin. "Art co-operative invites us to brush winter blues away." The Record, 8 March, 2005.
- Haber, Jonathan. "Gallery Reviews from Around New York: 7.12.04." Haberarts, 12 July, 2004.
- "Evidence." Interview: CIUT FM, 2 November, 2003.
- Paquette, Daniel. "Say Cheese." XTRA! Toronto's Gay and Lesbian Biweekly, 30 October, 2003, p. 35.
- Frost, Steve. "Show Beats Winter." The Art Species May, 2003, p. 2.
- Hardman, Elaine. "Moss Inspires Alfred Artist." Patriot and Free Press, 16 April, 2003, p. 10.
- Hardman, Elaine. "A 'Mossed See' Exhibition in Wellsville." Alfred Sun: Moonlighter, 10 April, 2003, p. 1.
- Bulucon, Chandra, Karagiorgos, Vasiliki. "Quick Stop Art Stop." Interview: CKLN Toronto, 8 November, 2000.
- "Sex City." Interview: CIUT FM, November, 2000.
- Loyst, Cynthia. "Sex TV" City TV Toronto, 9 November, 2000.
- "Superette du sexe" Sexzine, Paris (April 1999).
- Jeanson, Sylvie-Anne. "Sans détours." Interview: Radio Canada, 2 May, 1998.
- Smith, Mabel C. "... The Hollow Comes Back a Winner." The Peterborough Examiner July, 1985.
- Dance Magazine. "Cabled Choreographies." Dance Magazine December, 1973, p. 40.
- McDonagh, Don. "2 Foreman Works for Dance Prove Though-Provoking." New York Times, 12 May, 1972.
- Jowitt, Deborah. "Doing and Performing." The Village Voice, 27 May, 1971.
- Alen, Frances. "ChoreoConcerts." Dance News May, 1971, p. 13.
- McDonagh, Don. "Diverse Elements Unified by Dancers in a Winning Ballet." New York Times, 28 March, 1971.
- Mason, Nancy. "ChoreoConcerts; The New School, NYC." Dance Magazine January, 1971, p. 74-76.

Books/Catalogues

Gogarty, Amy. *'A Bell Rings Out'--Recollection, Architecture and Ceramics at the End of Modernity* (exhibition catalogue). Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2007

Long, Timothy. Gogarty, Amy. *Unearthing* (exhibition catalogue). Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, 2007

Eichhorn, Virginia. *Tessellated Anamnesis Patterns for Unforgetting: New Work by Christian Bernard Singer* (exhibition catalogue). Waterloo: Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, 2007.

McDonagh, Don. *The Complete Guide to Modern Dance*. New York: Doubleday, 1976.

McDonagh, Don. *The Rise, Fall and Rise of Modern Dance*. New York: Mentor Books, 1971.

Willis, John. *Dance World 1971, 1972, 1973, and 1974*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1972-5.

Media/Video

Ready, Tom (Producer). *Smoke, A Firing with Christian Singer* (Video). Toronto: OCAD, 1999.

Foreman, Brian. *Christian Bernard Singer: Chaconne de Paeton* (Video). Regina: Surrey Art Gallery, 2007.

Selected Archives

The American Center for Artists, Santa Monica, California - www.americanartists.org

Artists in Canada directory

Artists Space, New York, NY.

Canadian Cultural Web Directory

Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto www.ccca.ca (upcoming).

Laura Foreman Archives. Dance Collection, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts, New York.

Judson Dance Theater, Judson Memorial Church Archive (1835-1995), New York, NY.

New York Public Library, Dance Collection, New York, NY.

Ontario College of Art and Design Library and Archives, Toronto

Scholes Library, New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. Alfred, NY