

1998 Montréal/Calgary

Exchange

Kenneth Doren
Amy Gogarty
Angela Inglis
Shauna Kennedy
Luanne Martineau
Roy Meuwissen-Hendrickx
Steven Nunoda

Acknowledgments

In the spring of 1997, CIRCA Centre d'Exposition Art Contemporain (Montréal) approached Stride Gallery and TRUCK (Calgary) to participate in an exchange that would provide artists from both regions an opportunity to exhibit their work, meet cultural producers and visit art organizations outside their respective provinces. During May 1998, five artists from Montréal travelled to Calgary to present their work and the work of four peers in the first exhibition of the 1998 Montréal/Calgary Exchange. Upon their arrival a number of activities ensued including public artists' talks, visiting contemporary cultural organizations, studio visits and travel to regional institutions. Now, in October 1998, we are very pleased to have seven Calgary artists present their work at CIRCA Centre d'Exposition Art Contemporain in Montréal.

The artists' works included in this exhibition were not intended to be representative of artistic practice in Calgary, but rather, to signal the diversity of art within the community. Despite this diversity, there are some recurring themes in the work that indicate prevalent areas of interest for these artists. The first critically examines the processes by which objects, activities and memories are collected, archived, historically represented and how these processes relate to the relative position of the subject within societal hierarchies. Secondly, the artists' works demonstrate their dedication to their practices which is often made visible by their process. Humour and narrative also weave in and out of the works in the exhibition. Following the diversity of practice represented herein and the artist-driven nature of the project, no single text or author describes this exhibition. Instead, each Calgary artist has chosen to include a short statement or image about the work that she or he is exhibiting in Montréal.

On behalf of the Stride Art Gallery Association and TRUCK, we would like to thank the organizations and individuals who made this exchange possible and thus helped to raise the inter-regional profiles of these professional artists within Canada. We are grateful to the Montréal and Calgary artists for their participation, enthusiasm and assistance during the development of this exchange (Nicolas Baier, Michel Boulanger, Michel de Broin, Kenneth Doren, Jean Dubois, Lucie Duval, Sylvie Fraser, Amy Gogarty, Angela Inglis, Shauna Kennedy, Luanne Martineau, Roy Meuwissen-Hendrickx, Steven Nunoda, Leon Perreault, Andrea Szilasi and Carla Voyer). We congratulate CIRCA Centre d'Exposition Art Contemporain, Maurice Archard and Sylvie Fraser for initiating this exchange and thank the Stride Gallery and TRUCK Board of Directors for their ongoing support of the project. A special thanks for those who leave at home, but without whose exchange would not be possible: Robin Arseneault, Rebecca Bourgault, Gregory Elgstrand and Cate Rimmer. MN Hutchinson also deserves special recognition for his carefully considered publication design.

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Dawn Auvinne and Diana Sherlock
Project Coordinators

Seeing Crusading - Kenneth Doren

In Kenneth Doren's new installation *Crusading*, the viewer is confronted by a 4' x 4' newspaper image encased in glass and suspended from the ceiling. The news caption below the close-up image of an old man reads, "Dr. Luigi Bella, the controversial Italian doctor who claims he has the miracle cure for cancer, defended his treatment in Toronto on Monday." The exceptional thing about the photo is that wires encased in surgical tubing penetrate the doctor's eyes, ears and mouth before they wind out to their connection with an amplifier, speakers and an old television set also suspended in space in front of the doctor's image.

The tape that plays on the video screen are the quiet and deliberately paced takes of an eight-year-old girl haltingly singing from a sheet of quotes made by Dr. Luigi Di Bella in a crusade for his unorthodox treatments for cancer. As her small voice sings out the doctor's defence of his alternative position, the viewer is engaged by the strangeness of this quiet techno-theatre that is not unlike the wire strung operating theatres of contemporary hospital settings.

Dr. Di Bella's story signifies the shift we may be seeing now in the public's response to alternatives that rival traditionally held positions on highly emotional issues. The hope that drives the public interest in this story is what Kenneth has chosen to explore in this work. The power of public sentiment surrounding this story seems to have given the media license to exploit the issue on a global level that is actually affecting change within the medical profession.

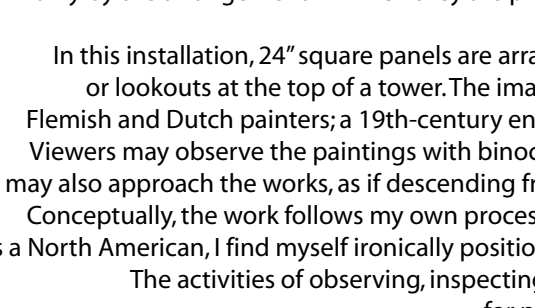
In this installation, the television holds a central place of authority suspended in the midst of tubes and amplifiers that appear to feed the story it tells. The subdued mystery of this odd construction is reflective of much of Kenneth Doren's contemporary art making. Magical and manipulative qualities of mediation seduce his audiences in the form of operas, videos, musical compositions, drawings and photos that he has reconstructed. Although he notes that his work is often described as dark, it is probably the mystery that surrounds the deconstruction or manipulation of a familiar form that intrigues him and informs work like *Crusading*. It is a process of investigation that Kenneth embarks upon when he "takes things apart", in order to see an idea or an art form in a new way. In the case of *Crusading*, his manipulations of familiar news-media devices subtly lead his audience to reconsider how we "read the news", and possibly recognize preconceived notions we bring to such readings.

The microphone sitting in front of the young singer in Kenneth's video appears to reference an anchor person on a television news show who is set up to give a seamless account of the story at hand — delivered with total comprehension and concern — no matter how dislocated he is from what he is actually reading. The impediment or difficulty we experience when we are watching this video is the gap we feel between what we are conditioned to expect of a child, of an operatic song or of a TV broadcast, and what we actually get. The delivery of "the news" is not seamless, and polished. It is read by a child who obviously does not understand what she has been given to read, nor does she feel any need to disguise her disinterest and boredom. The resulting sequences are humorous and poignant as we contrast the innocent honesty of a child with the highly manipulated but supposedly objective deliverance of "the anchor man."

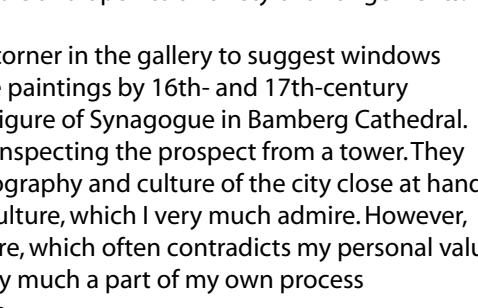
Despite the controversial content of the subject Kenneth has chosen for this installation he is not pedantic. He is not interested in particular theory or doctrine here nor in his other works. He makes an overview that works towards a new perspective that might unravel formal rules and reveal something beyond a literal meaning. Kenneth's closely cropped images of the young singer create an intensely intimate view of her reading. He has often used children in his work as "collaborators" because he enjoys "the power of their expression" and the contrast of their honesty and their precise way of thinking, with our lack of respect for them as makers of meaning. Although Kenneth is not interested in being didactic in his work, he does strive to create a "rub" or discrepancy between our preconceived notions of how information should be mediated and the recognition of an insidious cultural disrespect for particular voices.

There is an obvious generosity that Kenneth shares with the subjects of his work. These mainly include children, handicapped people and animals. They appear in all phases of the creation of his videos, operas and musical compositions. As we see here in *Crusading*, the people his media manipulates still emerge as subjects themselves due to his open approach to their own artistry. The resulting humour and intimacy in his work evolves out of his willingness to let the actor, singer or writer take charge of the story of song in their own voice. He sees himself as an editor who enjoys watching the creation of new art forms by the subjects he employs in his works. Although his viewers may sense that there is something incongruent or out of place in his re-constructions, what he allows us to experience is an understanding or recognition of the authority we unquestioningly give to the media.

Crusading is an opportunity to watch how this innovative young artist unravels the making of a media issue, or the prescribed use of video, song, voice and music to playfully recreate them as vehicles to send new voices, new poetry and possibly new ways of seeing to his viewers.



Zoe Williams



Amy Gogarty, Wooten from Montesquieu's Tower (detail, artist book, commercial glazed earthenware tile Harlem © 1700, 4" x 4" 1798

Amy Gogarty - Montesquieu's Tower

In the summer of 1998, I was a tourist in Italy. Anxious to make sense of my experiences, I climbed as many towers and hills as I could to survey my surroundings. In this, I was guided by Charles-Louis Montesquieu (1689-1755), who commented on his own travels in Italy:

When I arrive in a city, I always go up onto the highest steeple or the highest tower, in order to see the entire ensemble, before seeing the parts; and, upon leaving the city, I do the same thing, in order to fix down my ideas.

My experiences formed the basis for this particular arrangement of my work. For the past ten years, I have produced acrylic paintings on plywood squares in dimensions of 12", 16" and 36". The paintings consist of 30 to 40 layers of thin paint, which I sand and steel-wool to remove irregularities. The images I use derive from art history texts, encyclopedias and related visual sources. Some paintings include short phrases or longer texts, which are often 17th- or 18th-century in origin. For the past six years, I have been conserving and archiving my work so that individual panels merge with the collective, their particular meanings determined only by the arrangement in which they are presented. I regard this archive as flexible and open to a variety of arrangements.

In this installation, 24" square panels are arranged in a straight line around one corner in the gallery to suggest windows or lookouts at the top of a tower. The images include market, bird and still life paintings by 16th- and 17th-century Flemish and Dutch painters; a 19th-century encyclopedia image of penguins; the figure of Synagogue in Bamberg Cathedral. Viewers may observe the paintings with binoculars, simulating the experience of inspecting the prospect from a tower. They may also approach the works, as if descending from the tower to experience the geography and culture of the city close at hand.

Conceptually, the work follows my own process of investigating European visual culture, which I very much admire. However, as a North American, I find myself ironically positioned at some remove from this culture, which often contradicts my personal values. The activities of observing, inspecting, reflecting and interpreting are very much a part of my own process for producing and arranging these works.

An artist book located near the binoculars expands my ideas with panoramic scenes photographed from high vantage points throughout Italy. The accompanying text meditates on the relationship between the "towering vision" of the tourist and the painter's vision. Mock library or archive drawer fronts identify the paintings in the exhibition, and a baseboard is inscribed with a 17th-century definition of *raison*: *Raison, se de quelquefois la seule faculté imaginative. Les chimères sont des estres de raison, qui ne subsistent que dans nos sens imagination.* (Dictionnaire universel de Furetière, 1690)

Amy Gogarty, October, 1998

excerpts from the information series (ambiguos) - Angela Inglis

The work I have been doing over the past few years is rooted in ideas about making solid objects from fragments of things. It is part of my curiosity about bringing together characteristics of painting, sculpture, architecture and literature — the idea that visual and written language/information exists together within an object. I am interested in concepts that move in and out of a variety of meanings, and how language is shaped through the flow and digestion of information.

In the piece excerpts from the information series (ambiguos), the hard-copy texts I used to build the work are related to daily activity, local context and generalized living. This work is built from materials I find during the ordinary course of a day, ranging from grass and leaves, to shredded corporate information and telephone directories. The dynamic between the public self and the private self comes into play, and what is interesting is how that dynamic molds new metaphors in our constantly shifting worlds.

"Again I thought that the cones looked like torches, and that there might be some meaning in their shape, because those torches were not torches, but parodies of torches, and the pink trace of pleasure they so solemnly displayed was not pleasure but a parody of pleasure, which would seem to capture the inescapable paradoxical nature of all torches and pleasures..." Milan Kundera, *The Joke*.



Angela Inglis
October 1998



Shauna Kennedy, ARTIFICIAL BREATHING - Respiration Artificielle (detail), video still (6:51), 1998

Shauna Kennedy - Fish out of Water

To define the exact influences of ARTIFICIAL BREATHING - Respiration Artificielle, is to solidify a moment in my life. Allowing the interposition to float and shift in myself allows the piece to breathe and live. To define can stifle and clutter with words — human words — and overwhelm a delicate moment or emotion. Even in the context of this writing, I struggle to maintain a balance between academic interpretation and poetic, fluid integrity.

Women out of water.

The lesbian community I am involved with has carved a niche for itself in my town. Often marginalized by the status quo, we band together to survive and thrive. Ironically, until we make our sexuality known, we are valued and appreciated members of our larger community. When we are public about our sexuality we are suddenly met with great opposition from our neighbours, churches and council members. Sadly, we lose our regular status as "Good Neighbour of the Week." Whatever positive community involvement we were recognized for becomes suddenly irrelevant.

Fish out of water.

In ARTIFICIAL BREATHING - Respiration Artificielle, the lesbian/androgynous body is juxtaposed with the body of a rare and dying fish. This juxtaposition is a means of addressing separateness from society and habitat. When this separation results in the death of the rare fish, the small community of onlookers are faced with their own detachment and left grieving.

The fish sculpture now presented the gallery represents a preserved, artificial body; not unlike a grizzly bear in a taxidermy display. Something to admire up close with the knowledge that were it alive we wouldn't have the privilege of being in its presence.

I touch upon the fragility of the environment and highlight the importance of diversity with regards to people in their communities and species in the wild.

Words out of water.

G.I. Gurdjieff was a Russian philosopher who claimed to have answered every question possible. Seventy years later his writing is dated. His analogies are absurd. His highly intellectualized writing highlights the ambiguities that arise with the use of language. One person's opinion becomes truth. Truth becomes dogma, then law, and finally, the habits of a nation.

The passage of time, the translation from Russian to English to French, the context in which it is presented and my restructuring of phrases all serve to alter his initial meaning. From his text *Views from the Real World*, I've taken his writing one step further than time and translation have already.

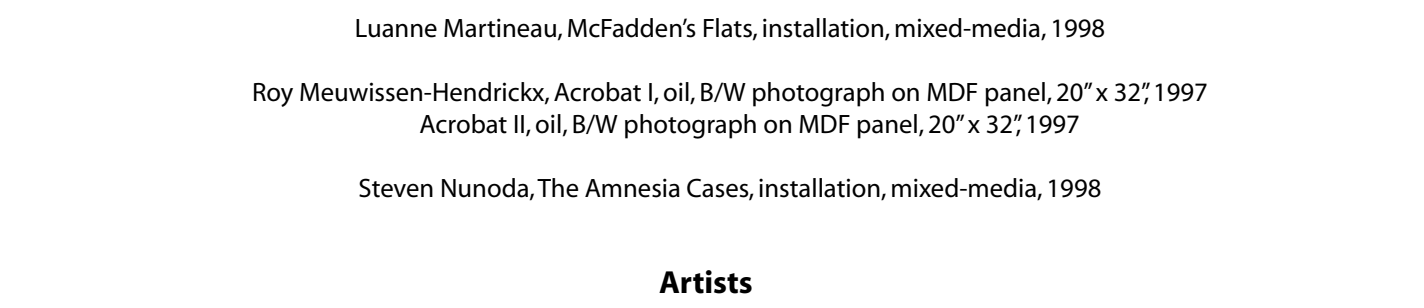
Conclusion

What is the difference between a good neighbour and a good lesbian neighbour? A person is, yes, both these things, but what makes someone not be these things at the same time?

To remove me from my nature is to make me endangered. To "cure" parts of me, as some would wish, would make my breathing artificial.

Shauna Kennedy

McFadden's Flats - Luanne Martineau



Luanne Martineau, McFadden's Flats (detail), installation, mixed-media, 1998

Roy Meuwissen-Hendrickx [excerpts from notes and statement (1997/98)]

(The most admirable trait of an interesting painting is that one is able to look simultaneously at, into, and through or beyond it while having it reflect what is in front of it as well.)

In questioning the mechanics of photography, painting and subsequent viewing practices, it has become necessary to present resulting images metaphorically as double agents in turn operating as illegal aliens — or auto-schematically the way mirrors function — within a conventional artistic framework or history; and using the decorative camouflage of an abstract syntax as disguise.

What occurs in the painting is a sense of continual slippage — a recurring evanescence or breakdown of perceived visual phenomenon. The resulting image exists neither here nor there — outside time as a time-image, potentially anywhere, but inevitably encountered "after the fact" (en passant) or incidentally — invoking a sense of displaced memory and premonition simultaneously. And, moreover, allowing for the subsequent fictionalization of previous realities.

In other words, the image-content and time-context of the work converge to establish complicating which actively exhibit elusive tendencies, pretending simultaneously that they are and are not what they seem and thereby complicating conventional viewing infrastructures between object and observer.

Finally, the paintings are intended to operate, through a distancing effect, at the "moment in which desire," unrealized and intangible, "has yet to ossify into identity, a strategic move that untangles desire from both deviance and explanation."¹

Roy Meuwissen-Hendrickx

1 Manohla Dargis, "Brave New World," *Artforum*, summer (1992), p. 8 - 9.



Roy Meuwissen-Hendrickx, Acrobat I, oil, B/W photograph on MDF panel, 20" x 32", 1997

The Amnesia Cases - Steven Nunoda

I have insisted that any new structure for codifying experiences and moving information, be it alphabet or photography, has the power of imposing its structural character and assumptions upon all levels of our private and social lives — even without the benefit of concepts or of conscious acceptance...

— Marshall McLuhan

I sit at a computer composing this statement, as I did when I planned all of the work in my portion of this exhibition. Ironically, I find myself about to comment on the thinking in which our use of technology has transformed our thinking to the extent that we have begun to use computer to describe our manner and even our interpersonal relations. The metaphors which we have used for the functions of the mind are telling indicators of our world views. The dominant metaphor for the mind in this period of datacracy derives from our belief that computers are a kind of electronic brain (note that the two terms brain and computer both refer to physical objects as much as conceptual structures — a far cry from any pure concept of "mind"). From seeing the computer as a brain we have begun to describe the mind as a computer, a flesh machine made of a complex system of neurons. Nevertheless, despite the advances in Artificial Intelligence, the machines at which so many of us labour are still no more intelligent or sentient than toasters, they simply store, organize and retrieve information. In this, the technology merely emulates some of the many human mental faculties.

The Amnesia Cases open with a similar move. Their structure follows a range of metaphors relating to the translations which occur among memory, perception and language. The work centres around a card index of cross-referenced anecdotes and definitions which correlate to specific cases. Connections are available to be made out of the cards' contents of images, text and objects. As with our memories, however, not all of the information is available at any given time. The information in the cards and cases is always partial, and the viewer is invited to adopt the role of the diagnostician or detective to make of the evidence a coherent tale (or heads). The cases taken as a whole are a physical structure, storing information and providing opportunities to the viewer for sensation and interpretation. They are like a brain — and the meanings produced are provided by the mind of a spectator.

Steven Nunoda, Mercator's Projection of the Mind, computer graphic, size variable, 1998

Steven Nunoda

List of Works

Kenneth Doren, *Crusading*, video installation (6:00), 1998

Amy Gogarty, *Montesquieu's Tower*, installation, mixed-media, 1998

Angela Inglis, excerpts from the information series (ambiguos), mixed-media, 1998

Shauna Kennedy, *ARTIFICIAL BREATHING - Respiration Artificielle*, video installation (6:51), 1998

Luanne Martineau, *McFadden's Flats*, installation, mixed-media, 1998

Roy Meuwissen-Hendrickx, *Acrobat I*, oil, B/W photograph on MDF panel, 20" x 32", 1997
Acrobat II, oil, B/W photograph on MDF panel, 20" x 32", 1997

Steven Nunoda, *The Amnesia Cases*, installation, mixed-media, 1998

Artists

Kenneth Doren graduated from sculpture at the Alberta College of Art and Design (1994).

His studies included a year at Kunsthochschule-Weissenau art college in Berlin, Germany (1993).

Doren is a multi-media artist whose videos and films have been screened in Germany, Sweden, Finland, Canada and the United States. His musical compositions have been used in Canadian dance, theatre and video productions. Doren is currently working on a digital opera (*Allegro Molto Con Brio King Kong*) about the myth of Prometheus. Doren's day job is Production Manager for Attitude Pictures, a documentary film company in Calgary, Alberta.

Amy Gogarty is known nationally for her art criticism and she has exhibited her work widely throughout Alberta. Her practice blends academic research, painting, writing and teaching demonstrating her commitment to serious theoretical discourse. Gogarty has involved herself with the Calgary community through her contributions as an artist, artistic collaborator, curator, writer, moderator, panelist, community activist and instructor. Gogarty has received many academic awards as well as awards from the Calgary Region Arts Foundation, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Angela Inglis graduated with a Fine Arts Diploma from the Alberta College of Art (1994). Since then, her work has been included in several group and solo exhibitions in Alberta and eastern Canada. She is a member of the United Artists Society, a Calgary non-for-profit artists' collective that provides studio, publication and exhibition opportunities to artists. Inglis' work is represented by Tranier/Baer Gallery in Calgary.

Shauna Kennedy graduated with distinction from sculpture at the Alberta College of Art (1994). Shauna has produced several videos working with EM/Media and the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers in Calgary. Her videos have been screened in Calgary and Mexico, broadcast locally on Shaw Cable and Rogers 10 Cable and broadcast nationally on Vision TV and Women's Television Network. Shauna has received several awards for her video productions and distributes her videos with Video Pool.

Luanne Martineau was born in Saskatoon, graduated from the Alberta College of Art (1993) and completed her Masters of Fine Arts at the University of British Columbia (1995). Her work has been exhibited in both group and solo shows across Canada. Most recently her work was exhibited at Mercer Union (Toronto, ON), The Eye Level (Halifax, NS) and Struts Gallery (Sackville, NB) and purchased by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts for their permanent collection.

Roy Meuwissen-Hendrickx graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Alberta College of Art and Design (1997). His work has been included in several group shows in Calgary including *The Painting Machine* curated by Arlene Stamp for The New Gallery (1997) and *Picture Windows* curated by David Garneau for Artweek 1998.

Steven Nunoda is an artist and educator whose installations have been exhibited locally and nationally since 1986. He has also worked on several curatorial projects for local artist-run centres and artists' collectives. His review of David Silcox's book about David Milne was recently published in *Books in Canada*, the Canadian Review of Books. Nunoda currently teaches art and art theory courses, while working part-time as a sculpture studio technician at the University of Calgary.

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