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 MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL
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50th Venice Biennale

May 22 to September 7, 2003

Nan Goldin



Cover page:
Guido on the dock, Venice, Italy (détail), 1998
Cibachrome print mounted on aluminum
180 x 270 cm
Collection Lambert en Avignon

Nan Goldin ranks among the most influential photographers on today's art scene. Her first comprehensive exhibition in Canada consists of about a hundred photographs taken over the past thirty years and a film, together with two slide shows, both presented in the form of a photographic diary.

Born in Washington, D.C. in 1953, Nan Goldin became interested in photography at the age of sixteen. Three years later she exhibited her first black and white images of transvestites, the *Drag Queens* series, which captures moments in the private lives of her friends and of people living on the fringes of urban society. She moved to New York in 1978, and since then has lived in London, Berlin, Bangkok and Tokyo. She presently lives and works in Paris.

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Nan Goldin's vision, based on a "snapshot aesthetic," is structured by the anxiety-ridden attention she pays to her everyday surroundings. She concentrates on those closest to her, and of the many images snapped in interiors – hotel rooms, friends' apartments, nightclubs – some have gradually been formed into series, grids or slide shows. Three of the slide shows the artist has executed over the years, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, 1981-1996, *All by Myself – Beautiful at Forty*, 1953-1995, and *Heartbeat*, 2001, are all built around the methodical and evolving presentation of sequences of images of herself and her friends, accompanied by soundtracks that impose a rhythm on the succession of pictures. Halfway between photography and cinema, these slide shows explore a variety of themes. *All by Myself – Beautiful at Forty*, accompanied by an Eartha Kitt song, focuses on the self-portrait. *Heartbeat*, whose music – by John Tavener – is enhanced by the voice of Björk, shows five couples in their most intimate moments and constitutes a celebration of the erotic relations between individuals. Penetrating to the very heart of the relationships, the artist invites the spectator, also, to become part of her protagonists' emotional lives. For Nan Goldin, the slide show is a form of storytelling in extended time. But it is always the fragility of existence that ripples across the surface of the images, as they portray different aspects of the human condition.

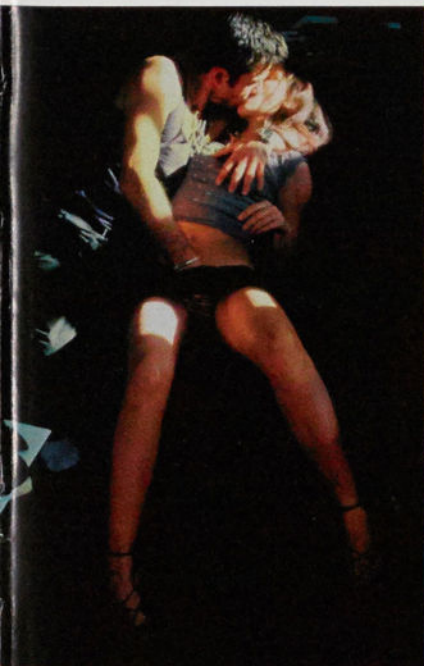
In autobiographical, journal mode, Nan Goldin encourages us to become for the duration of the exhibition part of her "extended family" – as she calls her friends – to share her experience of otherness. In revealing herself, the artist reveals the emotional vulnerability of being, but also unveils a world of drugs, prostitution, violence, AIDS and death. Her starting point is invariably beauty, desire and love, and the effect on them of the inevitable passage of time. Through the portraits of her friends and her self-portraits, with their artificial-seeming colours, where the roles of the physical and mental materialize, Nan Goldin's work is an investigation into the essence of being. The landscape, to which she first turned her attention in the 1990s, has allowed her to discover the rich tonalities of a natural light that plunges the viewer into a substance at once soft and enveloping, foreign and dehumanizing. Nan Goldin also practices the still life genre, sometimes imbuing it – in a still life with candles, for example – with a spiritual dimension. In these landscapes and still lifes there is a tension between dark and light, presence and absence, real and abstract. And the correlation established between the painterly and the photographic pushes us toward far-off densities and offers us glimpses of unfulfilled desires. Like the portraits, these works take the form of intimist scenes dominated by solitude and a sense of unease. The artist's most recent works possess a serenity manifest in the refinement of the portraits, while reexploring the same themes – friendship, love, loneliness, loss – that dominate her whole oeuvre. In a universe where the power of desire is of the very essence, Nan Goldin offers a profound and personal vision of her private world and a critical meditation on her own life. Spontaneously and intuitively, she captures the subtlety and intensity of human expression and reveals the moving fragility and vulnerability of existence.

This exhibition has been produced by the Musée in collaboration with the Collection Lambert en Avignon.

Paulette Gagnon

Gilles and Gotscho embracing, Paris, 1992
Cibachrome
69,5 x 101,5 cm
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris

Joana and Aurèle making out in my living room, NYC, 1999
Cibachrome
101,8 x 69,5 cm
Collection Lambert en Avignon



The planar masses produced by David Rabinowitch, which at first sight seem compact and austere, have quietly but authoritatively asserted themselves in the realm of sculpture for nearly forty years. The same holds true for his extensive series of drawings – specifically the paradigmatically titled *Construction of Vision* begun in 1969 – which offer a concise examination of the particular relationship between discrete linear, ovoid and circular elements and their precise placement within the vast, bare plane. Rabinowitch questions and challenges visual “certainties”; he proposes convincing sculptural and drawn objects, the apprehension of which entails experiencing multiple points of view, at the same time as it implies the impossibility of reducing the perfectly open complexity of their construction to a single reading. In the experience of contemplation and the deliberate reduction of formal vocabulary, certain aspects, or significant fragments, of universal knowledge paradoxically and meaningfully materialize.

Organized jointly by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the National Gallery of Canada, this exhibition is composed of some twenty sculptures and numerous works on paper, executed between 1962 and 1995 and drawn for the most part from the collections of the two partner museums. For the first time in Canada, the works selected offer a critical overview of a singular and in some respects unique practice that has developed in major cycles over periods spanning several decades; these cycles include the conic planes, the metrical sculptures, the refined drawings of *Construction of Vision*, the more profuse and “expressive” *Drawings of a Tree* and those of German Romanesque churches. Rabinowitch proposes the conscious experience of perception and recognition by presenting the dichotomous polarities that have always preoccupied him: what he calls internal and external conditions, container and contained, straight and curved line, vertical and horizontal, the density of mass and quality of light, solid and void. For each cycle he elaborates a system, or rather a set of considerations and properties, that marks out the conditions of experience and facilitates, over time, the synthesis of the act of seeing and that of recognizing and knowing.

Josée Bélisle

David Rabin



Conic (Round) Plane in 4 Masses and 2 Scales, I
(with Elliptical Hole), 1971

Hot rolled steel

183 x 13 cm

Gift of Marielle and Paul Mailhot

Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

April 24 to October 5, 2003

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*Drawing After Elm Trees in Tompkins Square Park,
No. 63, 1995*
Charcoal and beeswax on paper
152.4 x 102.9 cm
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
Photo: courtesy of Peter Blum Gallery, New York



Sylvie Bouchard
Portrait d'un jeune fumeur, 1992
 © SODART (Montréal) 2003
 Oil on panel
 97.5 x 66.2 cm
 Gift of Yolande Dubé
 Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
 Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

Marie-Claude Bouthillier
« mcb » les blés, 1999
 Encaustic on canvas, polymer varnish
 167.6 x 274.3 cm
 Purchase, made possible by the generosity of the
 Foundation of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
 Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
 Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay



May 16 to September 7, 2003

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Painting Unbound

Looking at the Nineties

It has often been said that in the field of the visual arts the 1990s were a time of plurality and individualism. These notions apply particularly aptly to the painting of the period.

The decade was marked by a lack of strict adherence to a single view of painting. Not only were diverse and even opposing aesthetic visions seen as equally legitimate – artists felt quite free to move from one stylistic approach to another within their own practice. Such a situation requires that we examine painting in a new light, for it is one in which each artist strives to create a personal blueprint for painting, to construct a stance distinct from every other. For these artists, in fact, a painting is not only a painted picture but also a representation of an idea of painting.

The aim of this exhibition, composed of a selection of works from the Musée's Permanent Collection, is therefore to cast an eye over Quebec painting from the 1990s. The works on view include the figurative, the abstract and the minimalist. While Pierre Dorion and Sylvie Bouchard have remained relatively faithful to the representational approach of their early careers – as have, in their way, Kamila Wozniakowska and Michel Boulanger – others, like François Lacasse, Sylvain Bouthillette and Marc Séguin, have taken unexpected paths that negotiate with abstraction, although each in a different way. And if the practices of Guy Pellerin, Marie-Claude Bouthillier and even, ultimately, Michel Daigneault maintain within an abstract approach a tenuous link with the figurative motif, those of Francine Savard and Stéphane La Rue are based essentially on minimalist and conceptual principles.

Many and varied as they are, the real intellectual and emotional power of these different painting approaches lies within each discourse. Without breaking with the past, they assert an unrestrained freedom, outside the purview of any norms and expressed both through the artists' aims and through the formal languages they employ.

Réal Lussier

This spring, the Musée will be presenting Akram Khan, who ranks among Britain's most internationally acclaimed young choreographers. Born in London of parents from Bangladesh, Akram Khan was first schooled in the 500-year-old Indian classical dance tradition of Kathak and later studied contemporary dance. With a perfect mastery of the two techniques and of the connections between modern Western and traditional South Asian dance, Akram Khan has developed his own language. Considered one of England's most significant contemporary choreographers, Akram Khan received the "Outstanding Newcomer to Dance Award 2000," presented by the Critics Circle and Time Out Live. Akram Khan will be performing three solos at the Musée: *Fix*, *Loose in Flight* and *Sounds of Archery* – the latter an original 30-minute work accompanied by two musicians, on tabla and sitar. Akram Khan's performance at the Musée is part of the *Vooruit danse en avant* event, organized in collaboration with the Agora de la danse, Usine C and Danse-Danse. *Vooruit danse en avant* offers the Quebec public a chance to learn more about the dynamic *Vooruit* art centre in Ghent, Belgium, and its remarkable contribution toward the promotion of Quebec choreographers in Europe.

From May 14 to 25, an installation by M+M – two artists, Marc Weis and Martin De Mattia, who live and work in Munich – is being presented in the Beverley Webster Rolph Hall. Exploring some of the avenues opened up by new technology, the M+M duo uses photography and video installation to create fragmented fictional narratives. The installation titled *Johanna Zyklus* draws spectators into an ambiguous and enigmatic story involving two men and a woman. Six films, projected simultaneously on six separate screens, recount, in six dialogues, the same story, whose narrative thread is far from clear. In recent months, M+M have taken part in the following exhibitions: *Science and Fiction* at the Sprengel Museum in Hanover; *Das zweite*

The Lively Arts at the



Johanna Zyklus
Photo: M+M

Danièle Desnoyers
Photo: Luc Sénécal



Musée

Gesicht, at the Deutsches Museum in Munich; *Kopfreisen*, at the Kunstmuseum in Berne; and *Stories*, at the Haus der Kunst in Munich. The duo has also shown work at the Neon Gallery in Bologna, and at Hammer Sidi gallery in London. This Montreal premiere of M+M's work is being presented as part of *La Bavière au Québec*, a cultural, economic and political event being held in Montreal and Quebec City from May 14 to 21, 2003.

Finally, this year's beneficiary of the artist-in-residence program is choreographer Danièle Desnoyers. Since 1995, the Musée has been inviting a performing artist or filmmaker to create an original project in the contemporary art setting of the gallery. Last year, filmmaker Atom Egoyan made *Hors d'usage*; with this year's invitation going to a choreographer, dance will be back in the spotlight. For her forthcoming creation at the Musée, Danièle Desnoyers is planning to pursue an approach in which the choreographic discourse is closely linked to sound. "I see it as a collaborative undertaking," she says, "a cross-disciplinary exploration that focuses on an encounter between choreographic and sound fragments, triggering a kind of dialogue where neither medium is constantly dominated by the other." The artist's aim is to delve deeply into the relationship between the language of dance and acoustic experimentation in a choreography where the body is intimately connected to the immediate sound environment. Danièle Desnoyers's creation will be presented at the Musée in October 2003.

Louise Ismert



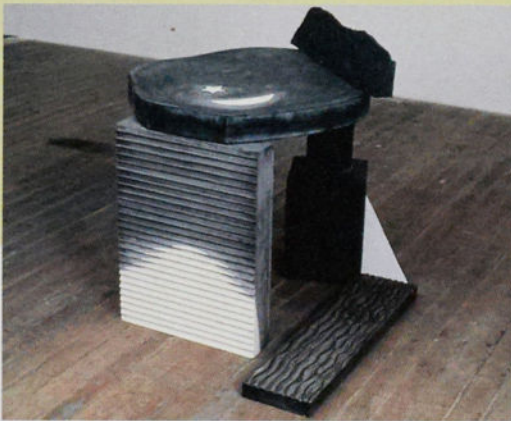
Akram Khan
Photo: Chris Nash



Geneviève Cadieux
Séquence n° 6, 1980

Gilles Mihalcean
Saint-Placide la nuit, 1980

Irene F. Whittome
Land Vessels 5, 1977-1980



Gift from the Canada Council Art Bank

With some 18,000 paintings, sculptures, photographs and prints by over 2,500 artists, the Canada Council Art Bank is home to the largest collection of contemporary Canadian art. The Bank's mandate, which has remained unchanged since its inception some thirty years ago, is to support and promote Canadian artists by making their works accessible in offices and public spaces across the country. The Art Bank's treasures are available for rent by corporations, institutions, and government departments and agencies.

Some pieces belonging to the Bank, however, while important from an artistic point of view, are not ideally suited to being part of a "collection in perpetual motion." As a result, the Art Bank has decided to donate a selection of works to public institutions, thus ensuring them wider

public exposure. The Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal has been chosen as a home for their works by artists Guy Bourassa, Geneviève Cadieux, Serge Cournoyer, Tom Dean, Jean-Marie Delavalle, Peter Gnass, Gilles Mihalcean, Laurent Pilon and Irene F. Whittome.

Of the thirteen works given to the Musée last December (listed in full below), some have already been seen in our galleries. For example, Geneviève Cadieux's *Séquence n° 6*, 1980, was included in the major solo exhibition of her work held at the Musée in the spring of 1993. In this large, photographic wall piece the artist explores the notion of identity by representing huge pairs of eyes that mesmerize spectators and plunge them into an unsettling relationship between watcher and watched. Gilles Mihalcean's poetic sculpture *Saint-Placide la nuit*, 1980, has also been on view at the Musée, as part of a solo exhibition of his work presented from October 1995 to January 1996. By assembling a range of diverse materials (plaster, glass, clay, wood), Mihalcean succeeds in conveying the mildness of a summer night in Saint-Placide, a small village on the shores of Lac des Deux Montagnes. Only three elements can be identified in this assemblage of black forms: a crescent moon, a star and a huge mosquito! The main feature of most of the thirteen works being donated by the Art Bank, their monumental size, has made them unsuitable for rental by government departments and agencies. The two works by Irene Whittome, for instance, *Watertable*, 1975-1980, and *Land Vessels 5*, 1977-1980, are part of the grandiose installation entitled *Vancouver*, a metaphorical representation of a city open to the sea. In this piece, the Vancouver-born artist has created an environment whose impact is first and foremost physical: a world of volumes and neutral colours spreads out before the viewer, parallelepiped constructions evoke buildings, a succession of masses and voids creates a kind of imaginary city through which the spectator can wander like a tourist.

The Musée's collection has been considerably enriched by the addition of these works. And we must offer a dual thank you: first to the artists themselves, who chose the Musée, and second to the Art Bank of the Canada Council for the Arts, donor of this group of masterworks by Quebec and Canadian artists.

Suzanne Lemire

**Works being donated to the
Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal by
the Canada Council Art Bank**

Guy Bourassa
Portrait(s) du Prince, 1991
Newspaper, shirt collar, marble tiles, glass
vase, photographs, shoes and various
materials
245 x 220 x 33 cm (ensemble)

Guy Bourassa
Tout d'abord il y a bleu, 1993
Wood, steel and coats
110 x 255 x 10 cm (ensemble)

Geneviève Cadieux
Séquence n° 6, 1980
Photographic emulsion on metal, printing
ink, masking tape, metal rod, nails and bolts
132 x 488 cm

Serge Cournoyer
Zéphire, 1966
Plexiglas and steel
167 x 120 x 77 cm

Tom Dean
Excerpts, from a Description of the Universe,
1985
4 tables, clay, cast iron and various objects
120 x 193 x 91.5 cm (each table)

Jean-Marie Delavalle
Track 1, 1969
Steel
32 x 500 x 381 cm (ensemble)

Jean-Marie Delavalle
Field Sculpture No. 2, 1973-1974
Steel (8 elements)
30.5 x 46.5 x 31 cm (each element)

Peter Gnass
Progression d'un polygone dans le coin, 1978
Graphite on paper and steel
4 drawings: 66 x 99.1 cm (each); sculpture:
41.9 x 127 x 167.6 cm

Gilles Mihalcean
L'Été, 1980
Metal and wood
164 x 90 x 81 cm

Gilles Mihalcean
Saint-Placide la nuit, 1980
Painted plaster, glass, clay, wood
54 x 244 x 244 cm

Laurent Pilon
Cumulatif n° 2, 1986
Polyester resin, metal powder, plaster powder,
sand, fibreglass, cotton and cardboard
203 x 180 cm

Irene F. Whittome
Vancouver-Watertable, 1975-1980
Wood and encaustic
46 x 91 x 137 cm

Irene F. Whittome
Land Vessels 5, 1977-1980
Wood and encaustic (5 elements)
48.2 x 236.2 x 35.5 cm (each element)

The didactic exhibition *Relief*, part of the *Visual Language* series, focuses on a small selection of works from the Musée's Permanent Collection in order to explore the notions of height, width and depth. On view are pieces by Yaacov Agam, Juraj Dobrovic, André Fournelle, Christian Kiopini, Fernand Léger, Norman McLaren, Mario Merola and Robert Roussil.

Light is reflected, shadows are formed, an image emerges: this is relief.

In painting, an illusion of relief is created either by the contrast between light and dark areas, or the effects of impasto – the texture produced by the thickness of the paint itself. In relief printing, ink is applied to the raised part of a block or plate. In intaglio printing, it is the etched or engraved areas that receive the ink.

In sculpture, relief results from the relationships between concave and convex surfaces. According to the degree of projection, reliefs are usually classified as low (*basso rilievo* or bas-relief), medium (*mezzo rilievo*), or high (*alto rilievo*). As the names indicate, in a low relief the elements project only slightly, in a medium relief they are seen in the half-round, and in a high relief they appear almost detached from their support.

Sculpture “in the round” is freestanding sculpture that is fully integrated into its surroundings. Unlike relief sculpture, which must be viewed from the front, sculpture in the round can be explored from a multitude of angles. Its volumes, forms and surfaces interact in three-dimensional space – you can actually walk “round” it!

Luc Guillemette

Relief

Visual Language series

Didactic Exhibitions

Until October 12, 2003



Robert Roussil
Les Buteurs II, 1962
Steel, copper and brass
101.5 x 201.5 x 4.5 cm
Gift of Suzanne, Bernard and Jean-Jacques Janelle
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

The Educational Segment of the Fund-Raising Campaign *The Art of Giving!*

Ten years after its reopening in the downtown core, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal has embarked on a major fund-raising campaign aimed at amassing \$5 million over a five-year period. An impressive campaign team has been assembled, composed of business people from some of Quebec's most prestigious and dynamic organizations.¹ The campaign is focusing on two pivotal features of the Musée's mission and activities: the acquisition of artworks and the development of major educational projects.

The educational segment of the campaign is composed of four programs, each aimed at offering young Quebecers experience of the Musée: a website designed to assist primary school teachers in preparing educational tools related to contemporary art; a program of travelling didactic exhibitions targeting high school students and consisting of works drawn from the Musée's Permanent Collection; the opening up of our art workshops and Musée tours to a larger number of primary and secondary school students; and a specialized contemporary art portal conceived for college and university students.

The goal of the program's first phase is to double the Musée's workshop and tour attendance figures! To help reach this ambitious goal, renovation work is already under way in the Musée's educational wing with a view to opening a brand new workshop space in September.

¹ Marie-José Nadeau (Hydro-Québec) and Jacques Lamarre (SNC-Lavalin) are the campaign's Co-Chairs; Guy Marier (Bell Québec), Jacques Nadeau (Yorkton) and Pierre Jean (Construction Albert Jean Limitée) are respectively the Presidents responsible for Major Donations, Important Donations and Special Donations, and Pierre Seccarecci, (PricewaterhouseCoopers) is serving as the campaign's Treasurer. They are supported by Pierre Bourgie, Chairman of the Musée's Board of Directors, Jean Saucier, President of the Fondation des Amis, Marcel Brisebois, Executive Director, and Katie Whitehead, Director of Development and Fund-Raising.

This inauguration will be marked by a celebration bringing together the whole Musée family, whose new members include Bell Québec, Hydro-Québec, Pratt & Whitney Canada, National Bank of Canada, SNC-Lavalin, Groupe CGI, Saputo, Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec, Microsoft, RBC Banque Royale, Fondation J. A. DeSève, CIBC and Cascades.

Conscious of the Musée's responsibility toward society, the campaign's first corporate donors have been keen to commit themselves to this educational project. Through their vision and values, they will be helping to ensure the emergence of new generations who are bright, curious, inventive and visionary.

Danielle Legentil



Pierre Bourgie, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Guy Marier (Bell Québec), President, Major Donations, Marie-José Nadeau (Hydro-Québec), Co-Chair of the campaign, and Marcel Brisebois, Executive Director of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, accepting a cheque of \$250,000 from Bell for the campaign *The Art of Giving!*

Symposium

Symposium on Spirituality in Media Theory and Practice

September 24 and 25, 2003

Information: (514) 847-6226 or www.macm.org

Contributors to this symposium, which focuses on the idea of a "new" aesthetics for today's art – particularly that which can be classified as technological, electronic or telematic – will examine a range of questions, including the religious foundations of certain approaches to the Internet, the use made of the philosophy of Henri Bergson in various media practices, and the influence of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on cyberspace thinkers. The goal will be to throw light on the powerful spiritual subtext characterizing the various discourses of media theory and practice.

Foundation of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

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Spring 2003

It's hard to believe that summer will soon be upon us. At this time of year, the Foundation usually has pictures and plenty to tell you about our famous Annual Auction, but this year the decision has been taken to postpone the auction until October 16. Mid-fall is a favourable time of year to host such an event, and the new date will also allow the organizers to put together the catalogue well in advance, thus ensuring that collectors – neophytes and veterans alike – have plenty of opportunity to review the works of art. We anticipate that the catalogue will be ready for distribution by the beginning of September. For further information, please contact our Administrative Director, Jean Philippe Bolduc, at (514) 847-6272.

Owing to the reputation and popularity of the Annual Auction, we received hundreds of works. Unfortunately, we are limited to approximately one hundred for the evening, and have therefore been unable to accept all submissions. The selection committee was faced with quite a challenge.

Jean Saucier, President of the Foundation, is also this year's president for the auction organizing committee. As in the past, the event will be held in the Beverley Webster Rolph Hall. The works will be on display to the public on October 15 and 16, 2003.

The Ball

By the time you read this, our Annual Ball will have taken place, but I must mention here how blessed we were to have had so many wonderfully supportive people join our organizing committee. Without them, this event could not have been the success we anticipate.

Before listing the members of our organizing committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them for joining our team and giving us so much support. We are truly grateful that the Musée is able to count on such close friends. So, a huge thank you to the following: Carolina Richer La Flèche, Martha Franco, Lillian Mauer, Marissa Nuss, Michael Goodman, Fernanda Ivanier, Julie Couture, Vanessa Laframboise, Mary Creighton, Nancy Cleman, Giovanna Jatropelli, Lise Laberge, Monique Parent, Carmen Robinson and Marie Sénécal McNiven

A special thank you goes, too, to three individuals who have not only made this event a pleasure to work on, but have, through their ideas and creativity, brought it to a whole new level.

Firstly, Joanne Lefebvre of Paprika. Joanne and her team designed the invitation and all the printed materials. She also joined us in creating the evening's theme and design, and even assisted in choosing the perfect setting. And from an organizational point of view, she went far beyond the call of duty. Thank you Joanne. It was a treat working with you and your team at Paprika.

Next, Vivian Roy, who has her own public relations company. Vivian arrived full of ideas and strategies to ensure unprecedented media attention for the event. She also called upon her "network" of people to tie up all sorts of loose ends. Vivian, your energy and professionalism were outstanding. Thank you.

And last, but certainly not least, Danièle Patenaude. Danièle manages and coordinates private events held at the Musée. Words are inadequate to express our sincere gratitude to Danièle for her tireless attention to every detail of the Ball.

As you are now aware, we were honoured to have Their Excellencies The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, and John Ralston Saul as our guests of honour. We were also so fortunate to have Marie-José Nadeau, Executive Vice President Hydro-Québec, and Jacques Lamarre, President and CEO of SNC-Lavalin, as our co-presidents for the evening.

Katie Whitehead

The Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts, Canada's most prestigious honours in these fields, were created in 1999 by the Governor General and the Canada Council for the Arts, which funds and administers them.

At an official ceremony held on Monday, March 17, 2003, at Rideau Hall, artists Robert Archambeau, Alex Colville, Gathie Falk, Betty Goodwin, Walter Harris and Takao Tanabe, together with educator and arts administrator Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne, were presented with their awards by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, and Jean-Louis Roux, Chairman of the Canada Council for the Arts. As well as a \$15,000 prize, each laureate received an original artwork by A. A. Bronson, winner of a Governor General's Award in 2002.

Jean-Louis Roux pointed out that as well as playing leading roles in the development of the visual arts in Canada, all this year's winners have had significant exposure outside the country and have distinguished themselves on the international scene.

On Tuesday, March 5, in anticipation of this official honour, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal held a press conference at which its director, Marcel Brisebois, paid tribute to the remarkable careers of the two Quebec women being honoured this year – Betty Goodwin, a leading figure on Canada's art scene for the past thirty-five years, and Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne, creator of the Canada Council Art Bank.

Caroline Langevin

Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts



Betty Goodwin and Suzanne Rivard Le Moyne at Rideau Hall
Photo: P. Doyle/CP
Courtesy of the Canada Council for the Arts

Jana Sterbak is one of the foremost figures of Canadian contemporary art. This artist, whose oeuvre has been the object of major exhibitions in Europe and the United States, has for close to twenty-five years been developing an eclectic, complex body of work focusing mainly on the human condition and, in particular, the individual. Cultivating paradox, irony and sometimes even the absurd, Sterbak's art is inspired by both literature and the latest scientific research, as well as her own everyday reality. Crossing over between genres and disciplines and telescoping different subjects, her works frequently find their expression in the meeting of carefully chosen, rather unusual materials and a variety of strategies that always show a great economy of means. Within any given piece, in which contradictory views and divergent ideas are often conveyed, conflicts and tensions also arise. These are marked by a taste for effect and the desire to shake up the viewers in their habits and certainties, as was the case with what is certainly the artist's most controversial work, *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic*, 1987, which featured a dress made of meat on a dressmaker's mannequin; and also with another, almost iconic piece – a picture of a man with a shaved head seen from the back, a bar code clearly visible on his neck. This work, *Generic Man*, was shown in the *Aperto* section of the 1990 *Venice Biennale*.

Jana Sterbak at the 50th *Venice Biennale*



From Here To There, 2003

From Here To There is the title of the artist's most recent creation, a multi-screen video installation presented as Canada's official contribution to the 50th *Venice Biennale*. Composed of a series of short segments, it chronicles the adventures of Stanley the dog in the city of the Doges, as well as on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, the entryway for the first French explorers into what is now Canada. As it happens, 2003 marks the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's exploration of New France – a name given, incidentally, by Giovanni da Verrazzano, an Italian explorer in the service of Francis I of France, on his first voyage to the Americas (1524).

The two places are not only linked by history and the importance of water in their location, they are subjected to the same filmic treatment. The erratic camera movements in this piece bear no relation to the technique now closely identified with the language of experimental cinema of the 1960s and 1970s. Rather, they are the natural outcome of the behaviour and interests of the principal "cameraman," a young terrier called Stanley. A tiny camera – the smallest currently on the market – equipped with a recording device and a system for transmitting pictures and sound, was adapted from its function in industrial and medical technology so that it could be fitted onto the canine. Thanks to his energy and very particular point of view, the most serene republic loses its serenity: monuments are sent up, while the ground gains prominence. This work, entirely devoid of conventional plot development and aesthetic choice, will show spectators life as it appears from a height of 35 cm above the ground.

From Here To There is not only a voyage in space, from Canada to Venice and around the city itself; it is also a voyage in time, coupled with a tribute to the history of cinema. **Gilles Godmer**

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