

MSVU ART GALLERY

Mount Saint Vincent University

2000 - 2001 ANNUAL REPORT



MSVU ART GALLERY
Mount Saint Vincent University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B2M 2J6

2000-2001 Annual Report

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Cover

From *Gather Beneath the Banner: Political and Religious Banners
of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, 1877-1932*

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Every other year I must balance my duties as gallery director and curator with my responsibilities as an instructor in the MSVU Fine Arts Program. In the 2000-2001 period, during which I taught we found it necessary to bring in more exhibitions than usual from external sources, both to reduce the curatorial work load and to diversify the exhibition program. The four major "imported" exhibitions were skilfully animated and promoted by the gallery staff, and enjoyed a favorable reception locally. Two of the exhibitions, *Adrian Piper, a Retrospective* and *Indian Princesses & Cowgirls*, extended our mandate to explore alterity in various contexts. *Gather Beneath the Banner* and *e-textiles* provided insights into historical and contemporary textile technologies, and their intersection with women's histories and haptic aesthetics.

As always the program included exhibitions focused on contemporary Canadian and Nova Scotian art. We continued to mount idiosyncratic "Window Box" projects, such as *Fugit Hora* and *Ad/vice*, off-site in the university library vitrines. Both Window Box exhibitions entailed collaboration with individual members of the Mount faculty. When the exhibitions of the past few years are considered together, the patterns of connection between the exhibitions, and between the exhibitions and the gallery's audiences, indicate an increasing orientation toward Cultural Studies methodologies. In fact, Cultural Studies was approved last Spring as a new undergraduate program at the Mount. The introductory courses will be offered for the first time in Fall 2001, and the Art Gallery will serve as an integral teaching resource of the Cultural Studies major.

The new program came into being after innumerable meetings and stages in the academic approval process. I had the honour of working within the original "Cultural Studies Collective" composed of Mount faculty who shepherded the proposal to the point of implementation.

Another important internal affiliation, this time with the Nancy's Chair in Women's Studies, also bore fruit last year. Nancy's Chair Sharon Batt, the respected women's health activist, collaborated with Curatorial Assistant Heather Anderson, who is also a graduate student in Women's Studies, to produce the popular and acclaimed *Ad/vice* installation in the library. The appropriation of pharmaceutical advertising formats and the zine-style publication proved especially effective in reaching the two main audiences for this project: twenty-something students and the mainstream media. *Ad/vice* promises to reappear in the context of Sharon's work with students at Dalhousie University in the coming year.

A Canada Council grant allowed the gallery to add to its staff a Program Coordinator, Chrystal Clements, who is now entering her second year in the position. Responsible for media relations, audience development and events coordination, Chrystal has worked closely with the Art Gallery Secretary, Traci Scanlan, on integrating new softwares and digital imaging technologies into the Gallery's communications strategy.

Also thanks to Canada Council funding, I was able to attend a professional conference in Texas which encompassed the unequalled Menil Collection in Houston and the remarkable desert "art ranch" at the Chinatti Foundation, Marfa. In Canada I travelled to Saskatoon and Cape Breton. The results of these travels can be seen in the Fall 2001 exhibition program, which celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of the Gallery's founding in 1971.

Ingrid Jenkner
Director

EXHIBITIONS

1 April 2000- 31 March 2001

Exhibitions organized by MSVU Art Gallery are marked with an asterisk.

***Twisted**

26 April to 25 June

Spiral and vortex structures allow artists to engage in what Robert Smithson called "a kind of jeopardized map making--bringing chaos and order into close quarters." *Twisted* included works by three Haligonians who treat spirals cosmologically, mathematically and biologically. As a way of reflecting on adaptation and change, Gerard Choy makes stone sculpture that evokes the randomized spiralling of sea-shell fragments. The sculptor Steve Higgins generates a whirling, purely optical "anarchitecture" in his large charcoal drawings. John Macnab's project is to "motion control" a modified wood lathe so as to shape spiralling surfaces.

Adrian Piper: A Retrospective

Organized by the Fine Arts Gallery, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

8 July to 30 August

Adrian Piper played a formative role in the emergence of Conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s. The African American artist/philosopher continues to influence developments in identity-based art. Paradoxically, her reliance on Minimalist and Conceptual modes enhances the ability of her art to probe intransigent attitudes about race, gender and difference. Piper's objects, installations, performances, videos and sound works establish a compelling relationship between artist and spectator. They permit neither to retreat to the defensive rationalizations that distance art from topics as discomfiting as bigotry and xenophobia.

This exhibition appeared at MSVU Art Gallery in connection with *HX*, the city-wide festival of international contemporary art organized by the Contemporary Art Projects Society.

Indian Princesses & Cowgirls

Stereotypes from the Frontier

Marilyn Burgess & Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, Curators

Circulated by Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver

9 September to 15 October

In this exhibition popular images of specific female types from the "Wild West" revealed the structures of domination through which the West was won. The postcards, calendars and photographs, which were drawn from private collections were grouped stylistically to emphasise concepts of race and femininity that prevailed in the early 1900s. The whitewashed, exoticized Indian maiden of commercial imagination quickly gave rise to her white outlaw counterpart, the "cowgirl, an inherently wild, uncivilized creature who doesn't fit into white notions of femininity." These fantasies, the co-curators argue, demonstrate the need to disguise violent acts of appropriation, which were often genocidal, as gestures of appreciation.

Susan Feindel: Figura

Petra Halkes, Curator

Circulated by Ottawa Art Gallery

21 October to 19 November

Born in Bridgewater, Susan Feindel studied painting at Mount Allison and travelled the world before settling in Ottawa in 1973. She recently returned to Nova Scotia and lives in Chester Basin.

Figura includes paintings and drawings produced since 1983, which re-enact nature's creativity rather than mimicking natural appearances. Referring to the artist's impulse to transform matter, Petra Halkes writes that, "Through paint - with its propensities so similar to water, mud, blood and excrement - Feindel seeks to recover the human kinship with nature. She goes on to suggest that Feindel's images of land and sea contribute, in a uniquely visual and visceral way, to ecological thought.

***Prospect 8: Rebecca Roberts Painting**

22 October through 17 December

Prospect is a series of exhibitions introducing the work of new Nova Scotian artists. In an 8-metre strip composed of 36 individual oil-on-plywood panels, the 22-year-old artist presented radically cropped views of herself in the nude. The setting is a basement; the figure appears in a state of intense self-absorption, appearing to pick compulsively at her thighs and feet. By using painting as a means of self examination, Roberts both channels her compulsive behaviour and re-appropriates the tradition of the female nude into a feminist discursive space.

***26th Annual Mount Community Show**

10 - 17 December

From quilts to baking and from photographs to embroidery - practically anything made by Mount Saint Vincent students, staff, faculty and alumnae was eligible for entry.

e-textiles

Organized by Le Centre des textiles contemporains de Montréal

13 January - 25 February

The first digital computer was modelled on the 19th-century jacquard weaving loom, which operated in binary mode with punch cards. Today, cardless computer-assisted looms are freeing weavers from the manual labour entailed by mechanical jacquard techniques. *e-textiles* includes works as large as 14 feet square that have been jacquard-woven at the specially equipped Centre des textiles contemporains. The technology enables artists to manipulate scanned images and also lets them harness "the errors that stop the machines." Participating artists were: Louise Bérubé, Frances Dorsey and Ruth Sheuing (Canada); Liz Williamson (Australia); Lia Cook, Emily DuBois, Laura Nicholson, Cynthia Schira and Bhakti Ziek (U.S.A.); Junichi Arai and Hideo Yamakuchi (Japan).

Gather Beneath the Banner: Political & Religious Banners of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union 1877-1932

Organized by The Museum for Textiles, Toronto

3 March to 11 April

The 21 embroidered and painted banners in this exhibition proclaim the conservative beliefs and radical activism of one of Canada's most successful women's organizations, the W.C.T.U. Used in meetings and spectacular public parades, the banners served as billboards announcing women's entry into public life as moral entrepreneurs. The W.C.T.U. positioned itself at the forefront of national campaigns for Prohibition and women's suffrage. In 1915 W.C.T.U. member Nellie McClung (Famous Five co-petitioner in the 1929 Persons Case) led the Edmonton Prohibition Parade of 12,000 reformers under the banners of the "White Ribbon Sisters."

***Julie Duschenes**

Stories That Own Me

3 March to 11 April

A graduate of N.S.C.A.D. (1975) and U.B.C. (1981), Julie Duschenes teaches visual art at the University of Lethbridge. The painting series *Stories That Own Me* (1996-2000) portrays the artist and her partner in domestic situations reminiscent of paintings by the 17th-century Dutch master, Jan Vermeer. Within the paintings appear texts recounting government acts that have affected Duschenes' life: the Persons Case, refugee internment camps, and legislation concerning homosexual rights. Duschenes' vivid self-portraits situate lesbian citizens and spouses within the purview of artistic and legislative canons.

WINDOW BOX EXHIBITIONS

C.H.F.

Photographs of Carol Hoorn Fraser by John Fraser

In Commemoration of Carol Fraser

1 August - 1 October

A two-part exhibition commemorating the Nova Scotian artist Carol Hoorn Fraser has been installed in the Mount Saint Vincent University Library. *C.H.F.*, a series of photographs of Carol Fraser by her husband John Fraser, is on display in the vitrine in the hallway at the back of the library. Also on view in the library are drawings and a painting by Carol Fraser from the University's Permanent Collection.

***FUGIT HORA**

Rubbings from Puritan Gravestones

15 October - 25 February

These rubbings were done in the 1970s by Dr Nancy Chesworth (MSVU Tourism & Hospitality Management), in Massachusetts graveyards. Spanning the period 1678 through 1758, the gravestones represented in the exhibition are exceptions to the Puritans' strict rule forbidding graven images. The self-taught stone carvers who were active in rural New England did not try to mirror theological dogma. Their project, which answered a need on the part of bereaved families, was to express in visual symbols the joys of life to come and the beauties of an invisible world. Nova Scotians may recognize similarities to folk art.

***Ad/vice**

8 March - 30 June

In Canada, advertising prescription drugs to the public is illegal. Drug campaigns promoting *Alesse*, *Diane*, *Zyban*, and *Viagra* are challenging Canada's Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act. Recently Canada's Minister of Health Allan Rock said that he considers some of these ads legal. We disagree. *AD/VICE*, an exhibition created by the MSVU Art Gallery and the Nancy's Chair in Women's Studies, exploded the ads and explored the questions they raised through an exhibition and a zine-style publication.

CIRCULATING EXHIBITION

Ad/vice

- Boston School of Public Health (Boston Women's Health Book Collective), Massachusetts (September 2001)

PUBLICATIONS

Catalogues, brochures and information handouts published by the Art Gallery serve as primary reference and interpretive resources, particularly when they document contemporary art. The MSVU Art Gallery produces informative brochures or illustrated catalogues for most of the exhibitions it organizes, and provides externally published documentation with exhibitions borrowed from outside sources. Publications are distributed from the Gallery and by ABC Art Books Canada, Montreal. Sales support Gallery programs. The Gallery published the following titles in 2000 - 2001

***Taboos, Titillations & Thrills* 2000**

Essay by Andrea Mantin, 8 pages, 8 b & w illustrations.

***Twisted* 2000**

Essay by Ingrid Jenkner, 8 pages, 3 b & w illustrations, 2 color.

***Adrian Piper A Retrospective* 2000**

Brochure, Chrystal Clements, writer, 6 b & w illustrations

***Prospect 8: Rebecca Roberts* 2000**

Essay by Ingrid Jenkner, 4 pages, 1 b & w illustration, 2 color.

***FUGIT HORA* 2000**

Essay by Chrystal Clements; 4 pages, 1 b & w illustration (brochure)

***Julie Duschenes: Stories That Own Me* 2001**

Essay by Ingrid Jenkner, 20 pages, 3 color, 4 b & w illustrations

***Ad/vice* 2001**

Essays by Sharon Batt, Jessica Bailey and Heather Anderson, 24 pages, b & w illustrations (zine).

Newsletter

2 issues: June 2000 & January 2001, illustrated (brochure).

www.textstyle.net/msvuart/ (ongoing)

Written by Ingrid Jenkner, designed and maintained by Maurice Michaud, illustrated in colour.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Fall and Winter semesters

Coffee Hour

A casual Wednesday morning drop-in reception, *Coffee Hour* was held once or twice during the course of each exhibition in the Fall and Winter semesters (eight occasions in total). Conceived of as an "opening" for Mount staff, students and faculty, *Coffee Hour* provides social access to the exhibitions.

28 April at 7:30 pm

Opening

The exhibitions *taboos*, *titillations & thrills* and *Twisted* opened with words from the curators Andrea Mantin and Ingrid Jenkner.

13 May

Studio Tour

Gallery staff led an informal tour of artists' and artisans' studios in downtown Halifax, finishing with lunch at Studio 21.

9 July at 2 pm

Lecture

The distinguished black cultural scholar Dr Kobena Mercer spoke about "Decentring and Recentring: Adrian Piper's Spheres of Influence." The author of *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies*, this British critic also contributed to the exhibition catalogue *Adrian Piper A Retrospective*.

8 August at 2 pm.

Discussion Panel

Decide Who You Are: Dialogues with the art of Adrian Piper (moderated by Kim Cain with Chrystal Clements, Blye Frank, Sylvia Hamilton) was held in the Piper exhibition.

Education Intensive

In August, teachers participating in the summer intensive program were brought to the *Adrian Piper Retrospective* by three different Education faculty for extended discussion and study. Chrystal Clements and Kim Cain acted as tour guides and resource personnel.

Lecture

Dr Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, a Chippewa Northern Native Communications scholar, gave a lecture concerning the Indian Princess image and its historical effects on native women, in conjunction with the exhibition *Indian Princesses and Cowgirls*.

22 October

Artist's Talk

On the occasion of the opening of *Figura*, Nova Scotian artist Susan Feindel presented an informal walking tour of the exhibition.

29 October

Panel Discussion

The exhibition curator Petra Halkes, Randi Warne, (MSVU Religious Studies) and Gordon Fader (BIO geologist) engaged in a public discussion (moderated by Heather Anderson) of "a process description of reality".

22 October at 2 pm.

Opening

Artist Rebecca Roberts attended the informal reception opening *Prospect*.

23 November at noon

Opening

From quilts to baking and from photographs to embroidery - practically anything made by Mount Saint Vincent students, staff, faculty and alumnae was eligible for entry. The exhibition continued through 10 December

13 January, 7:30-9pm

Lecture

During the opening reception, Louise Bérubé, organizer of the exhibition and director of the Centre des Textiles, will give a lecture on jacquard and the emergence of a new weaving language.

March 8

Purity, Piety and Disobedience

On International Women's Day, Nellie McClung, Edith Archibald (Nova Scotia W.C.T.U.), their supporters and opponents, reenacted an old-time "parlour meeting" in the Art Gallery.

11 March at 2pm.

Artist's Talk

Julie Duschenes gave a presentation elaborating on the *Stories* and her current work.

MEDIA RESPONSE (April 1, 2000 - March 31, 2001)

John McNab's *Compound Conical Column 2000*. "Sure Things," *The Coast* (27 April - 4 May 2000).

Sharon Workman. "Let's Twist," *The Chronicle-Herald* (7 May 2000) p. C-8.

"Mount Staff Leads Tour of artists' studios," *The Chronicle-Herald* (11 May 2000) p. B-7.

Gillian Thorpe. "Time to Pay Respect to the Piper: Adrian Piper looks at racism..." *The Coast* (6-13 July 2000) p. 20.

Victoria Palmer, "Interview with artist James Shirley," *Soulmagazine.com* (e-zine) (Fall 2000).

Marilyn Smulders, "Taste the pain of racism at aggressive Mount exhibit," *The Daily News* (27 July 2000).

Nyna Cropas, "Twisted and Taboos, Titillations and Thrills," *Arts Atlantic* No. 67 (Summer/Fall 2000), pp. 6-8.

"Indian Princesses and Cowgirls," Ingrid Jenkner interviewed on CKDU Radio *Artspeak*, live, 22 September 2000.

"Good Prospect," *The Daily News* (20 October 2000): 30.

Marilyn Smulders, "Artist connects with land, sea," *The Daily News* (9 November 2000): 32.

Elissa Barnard, "The healing arts," *The Sunday Herald* (12 November 2000): B2.

Marilyn Smulders "Beautiful but private, Roberts reveals personal habits in first art show," *The Daily News* (23 November 2000): 32.

"N.S. Arts Council hands out \$146,740 in grants," *Chronicle Herald* (7 December 2000): C9

Elissa Barnard, "Compulsive art: Roberts paints comfort, anxiety of private acts," *The Sunday Herald* (17 December 2000): B2.

Peter Duffy, "Gravestone rubbings make Duffy all metaphysical," *The Sunday Herald* (13 January 2001).

Stephen Horne, "Adrian Piper: A Retrospective," *Art Press* (Winter 2001):

Elissa Barnard, "e-textiles excites," *The Sunday Herald* (21 January 2001): B2.

"Purity, Piety & Disobedience on International Women's Day" CBC Radio 1, *Mainstreet*, 8 March 2001.

Lezlie Lowe, "Out on her Own: artist Julie Duschenes paints personal and political Stories," *The Coast* (8 March 2001): 14.

Marilyn Smulders, "Mixing mystery and the mundane," *The Daily News* (15 March 2001): 34.

Peter Duffy, "Spunky Lady My New Best Friend" *The Chronicle Herald* (22 March 2001): A10.

Stella Lord, "Let Us Count the Ways Women Make a Difference Through Their Art" *Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women Women's Writes* Vol. 6, No.1 (March 2001): 9

ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2000-2001

Christine Bland
MSVU Student

Terry Paris
Head Librarian

Dr. Josette Deleas
Professor, Fine Arts

Carlee Portolesi
MSVU Student Union

Frances Dorsey
Artist

Dr. Judith Woodsworth
Vice-President, Academic

Rebecca Fisk
Artist

Dr. Rhoda Zuk
Assistant Professor, English

Lara Martina Harbord
Teacher, CP Allen High School, Bedford

ACQUISITIONS 2000-2001

Michelle Gay

Portraits from the End of the Day 1997
ink on paper (from a suite of 10 drawings)
76.2 x 55.88 cm

Purchased with matching funds from
the Canada Council Acquisition Assistance
Program, 2000

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ink on paper (from a suite of 10 drawings)
76.2 x 55.88 cm

Purchased with matching funds from
the Canada Council Acquisition Assistance
Program, 2000

Nancy Edell

Art Nun Portrait I 1993
hook wool, oil over
acrylic on plywood panels
with cut-out relief and painted
decorative mouldings
left and right panels each 32 x 32 cm
centre panel 32.5 x 32.5 cm
Purchased with donated funds and a
Canada Council Acquisition Assistance
grant in honour of retired
MSVU Art Gallery Director
Mary Sparling, 2000

Peter Dykhuis

Nov 28 09:552 1999
encaustic & enamel on 5 panels
Purchase, 2001

ART GALLERY PERSONNEL

STAFF

Full Time

Director

Ingrid Jenkner (BA, Toronto; MA London)

Part-Time

Secretary

Traci Scanlan (BOAD, M.S.V.U.)

Curatorial Assistant

Andrea Mantin (BFA, N.S.C.A.D.) to July 2000
Heather Anderson (BFA, E.C.I.A.D.) through
March 2001

Term Employees

Chrystal Clements, Program Co-ordinator

Weekend Attendant

Andrew Edgar-Gradstein

STAFF ACTIVITIES

Heather Anderson took part in the National Gallery's "Getting Technical" museum orientation workshops in April 2001. Through MSVU Art Gallery, Anderson also received formal safety training in fall protection practices and equipment use. As a member of the feminist artist collective, The Dirty Dishes, she participated in the exhibition *Sweet Perversions* at the Khyber Centre for the Arts, Halifax, February, 2001.

Chrystal Clements is an artist whose exhibition credits during the past year include *Sister Visions III: Through Our Eyes* Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, September, 2000; *Cultural Memory: The House That Mom Built* Far & Wide 2000: The Millennium Show, June, 2000, University College of Cape Breton Art Gallery.

Ingrid Jenkner continued to serve as Secretary on the executive of her employee group, the Administrative and Professional Association. In 2000-2001 she taught two half-unit courses in the Fine Arts Program. Also at the Mount, she coordinated the faculty collective which proposed and won internal approval of the new Cultural Studies undergraduate program. Since 1999 she has acted as Secretary to the executive of the Contemporary Art Projects Society, a non-profit group of Halifax arts workers who mounted the *HX* contemporary art festival in 2000. She continues to serve on the Halifax Inter-University Film Studies Minor Committee. In 2001 she participated in peer assessment at the Nova Scotia Arts Council and also served on a peer jury of the Canada Council for the Arts, Visual Arts Section. Jenkner is currently Chair of the Committee on Contract Curators, Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization.

GRANTS AND REVENUE

1 April 2000 - 31 March 2001

Canada Council for the Arts

Assistance to Art Museums and Public Galleries 75,000.00

Acquisition Assistance 2,200.00

(Michelle Gay, Nancy Edell)

Visiting Artists Assistance 1,000.00

(Dr. Kobena Mercer)

Nova Scotia Arts Council

Production/Presentation Assistance 4,450.00

Do Try This At Home

Human Resources Development Canada

Summer Student (Kim Cain) 630.00

Other

Catalogue Sales 1,500.00

Miscellaneous 100.00

TOTAL \$84,880.00

MSVU ART GALLERY MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY

Statement of Purpose

Through its exhibitions and programs, the Gallery functions as a visual arts resource to the University, communities served by the University, Metro residents and art publics everywhere. Admission is always free of charge.

The Art Gallery reflects the University's educational aims by devoting a significant part of its activities to the representation of women as cultural subjects and producers. This program focus is balanced with exhibitions on themes in visual culture which are relevant to university academic programs and/or constituencies served by the Art Gallery. Artists and artisans from the Atlantic region are well represented, often in the early stages of their careers. The Gallery's exhibitions and programs are funded in part by the Nova Scotia Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Since many contemporary artists treat artmaking as a form of inquiry, the university art galleries are uniquely positioned to promote access to their work. The MSVU Gallery aims to foster informed, critical responses to works of contemporary and historical art, in keeping with its academic setting. Gallery publications, lectures and talks by visiting artists and scholars are announced in the semi-annual Newsletter.

The Gallery encourages interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge, and its exhibitions are used by students and faculty in their course work. Unique in Nova Scotia, the Gallery's Curatorial Assistant program prepares university graduates for museum careers. In addition, the gallery functions as a lab for the curatorial studies course offered every other year by the Gallery Director.

On behalf of the University, the Gallery manages a collection of art that reflects priorities set by the exhibition program and the University's mission. Many works can be viewed in the E. Margaret Fulton Communications Centre and other campus buildings. The special collection of pottery by Nova Scotia ceramist and Mount alumna Alice Hagen is also displayed on campus.

2001