

et à la direction des Affaires culturelles du Ministère des Affaires extérieures donne cependant une importance exagérée au budget d'*OKanada* par rapport aux autres projets subventionnés pour la diffusion de l'art canadien à l'étranger. Il est important de réduire la disparité entre les budgets octroyés sous forme de subventions au secteur privé et ceux dont disposent les initiatives gouvernementales d'une part; d'autre part, on doit prévoir pour des expositions et autres manifestations d'envergure en Europe par exemple des budgets comparables à ceux dont bénéficient les Européens en pareil cas. Il faudrait aussi prévoir l'organisation de telles expositions au Canada même, afin de développer une expertise en ce sens. Ce sont là quelques points essentiels à retenir en vue de la formation d'une politique culturelle cohérente et efficace.

6. Il y aurait beaucoup à dire au sujet du catalogue en deux volumes publié par l'Académie, préparé par le Conseil des Arts et édité par Robert Stacey. Notons entre autres l'aspect kitsch des couvertures où sont reproduites l'affiche "OK" et une photographie de danseurs en habits de jogging, la disparité des tendances intellectuelles des auteurs réunis dans cet ouvrage (caractéristique du manque d'engagement actuel du Conseil des Arts), l'absence de textes de présentation qui donneraient une cohérence à l'ensemble. En somme, une occasion ratée d'amorcer une réflexion significative, armée d'outils intellectuels contemporains sur l'art canadien et son histoire.

KÜNSTLER AUS KANADA : RÄUME UND INSTALLATIONEN

Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart
February 10 - March 20, 1983



Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Public Projection on the "Victory Column"*, Schlossplatz, Stuttgart, West Germany. (Colour slide projected on trunk of column)

The projection was realized on the evening on February 13, 1983, three weeks before the National Election in West Germany. The deployment of the new generation of U.S. built nuclear missiles in West Germany as planned by NATO was the main issue of the election campaign.

The "Victory Column" functions as the main landmark in the city of Stuttgart. It was erected in 1846 to commemorate the military achievements of King Wilhelm II of Württemberg on the 25th anniversary of his rule.

Public Projection: Krzysztof Wodiczko
Production: Heinz Nagler
Historical research: Heinz Nagler, Leslie Sharpe
Photo collaboration: Reinhard Trocken-Müller
Technical and organizational assistance: friends from Canadian and Stuttgart art communities.

K.W.●

Walking down the Königstrasse, the pedestrian heart of Stuttgart, it's the Canadian flags that first catch the eye; they hang from the city hall and in the store windows. Travel agents display them to promote the city-wide travel quiz about Canada, shoppers bustle about, carrying bags designed with the national symbol of Canada.

These are indeed *Kanadische Tage — Canada Days* — in Stuttgart. Everywhere you turn in the centre of town, you meet a small piece of home. Even the West German banks are in the act, offering stuffy Canadian banks a good lesson in promotion by sponsoring exhibitions of Canadian art in their foyers.

Happily, there is a coherence to what Canada is doing in Stuttgart. Canada Days consciously offers something for everyone... What a contrast to the recent, unhappy *OKanada* exhibition in West Berlin. *OKanada* was assembled by a committee, or a series of committees...

Canadian organizers naturally headed for the banks in planning Canada Days; just as naturally, the banks displayed interest. Better still, the banks each held receptions to kick off their exhibits. The happy marriage of self-promotion and culture...

All is not culture in *Canada Days*. Behind the whole idea lies the hope of interesting investors, traders and tourists in Canada.

Jeffrey Simpson, *The Globe and Mail*

The notion of coming to a country that was far away, new and different was an exotic one at first. And I wasn't primarily thinking of artists. Sometimes I even felt that the purpose of my visit, to prepare an exhibition of contemporary Canadian art, was an interference.

Tilman Osterwold

On the one hand, there is the "natural history" of Canadian art. It goes like this: first there is the fact of geography; then nationhood and the national "interest" of railway building; an impulse which is transformed in electronic communications systems; and further expressed in the interconnection of federal funding and the development of the parallel art gallery system. It is a positive history, not critical; and everything is on the surface, natural and unproblematic. Fundamentally, it is a *bureaucratic* history and explanation as a justification of what exists. Art is an unproblematic reflection of this existence; it serves as exportable value. When our whole history is marked by a colonial dependency, we continue to export the *form* of this dependency in the bureaucratic apparatus of our art.

On the other hand, there are the *faits divers* from West German newspapers this winter. In these scare stories from the popular press of wolf attacks in northern Canada, symbols of the German imagination coincided with a popular myth of Canada.

Between the two is Tilman Osterwold, the director of the Kunstverein in Stuttgart, the capital of the *staat* of Württemberg in conservative south-west Germany. In two blitzes across the country in fall 1981 and spring 1982, Osterwold, with a list composed somehow between himself and The Canada Council, chose fifteen representatives of contemporary Canadian art. At first, to outsiders as we remain in the production of our own culture, it appeared interesting: one individual, a European curator (in the year of *Documenta*), composing an exhibition for Europe instead of the bureaucratic selection destined for Berlin. The exhibition was to highlight younger artists, but not "new image" — that would not lend a profile (for whom?) in painting conscious Germany. As it turned out, more than half of the artists were of Osterwold's generation. (Moreover,

much of the work was completed and exhibited between 1979-1981.) Let us say that Osterwold recognized himself, or only had himself in mind. Subtitled "Rooms and Installations", the exhibition was mainly male and sculptural. Even the women artists could be associated with a "male" tradition of sculpture. It therefore only confirmed the male organization of contemporary cultural production in Germany with its regressive return to painting and figurative wood sculpture. And it legitimated the cultural, financial and educational institutions circling the patriotic and patriarchal monument to war and leadership — the "Victory Column" commemorating King Wilhelm II of Württemberg — in front of the Kunstverein.

Of course, Osterwold's projection into the other cannot be too recognizable an identity when it returns home. John McEwen originally wished to show *Buck*, his most recently exhibited work. Osterwold wanted *The Distinctive Line Between One Subject and Another* from 1980. This sculpture which opened the space of the exhibition and served as illustration for the first local review signals the real theme of the exhibition: the two wolves confirm Canada as exotic, nature at its wildest. To show *Buck*, a sculptural installation part of which is a steel figure of a male deer, would bring that romanticism home to Europe, not to domesticate it, but to display it as an ideological projection and disguise of the social realities of contemporary Germany. (Stuttgart is an industrial centre with a high proportion of immigrant workers.) To show *Buck* under the dome of the Kunstverein topped by a golden buck would make that identity and romanticism too clear. The deer is an omnipresent symbol in Germany; and the site of the Kunstverein is said to be the location of an old hunting lodge. One artist has called the cultural bureaucrats who occupy the present buildings "little deer". In Germany Tilman Osterwold is a "little deer"; in North American he is a hunter. In Stuttgart, the exhibition was called "Tilman's Garden" in a review; in Canada, Osterwold is the discoverer.

Since nature is lost for these Germans in the intense industrialization of their country (and in the subjective internalization of industry's constraints), "nature" becomes the site of the contradictions of that ruthless technical process and alienated social relations. "Nature" is ideology; and New World Canada is the extreme case or as extreme as can be made into a cultural exchange. Thus the social contradictions this ideology covers in Germany is repeated for Canada. Except now artists are the objects of this social relation and domination: guest artists instead of "guest workers".

Artists were to serve this ideology. They were treated as ideological objects, as the irrational entities that secrete the magical irrationality of art; but they were ready-formed in selection and ordering in exhibition. ("[Artists] are different in nature, but they come into contact with people who view their work, with the public." "They are like magical stage directors", Osterwold says of Lyne Lapointe and Stephen Cruise. "Their stage is the subconscious which they reveal creatively without having to objectivate it.") Any deviancy from what was expected or planned (that is to say plans were not made; promises were) could not be accommodated or tolerated. ("Brian [Boigon] arrives on the scene without baggage, without plans, and reacts spontaneously to the situation with the materials of the house", says Osterwold in the completely pretentious ego-gratification that passes for the catalogue essay, a mutual interview with Bruce Ferguson. In fact, Boigon arrived with carefully detailed plans from which he wished to build. Consequently, his work could not be accommodated.) Many of the artists were lied to about the assistance they would receive; others were given assurances that were not kept. In the end the exhibition came off, but on the backs of artists. Meant to be an exhibition of installations, the Kunstverein was incompetent to build them and too parsimonious to fund them properly. Artist's work was torn down in the case of Brian Boigon; Tony Brown's installation had its slides thrown away; Spring Hurlbut was given a derelict hired from temporary help instead of the two tech-

nicians promised and the wrong materials; Krzysztof Wodiczko was not given enough money or assistance to properly complete his public projections; etc. Artists were left on their own. Some artists, however, were treated in a hierarchy and therefore have no perception of the real social relations enacted there. On the day of the opening and after, almost a third of the pieces were not up due to bureaucratic difficulties and obstructions that the artists encountered. But by the next morning the curator had escaped once again to nature, this time to Tunisia for a holiday. (The exhibition, incidentally, was opened by the mayor of Stuttgart, the son of General Rommel.)

Social reality is mystified in a mystification of nature. The disguised domination of that nature that finds expression in these individualist fantasies is repeated against the artists: they are treated as their objects, even though they were there installing their work. (We can repeat what Marx said, that "the relationships between producers, within which the social characteristics of their labour are manifested, take on the form of a social relationship between the products of labour.") At the same time in West Germany, another version of nature was being contested by the Green party and ecology movement in the federal elections. This was no irrational return to nature but a critique of East-West military blocs directed against the capitalist mode of production. Osterwold and his bureaucratic type protest against a "rational" and "objectivist" art (i.e., a critical art) which to them reflects the rational techniques of industrial society. Osterwold protests rational technical procedures within a limited sphere within the irrational totality of capitalism. It is the former that determines the division of labour of the specialist bureaucrat, and the latter totality that directs his fantasies. Osterwold is a cultural ideologue who serves the dominant order in the downturn of the economic miracle (and protects Europe's cultural heritage from the demands of the workers in the economy) by decontextualizing this art and bringing it into his own thematic order. The way he has chosen it, there is no critical art here. I do not want to criticize the Canadian work because of the ways it was limited by the exhibition as much as by the curator's framework of choice. Work that involved language was chosen more for its denial of language's conventional and communicative potentials; semiotic work was chosen more for its reinforcement of fashion than its deconstruction of systems. Installations were conceived, not in their critical and contextual history, but as symbolic universes ("Contemporary art releases us from all commitments."); or as a type of musical phenomenology, even though that irrationality is based on a measure (ratio). I leave it to Theodor Adorno, one of the anti-authoritarian representatives of the Frankfurt School, to set this irrationality in its place:

Works of art which by their existence take the side of the victims of a rationality that subjugates nature are even in their protest constitutively implicated in the process of rationalization itself. Were they to try to disown it, they would become both esthetically and socially powerless: mere clay. The organizing, unifying principle of each and every work of art is borrowed from that very rationality whose claim to totality it seeks to defy.

PHILIP MONK

* The author is indebted to the artists for passing on information and especially to Krzysztof Wodiczko.

The artists in the exhibition included: Brian Boigon, Tony Brown, David Buchan, Melvin Charney, Barry Cogswell, Carole Condé/Karl Beveridge, Stephen Cruise, Spring Hurlbut, General Idea, Lyne Lapointe, John Massey, John McEwen, Al McWilliams, Rober Racine, Krzysztof Wodiczko.

● This projection was not part of the exhibition *Artists from Canada*.

APPROPRIATION/EXPROPRIATION

Mount St. Vincent Art Gallery
March 11 - April 3

As a thematic show *Appropriation/Expropriation* began with the gallery director's intrigue for what was said to be the most fashionable catch word in the lexicon of current art. For the most part though, the show did not demonstrate the concept of appropriation as currently found in photographic practices supported by such periodicals as *October* magazine. There were few works that could be primarily aligned with this rather mute strategy of critique and deconstruction. In individual works the incumbent questions of possession, authorship, originality, authenticity and art history took a secondary role to a primary one of social criticism. Many of the pieces were intended to confront specific issues in an explanatory mode or to unmask ideology at work in culture.

Many of the pieces in the show were intended to criticize social circumstance. For example, there was a poster by Barbara Louder and Cathy Quinn criticizing First Choice pay t.v.; Bob Bean's photo essay on cultural imperialism and the motivations for cultural donations; a video tape by Wendy Geller butting media stereotypes against reality situations; a videotape by Susan McEachern in which television representations of the family, marriage and work are contrasted with sociological studies of the same situations; and a photo essay by Gary Kibbins on the American exportation of industry to its unofficially colonized countries. As such, it seems that most of these statements suffered from the group exhibition. With that shared environment and the thematic umbrella, the common strategy, appropriation, became the meaning. The implication of a common base was not only inferred but enforced. That each work supports the other, emphasizes what, in this case, can only be the lowest common denominator of meaning. Specific social circumstances, obviously the main concern of several artists, were distanced, if not lost, through collective presentation and the generalizing contexts of the theme and that gallery. Appropriation was in many cases a strategy for the production or construction of meaning and was clearly the means to the end. That end, given the right context, would certainly dominate. The preoccupation in this particular context, was inappropriately art-worldish in its orientation to a pseudo-formalist issue rather than a critique of societal conventions. That the theme could readily override the individual work was evidenced by the appropriation of the entire show as work of art and a vehicle of 'application/explication' in a locally produced and distributed poster. (Bustin, Doull, James, 1983)

Gary Kibbins exhibited a letter and a pamphlet, the latter of which had been previously made available in the stands of local banks. It used the logo for the Institute of Canadian Bankers to sketch out a sardonic relationship between the money, anal and religious complex. The logo became a diagram of a sphincter muscle among the commodity advertisements of gloves, a reproduction of Michelangelo's *God Touching Adam* and quotes from N.O. Brown on anality, sacred power and capitalism. Gary had accompanied the pamphlet in the gallery with a letter to the regional office of the Institute of Canadian Bankers stating complicity with the request that the work be publically available only within the art gallery context. The letter demonstrated the public willingness to continue the myth of artistic licence within the gallery institution and the identification of the gallery as a non-social space, coupled with recognition of the gallery's ineffectuality as a propagator of corporate insults.

Like the Kibbin's piece, several works in the show had been, or were being distributed elsewhere. The poster by Quinn and Louder, *First Choice is No Choice*, had been pasted in the downtown core at the same time



Sheena Gourlay, *Women's Washroom*, installation view. Photo: Robert Bean.

that it appropriated the gallery and the catalogue as distribution systems. The strategy of appropriation within the text and the use of the art systems to distribute the work was a clear emphasis on gallery functions with no deference to aesthetic dispositions. It was a functionalist piece in that it used the gallery, not as a 'never world' of aesthetic contemplation, but as an instrument of publicization.

Ferguson's *Thousand of Pennies* which were scattered on the floor had been much more convincingly and meaningfully displayed at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary as *A Million Pennies in a Pile*. The difference at the Mount St. Vincent Art Gallery was the lack of glamour concentrated on the work and the very different economic context. The previous exhibit conversed within associations of Albertan nouveau riche and the candid pretention of the Glenbow stairwell sculpture. At the Mount, however, the pennies were a casual reminder of the exchange value of even the most self-effacing art work and forced the withdrawal of the preciousness and respect usually accorded both artworks and money, as the art going audience shuffled through the scattered pennies.

One of the best pieces in this exhibit was Sheena Gourlay's. It was nominally identified within the exhibition space but mapped out its own territory in the washrooms outside the gallery. Its self-imposed isolation from the group exhibit avoided the problems of sharing contemplative space with works questioning (or not questioning) other issues. The piece consisted of a symbol for 'woman', like the one on the washroom door, with an accompanying text asking: "When you identify the meaning of the sign as difference, are you not defined within that identification?" (In the men's washroom, on the only mirror.) "When you identify with the meaning of the sign, are you not defined by its meaning to others?" (In the women's washroom, the