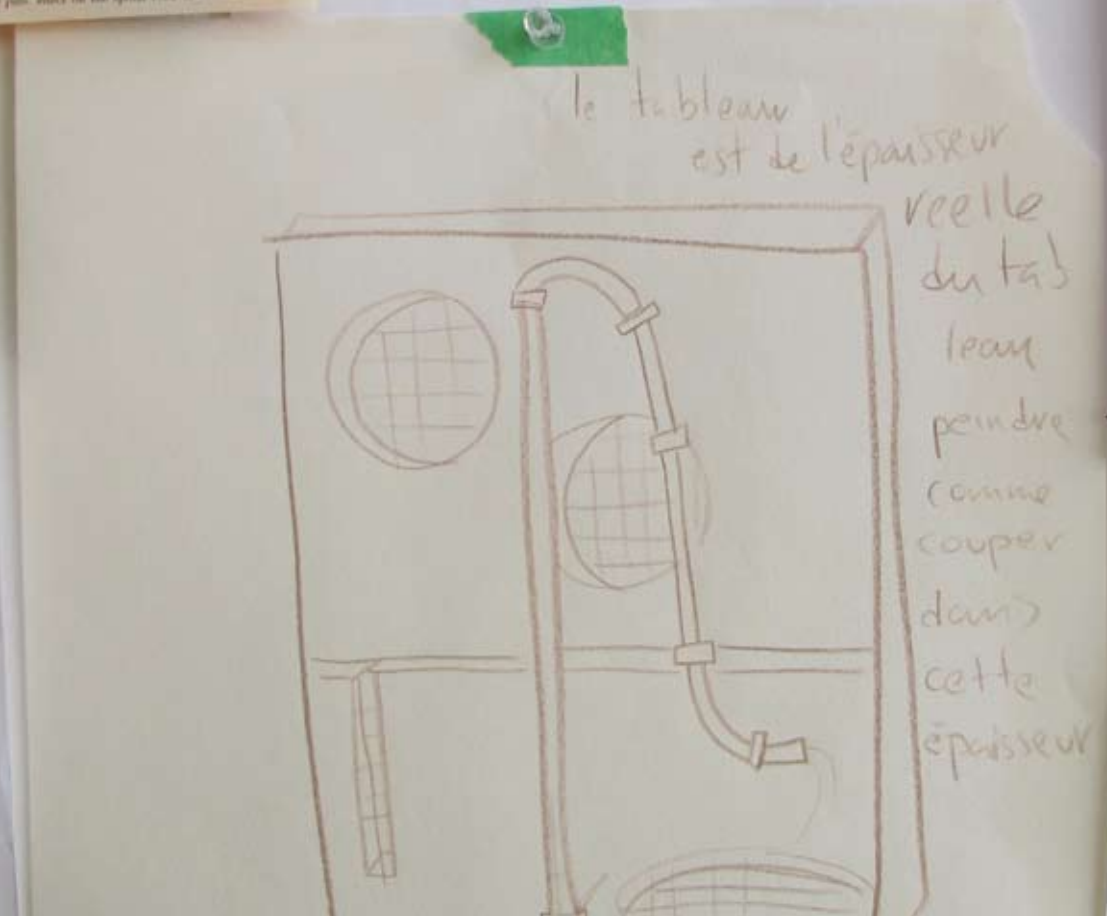


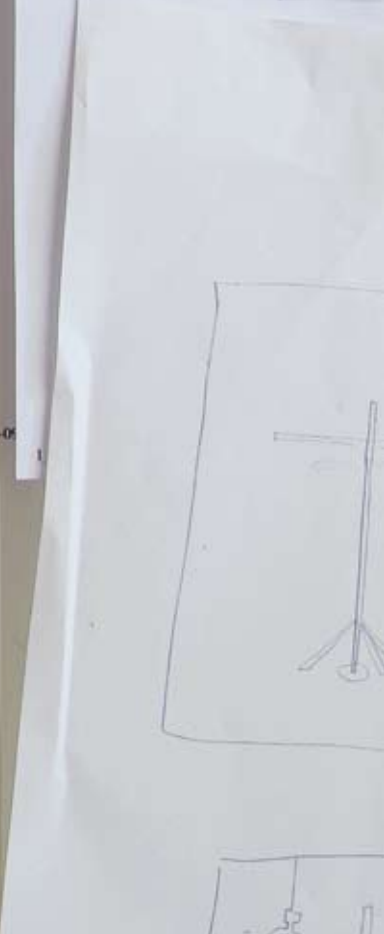


ON BRAIN is shown in this drawing. The best medical that an increasing dosage of sleeping pills first affects the (shade), causing drowsiness and sleep. Then mid-brain and rest are also affected until consciousness is blocked out, with the medulla (dark red), which controls respiration, with the pills' effect on the spinal cord to cause death.

Henry_David_Thoreau.jpg (Image JPEG, 623x768 pixels) - Rodime... http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/bu/Henry_Davi...



le tableau
est de l'épaisseur
veille
du tab
leau
peindre
(comme
couper
dans)
cette
épaisseur



CYNTHIA GIRARD:
**THE BLACK
GLOVE
AND THE
PEACOCK**

Curated by Amanda Cachia

DUNLOP ART GALLERY
June 26 - August 29, 2010



Cynthia Girard in her peacock costume

*The Black Glove
and the Peacock,*
Dunlop Art Gallery



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ART'S GEOPHYSICS

by Helen Marzolf

WHEN CYNTHIA GIRARD SLIPPED HER PAINTER'S HAND INTO THE GLOVE OFFERED BY

W.C. McCargar's strange painting *Untitled (Morning After the Night Before)*, she caused me to re-examine the self directed art of Stanley Brunst, Ann Harbuz, Roland Keevil, W.C. McCargar, Fred Moulding, Sam Spencer and Jan Wyers all over again. The sexy Girard-McCargar's gloved hand is protected, a hand that shuns direct touch. It leaves no prints and no forensic trail at the scene. It is feminine and deliciously domineering, derailing any tidy instrumentalist description or diagram. Everything, everything about looking at Girard's paintings careens into interiority, geographies of time and place and mind, places cloaked or repressed. The glove is the project's fulcrum and its detonator.

Cynthia Girard picked these artworks and elder colleagues strategically. She must have sensed a kinship with their individuated intensity. More importantly, all of these Saskatchewan artists, like Girard ". . . create two spaces within one, as a slippage, as another reality."

Brunst, Harbuz, Keevil, McCargar, Moulding, Spencer and Wyers are all nationally recognized artists of the generation that witnessed a momentous shift from land-based economies to industrial capitalism. Girard similarly works during a transformative time: economies, politics and communication are seeping away from heavy industrial solidity, to migrate into the cloud as corporate culture globalizes; politics is recast as a neo feudal state and consumerist revelation distracts everyone. Girard's art rides the crest of the wonder and fear of catapulting change, just as the earlier generation of Saskatchewan artists' work probed the conflicted condition of colonization—from inside the colonizer's gaze. Girard's paintings operate on a saturated blue screen, suggestive of the ubiquitous 'hearth light' of contemporary western culture: the LED screen. Brunst, Harbuz, Keevil, McCargar, Moulding, Spencer and Wyers anchored their paintings with an explicit horizon line, the shorthand for the foundation of livelihood and culture in twentieth century Saskatchewan. Brunst, Harbuz, Keevil, McCargar, Moulding, Spencer and Wyers leavened their art with generous spaces where the motivated viewer encounters a live set of images from which new stories and personal insight might be ignited.

Maybe it is inevitable that artists like Brunst, Harbuz, Keevil, McCargar, Moulding, Spencer and Wyers are associated with mythologies of settler culture. But the imagery

of these artists is too intimate and too strange to reinforce official histories and monuments to commerce and industry. Seeing their work solely as documentation of settler history misstates and discredits the complexity of their vision. These artists flew solo and each reinvented a discourse about the immediate circumstances of their lives, conceiving diaristic texts that chart a complicated map of a land that still remains largely unknowable to Euro-Canadians.¹

Perhaps the inconclusiveness of the art of Brunst, Harbuz, Keevil, McCargar, Moulding, Spencer and Wyers contributed to its lasting appeal. Their works became prominent in the 1970s and 1980s, when culture in Saskatchewan became preoccupied by local knowledge—in reaction against modernism's internationalism. That was also a moment of self-awareness when the province recognized it actually had an engrossing if contested culture. Suddenly, the idiosyncratic objects created by artists working outside the centre became a source of insight for visual artists such as Joe Fafard, David Thauberger and Victor Cicansky and curators such as Wayne Morgan, Peter White, Joan Borsa and Dan Ring.

Brunst, Harbuz, Keevil, McCargar, Spencer and Wyers problematize the settlement mythologies and Girard's project illuminates the subtle transgressive nature of the earlier artists' projects. Whereas Cynthia Girard was compelled to 'de-learn' the conventions of painting when she completed her studies, Brunst, Harbuz, Keevil, McCargar, Moulding, Spencer and Wyers extended existing painterly tropes to serve their agendas. Girard deliberately conjoins unlike modes and styles, and cannily mobilizes imagery to make unexpected and confounding, yet potent imagery. By necessity, each of the artists in this project practices an art that opens a poetic space of open-ended tales of incident, anecdote and stark reportage. Fred Moulding's and Sam Spencer's obsessive bird and animal plaques and Stanley Brunst's homely, workmanlike abstraction flourish in Girard's paintings, a sympathetic reconstituted habitat. Then there is powerful interpretive presence of light in many of the paintings in *The Black Glove and the Peacock*.

The objects floating in Girard's blue screen have an unmistakable affinity for the mercurial lightness of Wyers', McCargar's, Keevil's and Harbuz' paintings. Whereas Girard's paintings refer to technology's light, the light in McCargar's, Wyers' and Keevil's paintings is illusory. Look at any of McCargar's works where the light rakes across a barren space interrupted only by objects: an elevator, a clock, a pair of legs, and a recurring cloud formation. McCargar is an artist's artist, a keen observer who charted an existential map of expectant angst and vulnerability. Now, McCargar's work has always put the scare into me. I have stared numbly into his landscapes, as they await inevitable action, catastrophic or banal, to explode rather than unfold. The light illuminating the landscapes of Roland Keevil and Jan Wyers emanates from a place buried and obscured within the western tradition. Keevil's heady paintings are nearly iridescent with high-keyed hues. His bright stagings may seem at odds in a place generally perceived as a dustbowl, but for anyone who has lived on the plains, Keevil moments occur more frequently than the popular clichés would have us believe. Jan Wyers' imagery vibrates with an intense glow, a physics where atoms and molecules animate every blade of grass, each leaf, the movements of horses and the wind. Wyers' images appear to be made up of billions of particles that have coalesced for a single moment, brilliantly, hovering until a gust of wind gathers the particles upward to later resettle provisionally in the next vision or version.

The self-taught artists of Saskatchewan, I argue, would have identified art making as an action of escape and proposal. The provisionality that permeates their art uncovers a big fat lie at the core of traditional landscape tropes and heroic settlement lore.

Cynthia Girard's notational history painting lures us into other geographies of painting and mobilizes a slice of Saskatchewan's local knowledge in an utterly surprising way. *The Black Glove and the Peacock* unleashes the scary, the unpredictable and the pleasurable immortality of Stanley Brunst, Ann Harbuz, Roland Keevil, W.C. McCargar, Fred Moulding, Sam Spencer and Jan Wyers.

¹ The ideas that Euro-Canadians cannot see the land has been discussed in the poetry and essays of Tim Lilburn.

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THE BLACK GLOVE AND THE PEACOCK: THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN HIERARCHY AND BEAUTY

by Amanda Cachia

“The glove represents the hand of despotic power and the peacock is pure beauty and amazement...(the folk artists and my paintings) mix different visual language, they are wild. They do not obey and will never obey one ruler...in this way, my paintings are dandys, they are peacocks opening their tails wide open.”¹

“...a paramount factor in the critical definition of the creative Outsider is that he or she should be possessed of an expressive impulse and should then externalize that impulse in an unmonitored way which defies conventional art-historical contextualization.”²

WE BEGIN WITH CYNTHIA GIRARD'S ARTIST STATEMENT

followed by the definition of outsider art as espoused by Roger Cardinal, the esteemed and well known art critic who coined outsider art in 1972 as an English synonym for art brut or “raw art”. In this essay, outsider artists are going to be called folk artists, which was and is the commonly referred label attached to the seven Saskatchewan artists represented in *The Black Glove and the Peacock*. In Nancy Tousley's essay from *Canadian Art* in 1987, entitled “Prairie Vernacular”, she discusses how art historian Dennis Adrian felt that folk art was a “fuzzy and inadequate term that we use to describe a wide variety of art-making...(However) other terms - naïve, outsider, primitive, untrained - raise other problems.”³ Thus, I will use the term folk art because it is broad and covers many kinds of artists. Generally, folk artists do not conform to the art-world hierarchy or follow trends, movements or styles. While they may be influenced by art history, they are generally unfettered in their choices, from technique, perspective, composition to colour, use of formal and informal devices, symbols or motifs, scale, light and subject matter. “As an intellectual construction outsider art is founded on assumptions and creative and cultural projections that infer in the work emphatic separation from

socio-cultural influence and difference to normal art world practice, on the grounds that relatively unmediated creative outpourings reveal more truthfully the things of existence.”⁴ Montreal artist Cynthia Girard admires this certain kind of freedom that they possess. She has used the metaphor of a peacock to convey this freedom...a gay parade of feathered freedom - or a bird in flight that has beautiful qualities, such as innocence, peace, contentment and simplicity. On the other side of the coin then, Girard is using the symbol of the black glove as a threatening one, representing authority, power, rules and hierarchy. Whoever said the world of the trained artist was the right world? Is there a right or a wrong? While the two opposing forces may be different, is one better than the other?

Traditionally, certainly, the untrained folk artists have been dismissed too easily by the critics of the trained art world owing to this perceived ‘lack’, but some argue that this dismissal is too hasty and judgmental. “Naïve art often receives only a surface reading. Its lack of effort to be precious art unintentionally encourages people not to take it seriously. But the viewer's uncritical reaction has less to do with naïve art than with the tendency towards diluted, passive responses endemic to our progressive society. This superficial

¹ Cynthia Girard, email conversation with Amanda Cachia, April, 2010

² Cardinal, Roger, “Toward an Outsider Aesthetic” in *The Artist Outsider: Creativity and the Boundaries of Culture*, edited by Michael D. Hall and Eugene W. Metcalf, Jr., 1994, Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, p. 29, 30

³ Tousley, Nancy, “Prairie Vernacular: A folk tale connects art making in Regina, Chicago and California”, *Canadian Art*, Fall, 1987, p. 86

⁴ Campbell, Colin, “Outsider art and the outsiderish” in *Without Borders: Outsider Art in an Antipodean Context*, 2008, Melbourne: Monash University Museum of Art and Campbelltown: Campbelltown City Art Gallery, p. 12

THE BLACK GLOVE AND THE PEACOCK: THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN HIERARCHY AND BEAUTY

5 | Borsa, Joan, *Seven Saskatchewan Folk Artists from the Permanent Collections of the Mendel Art Gallery and Saskatchewan Arts Board*, 1983, Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, p. 6

6 | Cynthia Girard in “Build, Therefore, Your Own World: Notes on Cynthia Girard” by Oliver Koerner Von Gustorf, *Cynthia Girard: Tous Les Oiseaux Sont Ici*, 2009, Berlin: September, p. 13

7 | Cynthia Girard, email conversation with Amanda Cachia, April, 2010

8 | Tousley, Nancy, “Prairie Vernacular: A folk tale connects art making in Regina, Chicago and California”, *Canadian Art*, Fall, 1987, p. 93

response is ironic since the very essence of naïve art is the overpowering desire to think, to communicate, to articulate our knowledge of the world in a way that celebrates and re-asserts the inner self.⁵ In setting up a contrasting black and white duality to the title of her show, through the physical embodiment of the object/animal or black glove/peacock, Girard has provided a metaphor or a symbol for the duality of folk artists versus those artists who are traditionally trained and are part of the formal art world trajectory. What is the nature of the struggle, and what is being shed in the battle? Girard says, “For me, painting is more like a carnival: for a certain period of time the ordinary hierarchies cease to rule. The subject wants to transgress, to dress up and play different roles.”⁶

Cynthia Girard was invited to complete a one-week artist residency at the Dunlop Art Gallery in January, 2010 in order to explore the folk art in our permanent collection. The objective was for her to complete a new body of work inspired by the work in our collection, and other private and public collections in Saskatchewan. The final result is a solo exhibition at the Dunlop Art Gallery from June 26 – August 29, 2010, where her new paintings and paper sculptures are juxtaposed with clusters of these inspirational works from the various collections. Girard has selected the following folk artists to hang beside her own: Stanley Brunst, Ann Harbuz, Roland Keevil, William McCargar, Fred Moulding, Sam Spencer and Jan Wyers. All of these artists were untrained with the exception of Roland Keevil. Whilst Stanley Brunst painted in a modernist and abstract style, he was untrained. Girard selected the artists and artworks based on her intuitive responses, which had a lot to do with the way the works were painted and the image-making prevalent throughout. 15 artworks are featured in this exhibition thanks to the private collections of Jack Severson, Veronica and David Thauberger and Susan Whitney and the public collections of the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon and the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina.

Girard’s new work includes four large 6 x 5 foot paintings and one 5 x 6 foot painting with colour-field backgrounds, and several smaller paintings. The artist has also created a giant 8’ black paper glove sculpture suspended vertically in the air by a leg of a simple chair lying on its side. Other hanging paper sculptures that are wearable as costumes for

Girard’s minimal play include a sun clock, a pair of woman’s legs, a table, two flying doughnuts and the other black glove. All of these objects are derived from William McCargar’s small watercolour and gouache drawing on paper in the Regina Public Library permanent collection, Untitled (Morning After The Night Before), n.d. Girard stated that “I loved the space in his paintings, and I loved the objects he was representing, the black hand was very inspiring. I am into this kind of mental state often...it inspired me to create paper sculpture from this point of view but to bring a personal side to it: to live within the space he had created and to play in it like actors on a stage in a theatre.”⁷ McCargar’s work is complex and even mystical, and he was influenced by surrealism and Jules Olitski. In McCargar’s microcosmic world marked by the cyclical rhythm of seasons, days and nights, he would insert planets, stars and T-shaped sunsets, railway stations, sentinel grain elevators, winter landscapes and “tiny figures walking through prairie fields, haunted by a sense of time, space and a pregnant stillness that seems poised on the point of imminent rupture.”⁸ Girard has staged the watercolour painting of McCargar in the gallery space with the paper sculptures, so that when people come into the gallery, a living tableau vivant is before them. (In building her hanging paper sculptures, the artist was influenced by the mobiles of Alexander Calder.) In *The Black Glove and the Peacock* installation, the artist has created five clusters of folk art along the walls. Each cluster is interspersed or flanked by one of Girard’s own large paintings.

Girard performed at the opening reception to the exhibition on Friday June 25, 2010 wearing a peacock costume. The artist has a strong interest in theatricality and mimesis and often uses the device of performance, acting and theatre in her exhibitions, as she desires to become a physical and visceral part of her work in order to inhabit the space of some of her characters in her paintings and sculptures. She wants to morph into her paintings as though she is a chameleon. Thus, Girard becomes the peacock or bird in her paintings, and also takes on the characters of the sun clock, the woman’s pair of legs etc. In advance of the performance, the artist asked people to play a part in it, including several casual readers from inside the library. They rehearsed briefly before the performance and read one line from text that Girard composed, with minimal choreography. The peacock costume then re-

mained within the installation for the duration of the exhibition after the performance had concluded. Girard is interested in 1920’s modernist, Dada-style cabaret theatre, which is experimental, minimal and abstract, like absurd theatre and this is what she is trying to evoke in her performance.

The artist is breathing new life into the Dunlop Art Gallery’s permanent collection and providing a fresh perspective by her intervention. As a curator, it has long been an objective of mine to find an opportunity to work with an artist that can enhance and offer new insight into a permanent collection for a visual arts institution. A clever intervention provides unique and dynamic dialogue between a historical work of art and a contemporary work of art, where interesting comparisons and contrasts can be made. These new conversations can further provide rich educational exchange for visitors, where the juxtaposition of historical works of art sheds and reveals new meaning on an artist’s professional practice and vice versa. In her essay for the exhibition *Francis Alys: Fabiola*, held at the Hispanic Society of America in New York (2007-2008) and then the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2009), Lynne Cooke has said that institutional critique, developed in the 1960’s, has become so routine “that it is now codified as a historical category of artistic practice. Such interventions typically probe the power relations, ideologies, and disciplinary structures of museums.”⁹ It is this genealogy that provided a filter or context for the Fabiola exhibition, where Alys had assembled a significant collection of nearly identical paintings of the fourth-century saint Fabiola over the past two decades. The presentation of the Fabiola collection was held adjacent to galleries housing European old masters, where it resembled its neighbours “according to conventions established by the nineteenth-century academic salon.”¹⁰ The presentation then allowed for viewer contemplation swirling around old-master painting issues such as iconography, authorship, function, originality and more.

The Dunlop Art Gallery has previously worked with artists in providing such discourse through our permanent collection: in 1994, an exhibition entitled *Heather Cameron: For Home and Country* was held at the Sherwood Gallery. After reviewing our collection, Cameron produced a fabric/textile work around our Tantallon quilt. In 2000, *Billy’s Vision* was held at the Central Gallery, curated by Andrew Hunter for the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon. Andrew had produced a

narrative around a fictional character and used each venues’ collection to select art works that supported his story-line.

In broader contexts, other influential and memorable exhibitions in this particular curatorial category apart from *Francis Alys: Fabiola*, include *Intruders* at the Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec in 2008, curated by Melanie Boucher. In this exhibition, 25 contemporary artworks by 24 Quebec-based artists were installed into seven galleries within the Musée’s permanent collection. These new works were then hung beside the historical collection work in the Musée, for visitors to happen upon. Each of the seven galleries was conceived as a distinct exhibition framed to address a variety of topics, thus not confined, as is often the case in art museums, to periods, styles or disciplines.¹¹ The second major influential exhibition was *Give & Take* at the Victoria and Albert Museum and *Mixed Messages* by German conceptual artist Hans Haacke at the Serpentine Gallery in London curated by Lisa G. Corrin, Chief Curator of the Serpentine Gallery, both held concurrently in 2001. The V & A invited curators from outside the V & A to select contemporary artwork in response to special historical works of art in their permanent collection, ranging from paintings, sculpture, textile pieces, photographs and more. These works were strategically then placed throughout the V & A. Even though the V & A organized a guide of the floor plan for visitors, directing them to the new works of art, if one wasn’t aware of this special initiative, then it would be easy to mistake these new works for being historical ones. It was only when a visitor was to look closely, could they discern that the materials and the technology used in the art-making process were contemporary and distinguished this work from his or her peers.¹² These types of exhibitions can mark a turning point in an institution’s history, an axis on which to change direction, mix things up and provide a new account of art history that can be unsettling and fully charged.

As a curator at the Dunlop Art Gallery, one cannot help but notice the significant representation of folk art in its 300 plus collection. The Dunlop has had a rich history of researching and exhibiting work of self-taught artists. Previous Dunlop Directors, Wayne Morgan (1970-1984), Peter White (1984-1991) and Helen Marzolf (1991-2001) were activists and supporters in championing and showcasing the work of these underrepresented and unrecognized artists, offering

9 | Cooke, Lynne, *Francis Alys: Fabiola*, The Hispanic Society of America & Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2007

10 | *ibid.*

11 | Ouellet, Line, “An exhibition within exhibitions” in *Intruders*, 2008 Quebec: Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec, p. 170

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12 | Fred Wilson, the American painter, continued to make famous the collection intervention in the project *Mining the Museum* (1992), where he offered an explicit critique of the Maryland Historical Society's collection in Baltimore, and how it dealt with racism and the formation of the Society's collection. At the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1999, then Senior Curator Kynaston McShine curated Museum as Muse where he gathered more than 60 artists who drew on the subject matter of museum and museum structure, hierarchy and constraint in their work – as their muse. Similarly, the folk artists are Cynthia's muse. I am also reminded of the brave and completely empowering and noble efforts of the curators at the Tate Modern when they opened in the renovated Turbine Hall in 2000 with a controversial new hang of art history.

13 | Marzolf, Helen, Foreword in *Sam Spencer*, 1993, Regina: Dunlop Art Gallery, p. 2

14 | Riordan, Bernard, *The Illuminated Life of Maud Lewis*, 1996, Halifax: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

them professional development, exposure at the Dunlop, and an exhibition catalogue to accompany their foray into the formal art-world. Projects included *Ann Harbuz: Inside Community Outside Convention* (1997), curated by Joan Borsa, Sam Spencer (1993), curated by Suzanne Probe with an essay by Michael D. Hall in the catalogue, where the interior of the artist's living room was re-created in an installation in the gallery in order to give Spencer's carvings "a sense of domestic intimacy"¹³, *William McCargar*, curated by Peter White in 1987, (a catalogue was never published) and exhibits for Scottie Wilson and Jack Maka. Other institutions in Saskatchewan have followed suit: in 1989, Andrew Oko for the MacKenzie Art Gallery curated a major exhibition of work by Jan Wyers, and Dan Ring, Chief Curator at the Mendel Art Gallery, has also long been an ardent fan of the Saskatchewan folk artist, researching Roland Keevil's work for a retrospective in 1998. *Stanley E. Brunst: Radical Painter* (1982) was curated by Terrence Heath for the Mendel Art Gallery. Prominent Saskatchewan artist David Thauberger curated *Grassroots Saskatchewan* for the MacKenzie Art Gallery in 1976, which included the work of 16 folk artists, some of whom are in this exhibition.

On a national scale, Canadian art and cultural institutions have given their fair time, research and space to folk art and artists. In 1958 the National Gallery of Canada circulated the touring exhibition *Folk Painters of the Canadian West*, which included Jan Wyers and Roland Keevil. The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia in Halifax has a strong association with folk art which began in 1976 with an exhibition of twentieth-century Nova Scotia work. This inaugural event was an instant success and resulted in a strong commitment to this area of interest. Nova Scotia's special legacy of folk art developed an international reputation for the province. Of most prominence is the artist Maud Lewis. Her home has been restored for permanent display in the gallery filled with her art. She is a Nova Scotia icon.¹⁴ It has been said that Ann Harbuz is for Saskatchewan what Maud is for Nova Scotia.¹⁵ All over the world, museums dedicated to folk art have been established, and folk art has become a true discourse and paradigm in its own right. In Lausanne, Switzerland, the Collection de l'Art Brut was founded by Jean Debuffet in 1976.

Apart from William McCargar, as mentioned in a previous paragraph, Fred Moulding is the other artist in *The Black*

Glove and the Peacock that has never had a dedicated catalogue. It is my hope that this exhibition not only pays homage to the legacy of Saskatchewan folk artists, and provides new insights and meanings held up against the new work generated by Girard, but a gap can also be filled that has been omitted over the years in the representation of work by some of these talented prairie artists, such as McCargar and Moulding. And whilst they share space with Girard, their work can still be admired and respected as stand-alone objects. For this reason, I invited Helen Marzolf to write the Guest Introduction for this catalogue and to reflect on Girard's work against those artists with whom she is most familiar and has had a history. While this essay is focused on Girard's engagement with the folk artists, and does not hone in on the individual subject matter and processes for each of the seven artists, their biographies are included in this catalogue to provide brief summaries of their education and artistic achievements. Further, Nancy Tousley said in her "Prairie Vernacular" essay that "...every 10 years or so, someone looks at the interactions among Saskatchewan artists and another part of the story gets told, perhaps a little more fully each time."¹⁶ I hope that I can participate in sharing this story of Saskatchewan folk artists with the Regina Public Library public in a new light, a decade later, in collaboration with Cynthia Girard.

I had seen Cynthia Girard's work at the Quebec Triennial, entitled *nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed* at the Musée d'art de contemporain de Montréal in 2008. She had created large-scale paintings, and what struck me about her paintings was their simplistic, bold use of colour, the innocent nature of her style – akin to a folk art aesthetic – yet blending, borrowing and appropriating from other movements in art history in a sophisticated manner to create new narratives and very unique symbols and metaphors. They are whimsical, charming and witty. The work was sumptuous, and looked like it was having a meal of itself; a glutton for fields of colour and the seemingly random placement of characters on its acrylic surface, evoking childhood nostalgia, or illustrations from a fairy tale book. In placing Girard's work side by side with that of artists like McCargar, Harbuz or Brunst, I saw an immediate and obvious visual connection and aesthetic similarities, but also a conceptual one. What kind of new definitions, conversa-

tions and themes could be proffered by such a juxtaposition, and how might this new mix and match benefit the artist, our collection and our audience? How could I create a new story book, or stage with this theatre set of props – a mise-en-scène of new works combined with old ones, a performance and a captive crowd? How does Girard emotionally, intellectually and physically inhabit a folk art philosophy and approach whilst being an academically-trained artist? Does the artist share similar characteristics to the folk artist lifestyle both as a person and an artist?

Cynthia Girard loves paintings and utilizing the tools from other movements in art history to create new meaning in her work. She was influenced by art brut during her undergraduate studies. She has used impressionism, cubism, Russian constructivism, Op Art, abstract expressionism, minimalism, Dadaism and surrealism in her art. Dadaism and surrealism in particular had a strong influence on Girard's work in 2009. In Girard's new paintings, one can discern the use of abstraction and colour field painting, as she has created two segments or sections of colour field background in her canvases, splitting the surface into two horizontal parts, as if she is depicting sky and ground, like the prairies. Like the folk artists, Girard paints what she knows through the figurative, yet relies on abstraction to converse with this. Like Brunst, Girard plays with modernism, figuration, and abstraction. Girard also identifies with artists such as Kenneth Noland, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, Laura Owens, Patrick Caulfield, Philip Guston, Pablo Picasso, Sandra Meigs, Paul Thek, Jean Debuffet, Kazimir Malevich, Francis Picabia, Peter Paul Rubens, Diego Velazquez, the French filmmaker Georges Méliès for his magic, painted backdrops and costumes (directly influencing her tableaux vivant installations), and Antonin Artaud for his radical poetry and plays. Diverse in style, conceptual approach and methodology, Girard desires to interact with all of them through appropriation and other devices in her artwork. Further, Girard is interested in a plethora of historical sources, ranging from Egyptian art to the Lauscaux Paleolithic cave paintings.

Essentially, Girard feels that the self-taught technique the folk artists have developed is one that is imbued with the personal, and thus feels much more relevant than the institutional or academic technique. The imperfect perfection inherent in the work of folk artists is the crookedness, the

disproportional, a puzzle that does not fit together and an Euclidian view that is flat. "Space is a liar, and we are aware of it in folk art. We are not being convinced of something else. It is what it is."¹⁷ Girard does not create narratives in her paintings, although she has described her works as being individual worlds. She has a will to build a space into her paintings and a perception with psychological triggers like a mouse or a handcuff, there to give feeling. "Every painting is a well thought out environment; they need to be self-sufficient, and to have exits and doors so that they can remain open for the possibility for change."¹⁸

The artist is fond of American transcendentalism and the desire to embody the world, even non-living objects. Thus, the artist could strongly identify with objects, which seem almost as if they were animals in some of the work by the folk artists, taking on anthropomorphic qualities. Of Wyers work, *Working on the farm* (n.d.), Girard described the thrashing machine (in the days before the combine) as if it was a woman... "I feel that for him he had intimacy with the machine...I think he was inventing farm machinery...to him, his machine is like the body of a woman, he seems to know how to make it work. It is a strange idea to me, as if suddenly my body was really foreign and mysterious and complicated."¹⁹ Ronald Bloore first wrote about Wyer's painting for Canadian Art magazine: "It is a vision from memory, from nostalgia for the pre-combine era, before mechanization took complete command, when engines were surrealistic beasts, terrifying the horses with fire and smoke, hissing and roaring, panting and thirsting."²⁰ There are objects and animals in Girard's paintings that everyone will be able to recognize. They don't each have one role to play: they play a multiplicity of roles depending on the demands and desires of the viewer: "I just want the viewer to be caught by the painting...my paintings are like lures in fishing – they are there to trigger the fish and get them into the net of responding to art."²¹

The subject matter depicted in the idiosyncratic art of the folk artists remained close to their hearts: their homes, their lifestyles, self-portraits and portraits of individuals from families and friends, birds, animals and farms, still lives, landscapes, vistas and scenes – a prairie vernacular and an alternative for power relations. They painted what they knew, from their memories, and their relationship as individuals with their environments. David Thauberger states

15 | Curators have also long sustained interest in folk art, ranging from the exhibition *Dargerism: Contemporary Artists and Henry Darger* (2008) regarding Darger's influence (as the American Folk Art Museum in New York owns the largest single depository of Darger's work in the world) to Glenn Barkley's two exhibits in Australia entitled *Home Sweet Home: Works from the Peter Fay collection* (2003) at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra and *Without Borders: Outsider Art in an Antipodean Context* (2008) at the Monash University Museum of Art and Campbelltown City Art Gallery. Barkley is also working on his PhD on Australian outsider art at the University of Sydney. British artists Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane published a book entitled *Folk Art: Contemporary Popular Art from the UK* (2005), although they avoided calling their collection and montage of images 'outsider art' but rather transposing one form of art display to another – that of the gallery, dubbing themselves artists as anthropologists. In 2008, Anselm Franke curated a large-scale exhibition entitled *MIMICRY* for Extra City Center for Contemporary Art in Antwerp, which probed an alternative conceptual framework for "theatricality" in the visual arts. Like folk artists, the 26 artists in this exhibition sketch out different possibilities for power relations, and to portray the relation between individual and the environment, self and world, thing and context, figure and ground.

16 | Tousley, Nancy, "Prairie Vernacular: A folk tale connects art making in Regina, Chicago and California", *Canadian Art*, Fall, 1987, p. 93

THE BLACK GLOVE AND THE PEACOCK: THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN HIERARCHY AND BEAUTY

17 | Cynthia Girard, email conversation with Amanda Cachia, April, 2010

18 | *ibid.*

19 | *ibid.*

20 | Ronald Bloore, “Jan G. Wyers” *Canadian Art*, Issue 27, No. 2, (March 1960), p. 63-64

21 | Cynthia Girard, email conversation with Amanda Cachia, April, 2010

22 | Thauberger, David, *Grassroots Saskatchewan*, 1976, Regina: MacKenzie Art Gallery, p. 3

23 | Cynthia Girard, email conversation with Amanda Cachia, April, 2010

24 | Borsá, Joan, *Saskatchewan Naïve/Folk Art*, n.d., Lemarchand Gallery, Regina, SK

25 | Cynthia Girard, “I am a Wonderer: A Conversation between Cynthia Girard and Oliver Koerner von Gustorf”, September, Berlin

in his essay *Grassroots Saskatchewan: The Artists*, that their paintings were a type of oral history, recording a sense of the times, a history of their generation. “The need to paint arises from the need to record. It is the painting of memoirs rather than writing of them.”²² Their artworks were their friends, a comfort amidst a foreign environment, as many were immigrants to Saskatchewan, largely transplanted from England, Amsterdam and Eastern Europe (the Ukraine). Thauberger goes on to say that these immigrants helped to settle the prairies, so pioneer themes, the land and the landscape are a common vehicle for their expression. Similarly, Girard identified with the comfort that making art transposed onto one’s mental state. In my conversation with the artist, she said, “When I was studying I did not have a lot of money and when I would buy some pots of acrylic colour (primary colours), I used to put them in my bed to sleep with (at night) because I loved them and I was so happy, like someone in love with his car I guess.”²³

Girard has included portraits of historical figures – the rebellion leader, the scientist and the philosopher – that have both roots in Saskatchewan and internationally, namely Louis Riel, Charles Darwin and Hannah Arendt. The artist feels that they are relevant to what we are now and who we are today. These were influential figures who changed the way people think, ranging from Riel’s fight for land claims and the right of people to decide what is best for their own land, to the way we see ourselves as human in relation to the world and where we come from as intellectualized by Darwin and Arendt the philosopher of politics, who articulated an understanding and a thinking about the political and totalitarian horrors of the twentieth century. The artist ascribes her wish to imbed in her paintings a socio-political world in which we take part. Thus, even if the paintings appear enthusiastic, these historical figures must appear within this framework to convey to the artist and the viewers where they stand in the world. The artists with whom Girard shares space in *The Black Glove and the Peacock* came from countries in Europe at a time torn apart by war in the twentieth century, thus the artist is also making reference to her peers by acknowledging the historical context from which they came. Joan Borsá has said that “the long history of naïve art is associated with socially disruptive circumstances: the industry(ial) revolution, political oppression, wars and social/cultural upheaval. Such

conditions begin to explain the sporadic emergence of naïve art in so many different countries over such a long period of time.”²⁴ Girard’s paintings have often inserted the icon of the butterfly, emerging from its cocoon in a new metamorphosis, from its original state of a caterpillar. The butterfly underwent suffering during its metamorphosis, and the artist feels that in some ways, the folk artists are like the butterfly, where they have come from difficult socio-political and economic backgrounds and struggled as immigrants to evolve and assimilate into Canadian culture. The artist wishes to pay respect to this by including a representation of the caterpillar and to ensure that viewers do not forget the artists’ pasts and backgrounds.

Further, Girard has included literary influences, ranging from poetry by Emily Dickinson to Henry David Thoreau’s transcendentalist book, *Walden*, 1854 (or *Life in the Woods*), and Marx’s *The Capital*, 1867, about the fall of capitalism and the creation of a more equal society. Ants, snakes, owls, mice (one whose tail turns into a snake!) and other insects march along her painted acrylic surfaces carrying these books of influence. Carriages, balloons and other means of transport are also depicted with the books. As Girard is also a poet (and performer at her openings), the influence and incorporation of literary and theatrical tropes into her visual art practice is important. Girard has said in a previous artist interview that she sees these literary figures (Dickinson and Thoreau) as her gatekeepers. “I like the way (they have) been reclusive, either by choice or not. I think it was precisely this reclusive view of the world that allowed them to create a different vision.”²⁵ This view of the world is in line with the traditional stereotype of the folk artist as recluse, loner, psychotic or even criminally insane. Girard in fact feels that folk artists have been a good subject for psychoanalysis, because folk art could be like giving a body to inner mechanisms such as nervosas, obsessions and more. Lucy Lippard states in her essay *Crossing into Uncommon Grounds*, “These artists are “outside” of what? Their own social contexts? Sometimes. The mainstream? Usually. In fact, these people, like some of the best artists who function within the art world, are really insiders.”²⁶

Girard also loves still lives, animals and objects: in the painting *Pussy Willows and Easter Eggs*, (2010), we see the Ann Harbuz easter eggs with Girard’s bowl of spaghetti with

meatballs symbolizing the sun as its place on the canvas implies, up high in the ‘sky’. It is an antithetical source of nourishment and decay as the spaghetti looks like worms. On a formal level, Girard takes a lot of elements and influences from every painter, whether it is their way of applying paint, the imagery or the palette, but the artist also tries to connect with the folk art work in other ways. She has painted the pussy willow and the easter eggs as mentioned from Ann Harbuz’s painting *A Bowl of Easter Eggs* (1976), the sculpture by Moulding of a pig being slaughtered, *Untitled (Pig Slaughter)* (1980), and the vultures of Spencer in *Untitled (Three Birds in Tree)* (1982). Continuing, the artist has used the horizon line of McCargar in most of her background compositions (the McCargar horizon line can be seen in all his paintings in *The Black Glove and the Peacock*, such as *Untitled (Sunset)* (c. 1960’s). The artist has painted the same trees in the same manner of Keevil in another painting, *Feeding the Birds* (2010) from *Ranch Scene – Foothills* (1957), and she has painted the geometric rainbow of Brunst in one of her skies (*The Tree and the Snake*, 2010) from *Landscape – Abstract* (1935) and *Untitled (abstract landscape)* (1944).

While certain symbols from Girard’s painterly language or lexicon reappear in this new body of work (eg. the device of a window or door that one can enter but also escape from, as already mentioned), the artist has fused her language with a new dialect. She appropriates and borrows images and symbols from the folk artists she chose to exhibit with, so that this new body of work becomes a resounding success in the development and new direction of her professional practice. In McCargar’s watercolours, Girard has said that the sky line is strong, with the grain silo and the small character with his dog. For Jan Wyers “I was crazy to see his horse paintings, they are in a community. They look gay to me and happy and sensual; it looked like a community of horses that love each other and when I look at it gives me a feeling of playfulness...and the way he applies the paint is with a soft touch, perhaps a bit too weird to say impressionist.”²⁷ With Roland Keevil, Girard loved the touch of the paint brush and could feel it in her wrist: “I could not wait to come back to Montreal to start working in my studio and reproduce this kind of brushstroke...also his work has many layers that I really like, layers in space like the foreground, the middle ground and the background... I really enjoy the

way he works with the space, it is really precise and so separate at the same time.”

Girard is interested in blurring the boundaries between high art and low art. She calls herself fetishistic with art, the art object and image-making and describes the sensation of viewing some of the folk art in the Saskatchewan collections for the first time and wanting to steal them and keep them for herself – to possess them, away from the others. Girard can see the minds of the painters through some of the works: they are talented, stubborn and very strong, hand-made, like a round-the-world sail boat. Girard also respects their social status, which was on the outskirts and periphery of the art institution. This ultimately freed them from the politics and they could invent their own language that Girard finds inspiring. Like an anarchist, the artist wants these power structures to dissolve, and yet, conversely, she loves both and sees that there is a role and a place for both. “In breaking this taboo, Girard employs an arsenal of practices. She allows for imperfection and error, reintroducing the “jittery hand” and the critical rejection of artistic perfection and virtuosity...Girard has a programmatic demand for the dissolution of boundaries in painting, a rebellion against her expertise, status thinking and academic categorization.”²⁸ Girard’s practice is compulsive and she does not want to choose, but to do everything, all at the same time. It is as if her identity is constantly shifting and never stable enough – this is what she believes is best and healthy for her practice. “Whilst the folk artists were not rich, the work they created was amazing: beautiful artwork blossoming in small houses and not in high standard artist studios.”²⁹ Girard feels lucky to show her work in their proximity.

The peacock in all its finery and plume, and the glove in its threatening reach, reveal to viewers at the Dunlop Art Gallery and Regina Public Library that the two can indeed co-exist in a relationship where one balances off the other. Similarly, Cynthia Girard’s new paintings juxtaposed against the salon of folk artists from Saskatchewan sing in harmony side by side in the gallery space, creating a new experience that enriches the senses, and sparks the imagination. Girard says of the folk art, “Some of their work I make close reference to within my paintings and some not, but they cohabit together like strangers that finally, while having a tea together, find a lot in common”.³⁰

26 | Lippard, Lucy, “Crossing into Uncommon Grounds” in *The Artist Outsider: Creativity and the Boundaries of Culture*, edited by Michael D. Hall and Eugene W. Metcalf, Jr., 1994, Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, p. 5

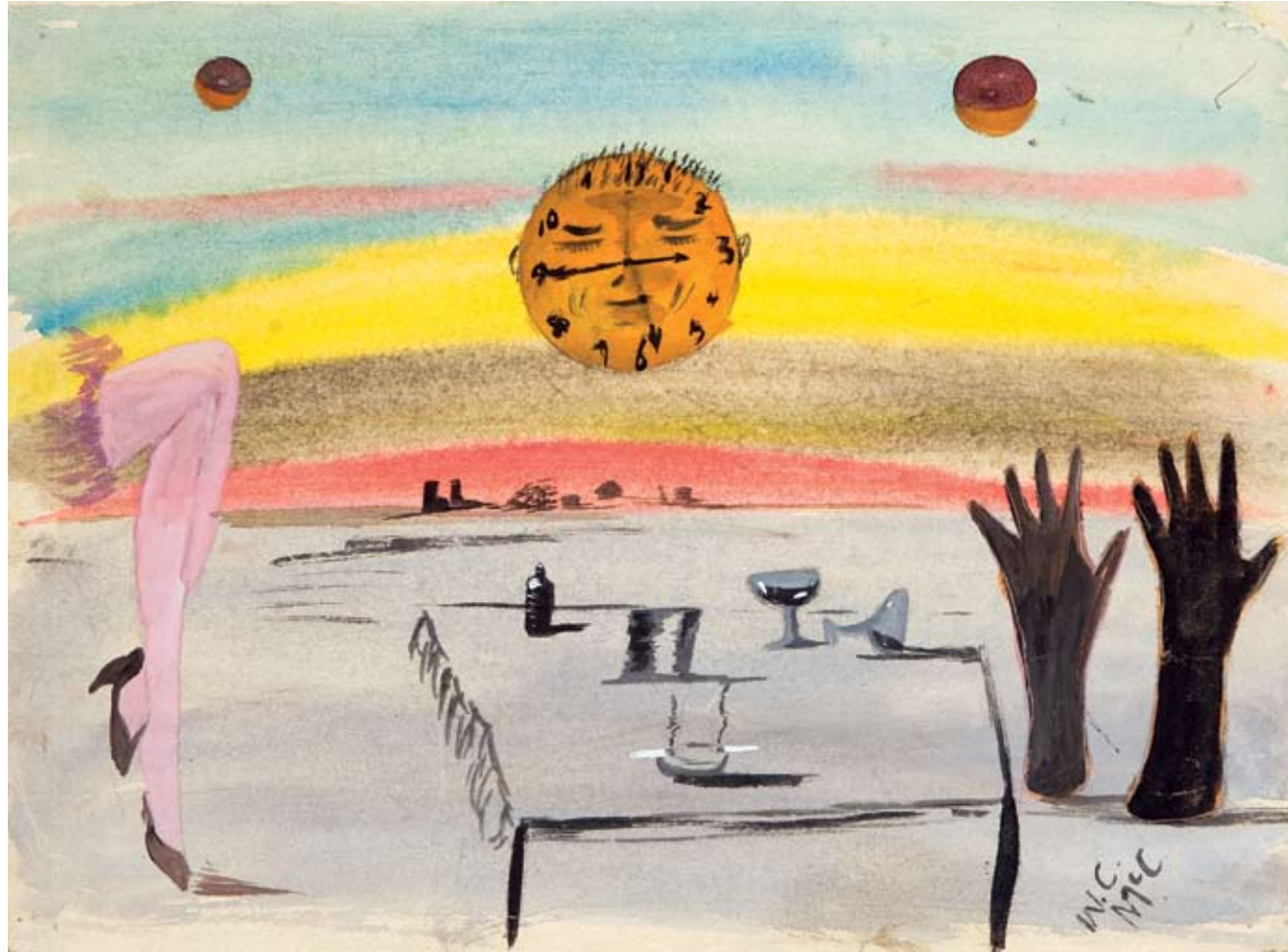
27 | Cynthia Girard, email conversation with Amanda Cachia, April, 2010

28 | Oliver Koerner Von Gustorf, “Build, Therefore, Your Own World: Notes on Cynthia Girard”, *Cynthia Girard: Tous Les Oiseaux Sont Ici*, 2009, Berlin: September, p. 13

29 | Cynthia Girard, email conversation with Amanda Cachia, April, 2010

30 | *ibid.*

AMANDA CACHIA
is the Director/Curator of the Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina, SK.



William C. McCargar
Untitled (Morning After the Night Before) n.d.

Cynthia Girard
Pussy Willows and Easter Eggs, 2010



Pussy Willows and Easter Eggs, 2010 (detail)





Pussy Willows and Easter Eggs, 2010 (detail)



Roland Keevil
Untitled (Highway and Mountains), 1961

Pussy Willows and Easter Eggs, 2010 (detail)

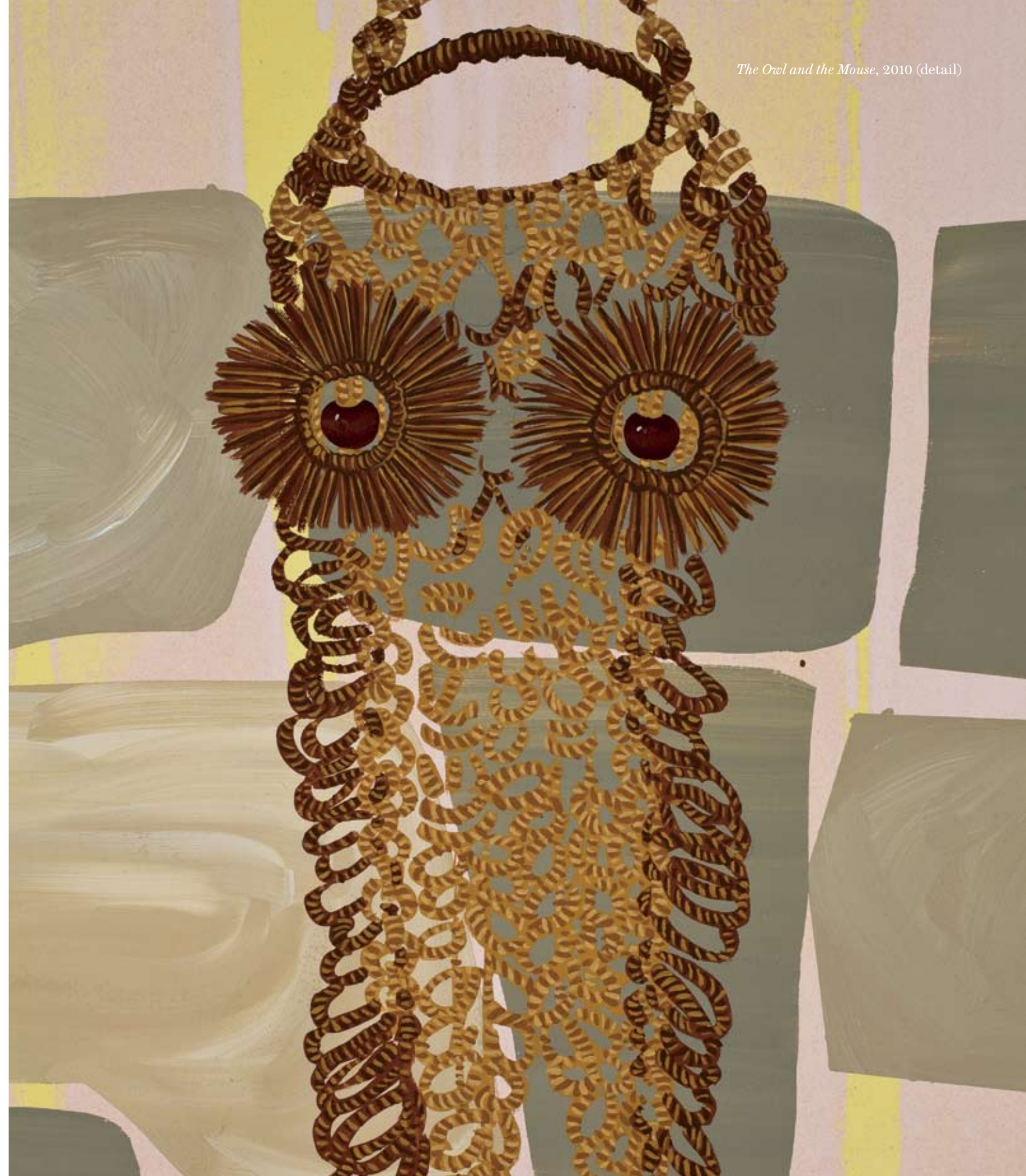


Cynthia Girard
The Owl and the Mouse, 2010





Stanley Burnst
Night Firing, 1937



The Owl and the Mouse, 2010 (detail)

WALDEN;
OR,
LIFE IN THE WOODS.

BY HENRY D. THOREAU,



*I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag
as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his
roost, if only to wake my neighbors up. — Page 92.*

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
M DCCC LIV.





William McCargar,
Untitled, n.d.



Jan Wyers
Working on the Farm, n.d.



Cynthia Girard
Bird Cut-Out, 2010



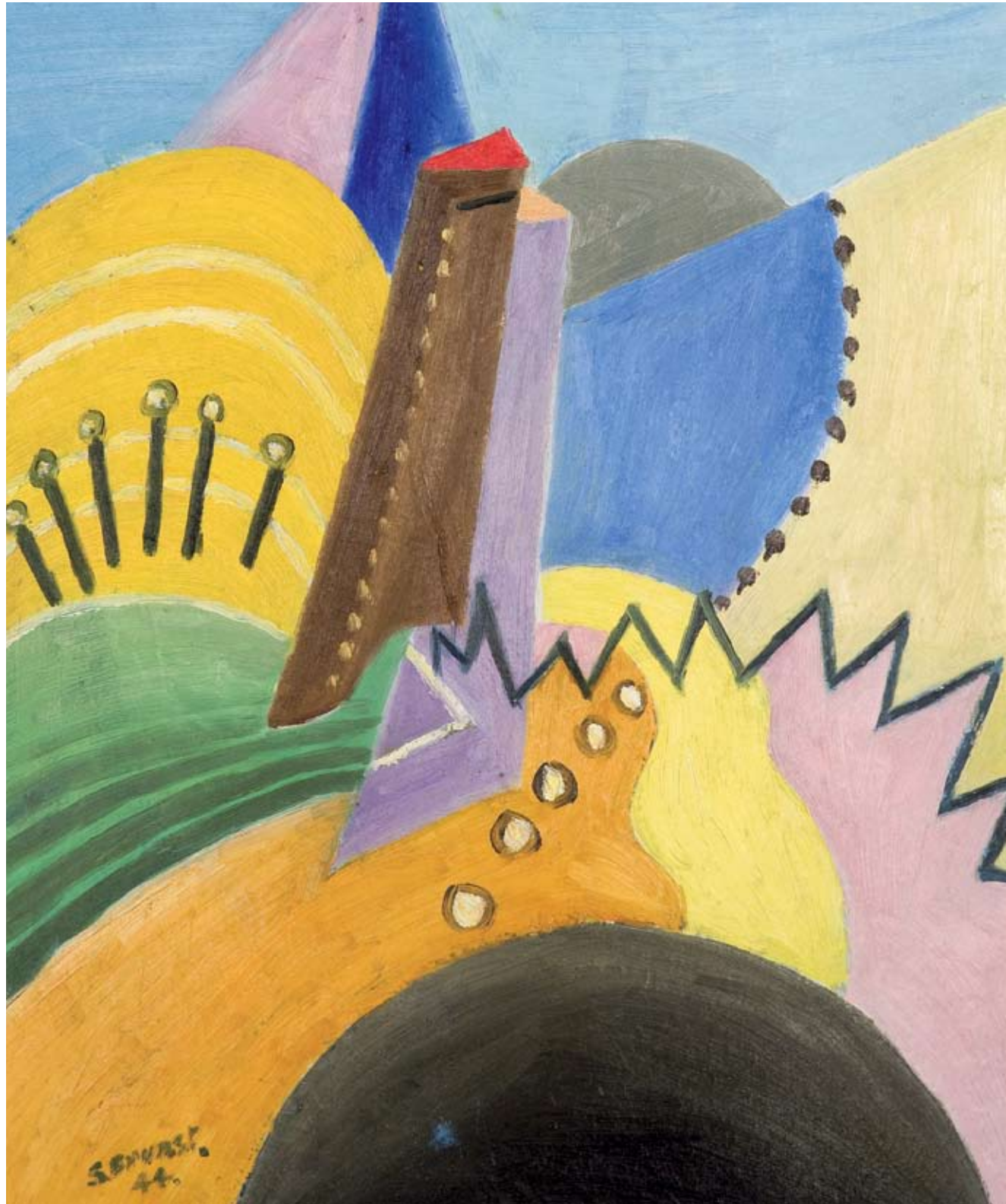


Cynthia Girard
The Tree and the Snake, 2010

The Tree and the Snake, 2010 (detail)



Stanley Brunst
Landscape-Abstract, 1935



Stanley Brunst
Untitled (abstract lanscape), 1944



Fred Moulding
Untitled (Pig Slaughter), 1980

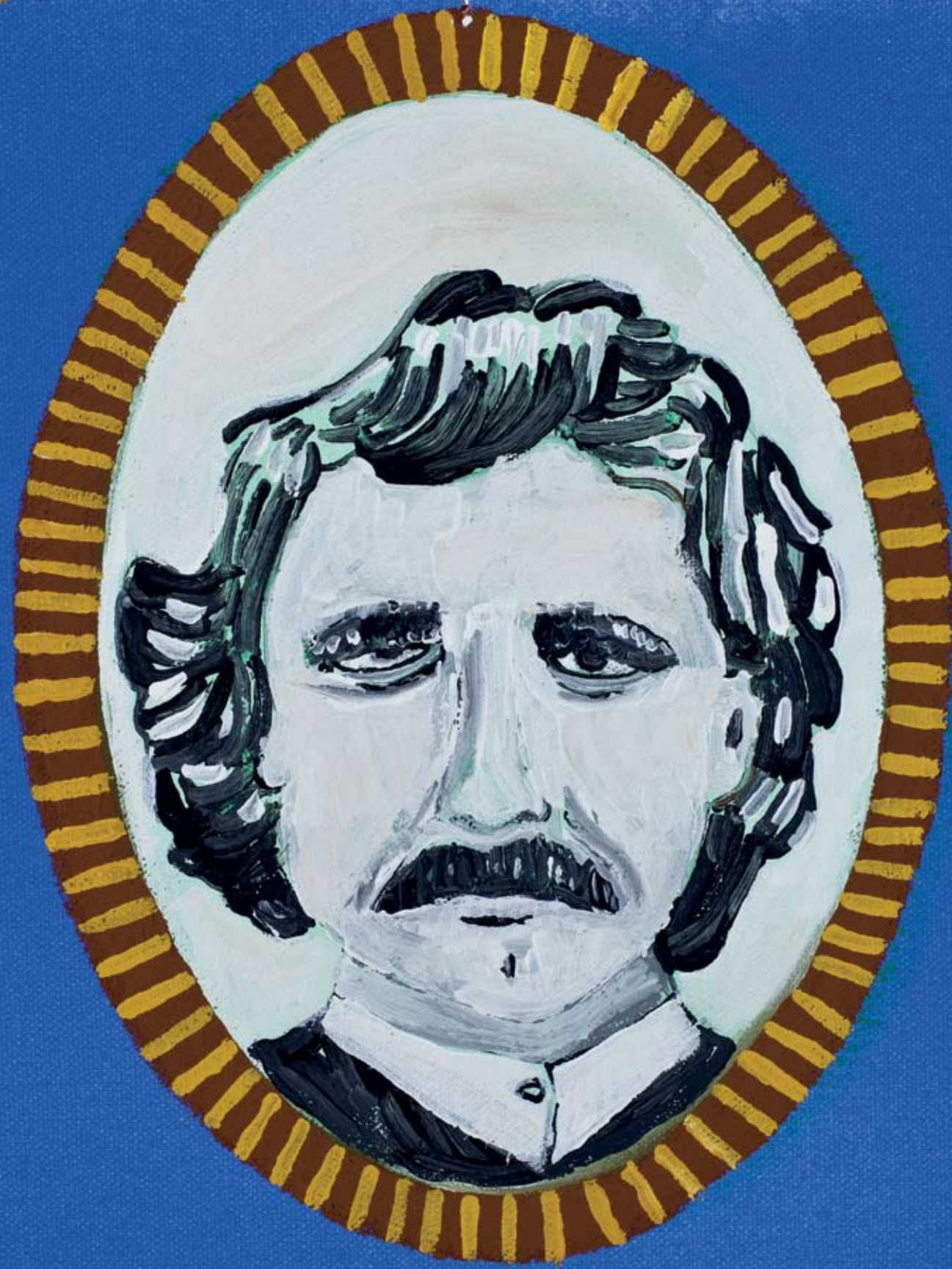
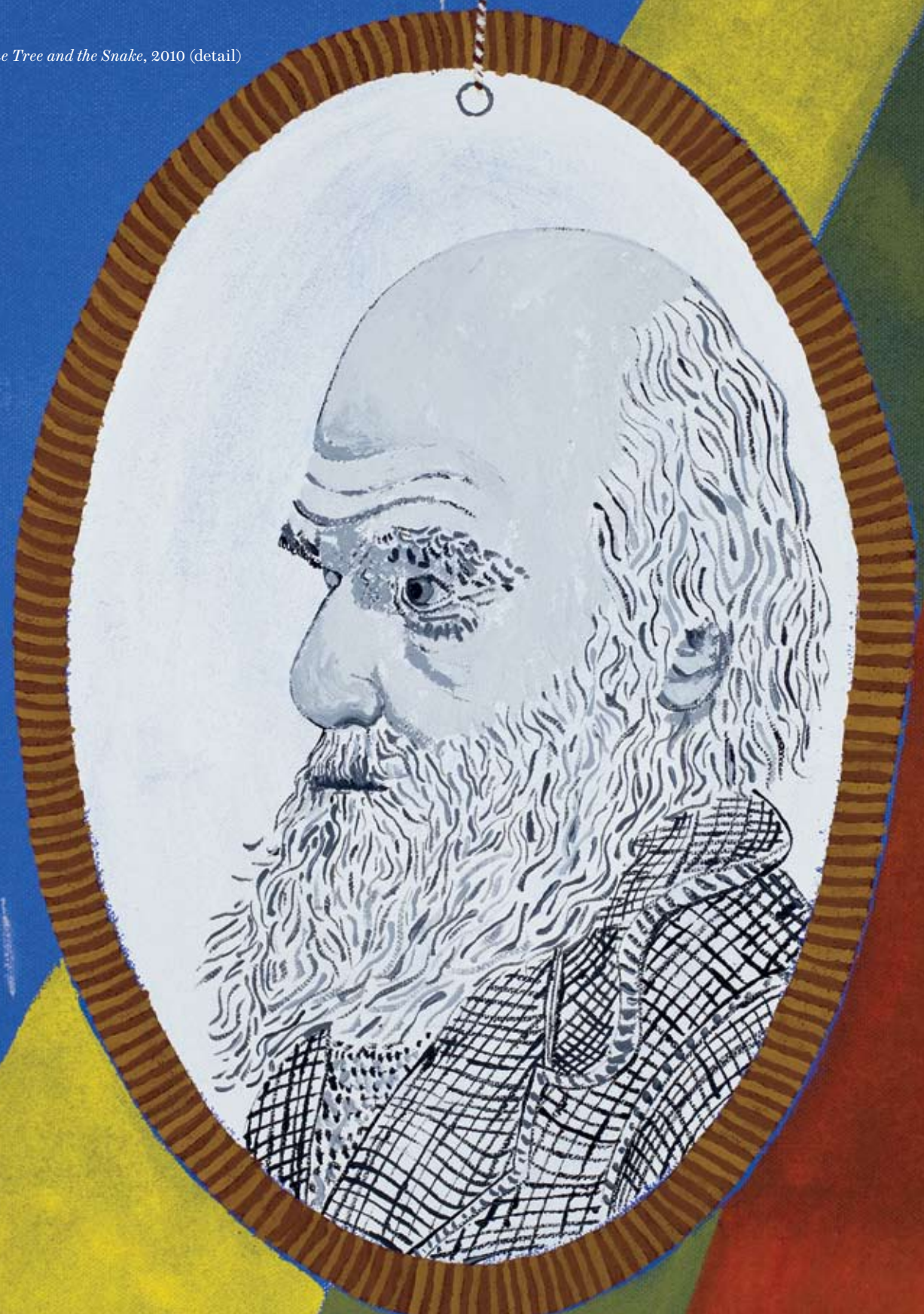
The Tree and the Snake, 2010 (detail)





William C. McCargar
Untitled (Sunset), 1980

The Tree and the Snake, 2010 (detail)



Ants and Vultures, 2010 (detail)



Sam Spencer
Untitled (Three Birds in a Tree), 1982, detail





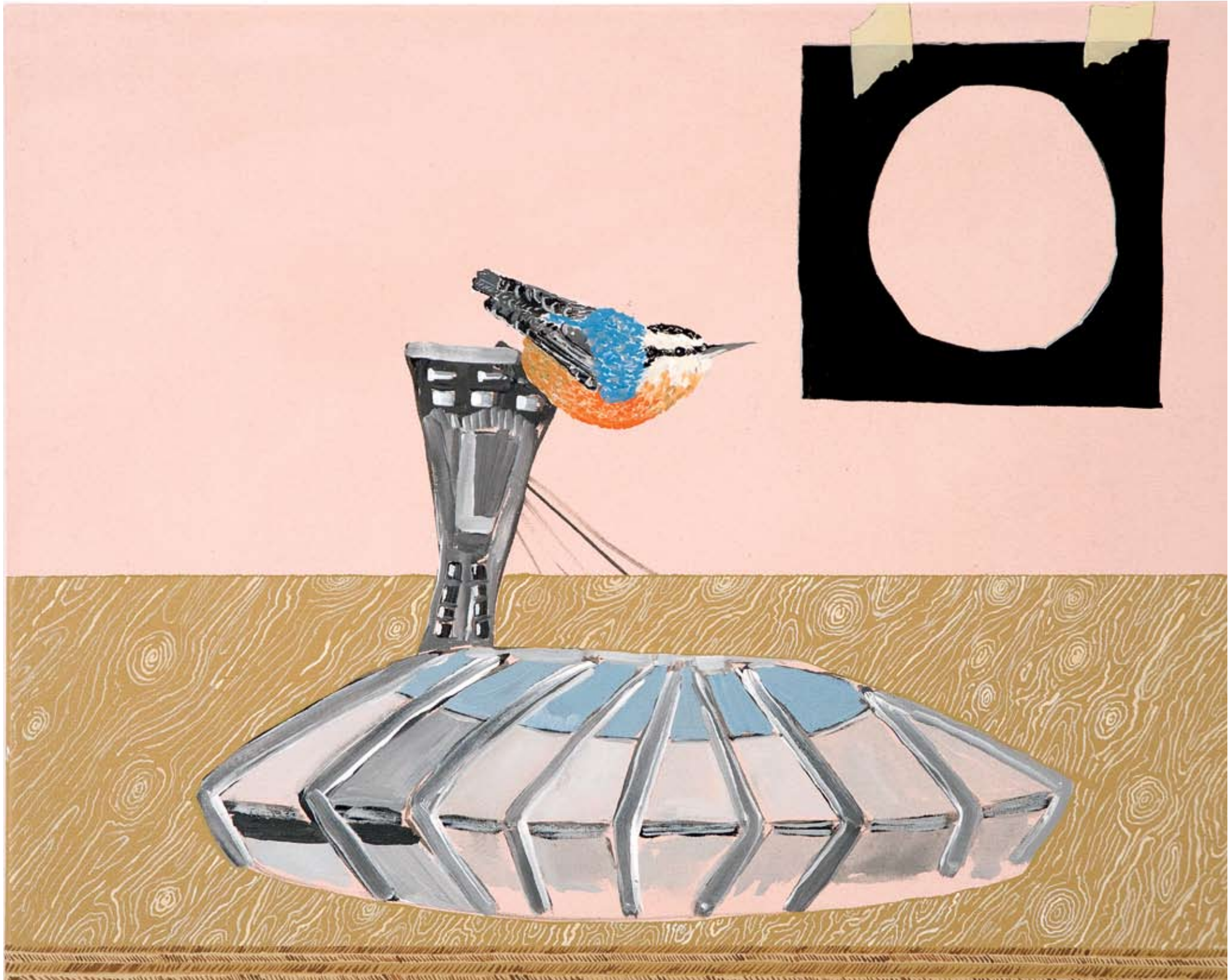
Jan Wyers
Winter Pasture, 1967





Cynthia Girard
Feeding the Birds, 2010

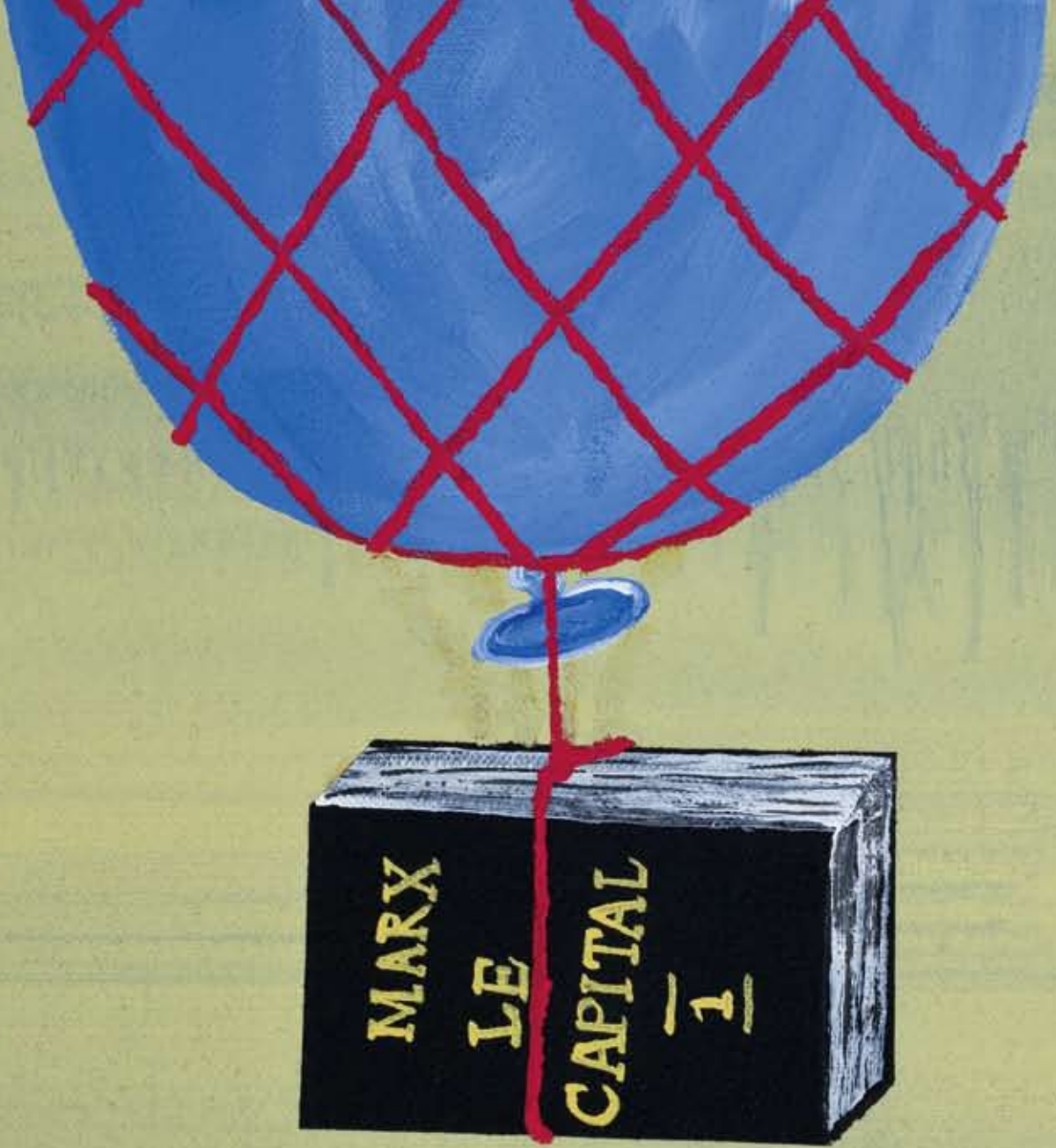




Cynthia Girard
The Nuthatch and the Stadium, 2010



Cynthia Girard
Orange Julep, 2010





Sam Spencer
Untitled, n.d.



Fred Moulding
Weasels, c. 1970



Roland Keevil,
Ranch Scene-Foothills, 1957 (detail)



Feeding the Birds, 2010 (detail)

Cynthia Girard
Peacock, 2010



**THE
WHITE
PEACOCK
*AND THE
BLACK
GLOVE***

by Cynthia Girard



I am a white peacock
 a black glove
 an intimate war is taking place in my body
 beauty is fighting hierarchy in all the trenches
 blue and red the armies are marching in my veins

the mirror is broken
 hundreds of eyes are watching me from the ground

the dungeon is my neck
 the fortress is my head
 and my train is an army of hundreds directed to their immediate death

My whip is a paintbrush
 my battlefield a palette
 I am a neo gothic bird whipping the old painter's fantasies
 exhausted
 I lay drunk on the grass with moonshine as my only company
 I am a peacock and a peahen
 long feathers waving
 female and male are making in my body, every cell is
 embracing the other
 the background is melting into the foreground
 I am a headless queen long since decapitated
 a feathered Marie-Antoinette
 my body covered in purple velvet walks restless
 as a house I will demand a guillotine

The birds are gone
 they have been hunted to extermination
 my dreams stand wingless
 they hardly rise above the ground and at their highest point in the sky
 they fall back heavily like thrown stones
 into the puddle of reality.

The sun-clock shines high above the ground like a stainless steel pot
 turning in the sky

I am in a state of awakesness but

My narrative is legless
 painting is a Sapphic moon
 turning into the Gulag of eternity

I am a ghost limb, a phantom, I live only within brushstroke sentences
 my body is empty like a glass of wine
 long gone
 the table is grey
 no promises have been made
 cigarettes are burning to their tips
 my body is a poem too difficult to read
 this prayer book made of skin and bones will remain unread

Only the ghosts of other painters come to visit me
 we have a drink at midnight under an oak tree

I show them my long tail dragging on the ground
 and to convince them of my strongest abilities I lift my tail open and
 exhibit the infinity of its feathers
 a hundred eyes blue green and purple scrutinizing us
 the eyes of my opened tail are tireless

The Sun-Clock walks endlessly in the sky:
It is time for rebellion
Oush! Oush! Oush!
I run East I run South I run West and I go to bed

The woman's legs are showing off, elongated like princess fingers
 waiting to be ringed:
we are a pair of crossed legs hanging in midair
a kite of flesh over
a garden of skin and bones
the flowers are blossoming like a man's moustache stroking our breasts
our body is of mesh enveloped
like a tuna in a net
we are a rainbow and a cloudy sky
a sun and a heavy rain
opposition embracing itself to suffocation

I stand motionless like a doughnut in the sky, fixed and framed for
 posterity. A cloud of butterflies are sucking away my chocolate crown:
We are painted doughnuts
not the real thing
painted food on a piece of paper
to seduce the viewer
our round shape is perfect
all we ask is that you slip your finger in the hole and lick our delicious
chocolate clean

I am a spill, a hurricane, a landslide, an earthquake disrupting our idea
 of stability, I am a spy, an impostor, my body contains hundreds of
 hands and they all want to share the brush, they fight over it, I lie on
 the floor stunned and motionless, the hands all paint together a chaotic
 landscape encompassing all visions, trying to destruct every ideology.

I am a boat long lost in the storm of fantasy

I want to play all the roles
 I am the table:
I crawl on my four legs and listen to the lovers promises
like a line in a perspective drawing
a horizon

I don't want to choose
 I will be them all:
 the peacock, the glove, the table, the legs, the sun-clock and the
 doughnuts
 drowning in the sea of multiple identities.

My bed will always be a canvas
 and like a sleep walker
 my dreams will come true.

Cynthia Girard
The Black Glove and the Peacock

June 25 - August 29











ARTIST AND WRITER BIOGRAPHIES

Cynthia Girard

Cynthia Girard is a visual artist and writer, born in Montreal in 1969. Solo exhibitions include: *Cynthia's Revels*, at September Gallery, Berlin (2009), *Tous les oiseaux sont ici at Kunstlerhaus Bethanien*, Berlin (2009), *La secte de la souris volante at Oboro*, Montréal (2007), *Locked Up* at SPACE, London (2006) and *Fictions sylvestres* at Musée d'art de contemporain de Montreal (2005). She has participated in numerous group exhibitions, such as *Anthem* at Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa and Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff (2007-2008) and *La triennale québécoise* at Musée d'art de contemporain de Montreal (2008). In 2010, Girard completed a one-week residency at the Dunlop Art Gallery in Regina, SK in order to research the permanent collection as a source of inspiration for a new solo exhibition, *The Black Glove and the Peacock*, held in the same year at the DAG. In 2008-2009, she was artist in residence at Kunstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, which was awarded by Le conseil des arts et des lettres de Quebec, and in 2005-6, she was artist in residence at the Canada Council for the Arts studio at SPACE in London, U.K. From 2007-2008, Girard was invited as a guest artist to teach in the studio art department at Concordia University in Montreal. Girard received her MA in Fine Arts from Goldsmiths College in London in 1998 and her BA in Visual Art from Université du Québec à Montréal in 1995. Her work belongs in the permanent collections of Musée d'art de contemporain de Montreal and Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. She has published several collections of poems, including *Le soleil et l'électron at Triptyque* in 2005. In 2010, Girard's first novel will be released, entitled *J'ai percé un trou dans ma tête*, éditions Hélotrope, Montréal. She is represented by September Gallery in Berlin.

Helen Marzolf

Helen Marzolf is Director of Open Space, an interdisciplinary artist-run centre in Victoria BC, and former Director of the Dunlop Art Gallery (1991-2001). In addition to chasing funding and other arts administrative pleasures, she has organized recent curatorial installations *Bamberton: Contested Landscape* by Cedric and Nathan Bomford and *Circuitous Routes: Excess/Abundance* by Wendy Welch. Her curatorial practice is that of a passionate generalist. Currently she is surrounded by Tracey Nelson's installation of an imposing coven of sock monkeys and a robotic drawing machine and Alison Peabworth's touring Wild West show *Beautiful Possibility*.

Amanda Cachia

Amanda Cachia has been Director/Curator of the Dunlop Art Gallery since November 2008. Previously she was Dunlop Art Gallery Curator (June 2007-October 2008) and Assistant Curator (January-May 2007). Cachia was born in Wollongong, NSW, Australia. She received her BA/BCA from the University of Wollongong (1999), and an MA in Curatorial Studies from Goldsmiths College, University of London (2001). This was followed by internships at the Museum of Modern Art and the Dia Centre for the Arts in New York. Other internships include Tate Modern, London, National Gallery of Australia and Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia. In 2004 she immigrated to New York City and worked as Assistant Director at Cynthia Broan Gallery in Manhattan and Program Manager at Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art in Newark, New Jersey until 2006. Prior to that, previous positions held were Curator of the New England Regional Art Museum in Armidale, NSW, Australia (2003-2004) and Director of the Blake Prize for Religious Art one of Australia's oldest and most established art prizes (2002). In 2008, Cachia curated *Pandora's Box* for the Dunlop Art Gallery, which toured to Plug-In ICA, Winnipeg, MB in 2009, followed by Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, ON in 2010. Cachia also curated *Diabolique* in 2009, which has toured to Galerie de l'UQAM in Montreal and the Kenderdine Art Gallery, University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon in 2010. *Diabolique* will also be held at Oakville Galleries, Ontario in fall, 2010 and the Military Museums in Calgary, Alberta in summer, 2011. Other curatorial projects for the Dunlop Art Gallery include *Mind the Gap!*, co-curated with Jeff Nye in 2009, touring to five Saskatchewan venues from 2011-2012 in addition to the Ottawa Art Gallery in 2011 as part of the national Prairie Scene arts festival, *Geoffrey Farmer: Ongoing Time Stabbed With A Dagger, Green is the Colour: The Art of Rider Pride, Linda Duvall: Where were the Mothers?*, all in 2010, *Daniel Barrow: Learning to Love the Normal Amount* (2009) and *Garden Folk* (2008).

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Stanley Brunst

Stanley Brunst was born in Birmingham, England, in 1894, and immigrated with his family to Canada sometime between 1909 and 1914. His formal education ended at Grade 7 in an English orphanage school. He was a self-taught painter, except for one evening class led by well-known Saskatchewan artist Augustus Kenderdine at the University of Saskatchewan, in the early 1930s. Brunst moved to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 1923 and lived there until 1941, when he and his wife moved to Vancouver. He spent his working life in a dry cleaning plant, but actively participated in the art scene in both cities. He was considered a radical painter during his years in Saskatoon, in part because he disregarded traditional art practices and because he chose scenes from his everyday experiences for his watercolours and drawings. His conscious commitment to abstract art in 1936 placed him ahead of many of his contemporaries. Some of his best works were done after 1936, as he combined abstraction with bright colours in his works. Even after he moved to Vancouver he often used drawings and sketches he had done in Saskatoon as the basis of paintings. Brunst believed that the highest levels of creativity were achieved when the artist could tap into the subconscious mind. His belief in the power of spontaneous art may have been a justification for his lack of education and formal art training, but it also contributed to his strong personal vision. Brunst had three solo exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery. A retrospective of his work was presented at the Mendel Art Gallery in 1982. Brunst died in 1962 in B.C.

Ann Harbuz

Ann Harbuz was an early Saskatchewan settler and immigrant of Ukrainian descent. She loved to paint and she produced a large number of works relating to what she knew and observed in her local environment. She was a self-taught artist and considered to be part of the Folk Art tradition. Ann Harbuz was born in Winnipeg Manitoba of Ukrainian descent in 1908. She lived most of her life in Saskatchewan and settled with her husband in North Battleford. Ann's painting career was initiated in 1967 after seeing the works of her neighbour. Ann was a painter who told stories, recording on canvas images of the early years of her life in rural Saskatchewan. Ann's paintings refer to her Ukrainian heritage as well as capturing elements of the experience of all Prairie pioneers. Her work is complex, with elaborate over-painting and perspective. Among subjects treated are local farms and homesteads, village business establishments, scenes from everyday pioneer life, dances, ritual activities and country chores. Ann held a solo show at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge in 1982. Her work was featured at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in an exhibition June, 1997 together with the work of Maud Lewis. Ann Harbuz is well known as Western Canada's Maud Lewis with several pieces of artwork in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, the Saskatchewan Arts Board in Regina as well as important public and private folk art collections across Canada. She has also been featured in several prominent Canadian folk art books. Ann died in 1989.

Roland Keevil

Roland Keevil was born in New Malden, England, 02 July 1884 and died in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 25 April 1963. He was descended from an English family which proudly traced its ancestry to Nicholas De Kevilly who lived in Wiltshire in 1330. The family prospered as farmers and traders of produce and by the 18th century had become one of the leading middle-class families in the West Country. By 1900, as Keevil and Weston, they were one of the largest wholesale poultry and game suppliers in England. Roland was educated at St. John's College in Brixton where he briefly studied art under a "well known artist", completing one painting which was placed in the Great Hall of the school. He spent time in London art galleries and was "a great lover of paintings" which he saw there. He also spent some time in the south of France, for he once remarked that the quality of light there was similar to that in Saskatchewan. Despite his early artistic training, Keevil did not paint again until he neared retirement in Saskatoon. The Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon mounted a retrospective exhibition of his work in 1998.

William C. McCargar

William C. McCargar was born on December 28, 1906, in Newcastle, Ontario and grew up in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. A self-taught folk artist, he worked for many years for the Canadian Pacific Railway in Balgonie. He started painting as a hobby in 1958, and had his first exhibit, entitled *Windmills, Wagons and Railroads*, at the Dunlop Art Gallery in 1973. McCargar exhibited regularly with the Saskatchewan Arts Board annual exhibition, as well as in other local Regina shows. His work was featured prominently in *Grassroots Saskatchewan* at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in 1976 and in the magazine *Artscanada* in 1979. He also had a solo show at the Rosemont Art Gallery in Regina in 1975. McCargar died on February 18, 1980. In April 1987, the Dunlop Art Gallery held a major exhibition of his works entitled *McCargar: Retrospective Exhibition*. He often painted images of rural Saskatchewan, capturing the all-familiar prairie manmade elements: grain elevators, trains, and telephone poles. His work is found in a number of private and public collections, including the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull (Quebec), the Mendel Art Gallery (Saskatoon), the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the University of Saskatchewan.

Fred Moulding

Fred Moulding was born in England in 1897. As a boy he worked in an English textile factory. Later he homesteaded in Saskatchewan and remained a farmer all of his life. Self-taught, he started to work on his carvings in 1960. He recreated in miniature the farm implements and wagons of his early farming days. His work is represented in the collections of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the Mendel Art Gallery, Esso Resources, the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, the Museum of Man and many private collections. He died in 1993 in Regina.

Sam Spencer

Sam Spencer was born in Worcester, England in 1898, and was orphaned early. He immigrated to Canada with his paternal grandmother in 1903. He grew up on a homestead in the Touchwood Hills near Punnichy, Saskatchewan, with his grandmother and bachelor uncle. Spencer favoured occupations which permitted him to work outdoors. At the age of twelve he began to earn his living as a trapper, then worked in construction before returning to the family farm in 1926. It was during this period that Spencer began carving, an activity he would continue after he retired in Saskatoon in 1941. The subject matter of Spencer's carvings is drawn from popular culture, religious icons and a deep appreciation of the natural world. Spencer strived for what he described as 'life expression' in his works...His human figures and wildlife subjects convey far more than an external reality. They are portraits, heroically enshrined and always imbued with the artist's admiration and respect. Not surprisingly, Spencer's reputation as a folk artist grew beyond his immediate community. By 1979 Spencer's health had deteriorated considerably and he became concerned about the fate of his carvings. He wanted his life's work to remain intact as a collection and agreed to sell the majority to the Canadian Museum of Civilization. He boarded with the Vanstelandt family who lived nearby, and, until his death in 1988 spent his days at his own home working on a new series of carvings. The Dunlop Art Gallery organized an exhibition of his work in 1992.

Jan Wyers

A self-taught artist of vernacular subjects from the village of Windthorst, Saskatchewan, Jan Gerrit Wyers' work was championed by the generation of well-educated artists emerging in Regina around 1960, and then again by the generation emerging in the 1970s. He was born at Emmer, a farming community within the municipality of Steenderen near Arnhem, in The Netherlands. He left home in 1913 and settled near Windthorst in 1916 as a farmer, a career from which he retired in 1960. A lifelong bachelor, Wyers' activities during the 1930s included bootlegging and patenting an animal trap. He took up painting later in the decade. Wyers began exhibiting his work in provincial exhibitions in the 1950s, and in 1956 received an Award of Merit for the painting *The First Saskatchewan Harvest* in the annual exhibition of the Saskatchewan Arts Board. In 1959, the National Gallery of Canada included eight of his paintings in its exhibition *Folk Painters of the Canadian West*, which traveled extensively in Canada and the United States. That year, Ronald Bloore, director of the MacKenzie Art Gallery purchased his *Good Old Thrashing Days* from this show for the gallery's permanent collection. A few months after Wyers' death in Regina in 1973, the National Gallery of Canada mounted the comprehensive national survey exhibition of historical and contemporary folk art *People's Art: Native Art in Canada*, which included two of his works. Wyers worked from close observation, memory, and magazine or book illustrations. His subjects, which

he repeated several times, were taken from everyday experience and included harvesting, horses in pasture, farmsteads, cats and dogs, and self-portraits. His strong and colourful paintings are a moving tribute to life on the prairies. During the 1970s, the relationship intensified between folk artists and several contemporary artists from the Regina area, including Vic Cicansky, Joe Fafard and David Thauberger. This enthusiasm for folk artists stemmed from their straightforward expression of experiences of life on the prairies, and was a catalyst for their own vernacular expression. Wyers is remembered as a pioneer artist within a community of like-minded artists, rather than an isolated folk artist.

LIST OF WORKS

All measurements are in centimetres. Height precedes width precedes depth.

1 Stanley Brunst
Landscape, Abstract, 1935
watercolour on paper
31.0 x 23.0
Collection of the Regina
Public Library PC91.2

2 Stanley Brunst
Night Firing, 1937
watercolour on card
31.1 x 27.31
Collection of the
MacKenzie Art Gallery,
gift of the Brunst Estate,
1991-041

3 Stanley Brunst
Untitled (abstract
landscape), 1944
oil on panel
60.9 x 45.9
Collection of the Mendel
Art Gallery, purchased
1988, 1988.18.9

4 Cynthia Girard
Ants and Vultures, 2010
acrylic on canvas
182.88 x 152.4
Collection of Cynthia Girard

5 Cynthia Girard
Bird Cut-out, 2010
acrylic on canvas
25 x 30
Collection of Cynthia Girard

6 Cynthia Girard
Black Glove, 2010
Cardboard structure
mounted on wooden chair
with belt
328 x 90 x 90
Collection of Cynthia Girard

7 Cynthia Girard
Doughnut 1, 2010
paper and wood structure
102 x 117
Collection of Cynthia Girard

8 Cynthia Girard
Doughnut 2, 2010
paper and wood structure
102 x 117
Collection of Cynthia Girard

9 Cynthia Girard
Feeding the Birds, 2010
acrylic on canvas
152.4 x 182.88
Collection of Cynthia Girard

10 Cynthia Girard
Glove, 2010
paper and wood structure
290 x 130
Collection of Cynthia Girard

11 Cynthia Girard
Orange Julep, 2010
acrylic on canvas
46 x 46
Collection of Cynthia Girard

12 Cynthia Girard
Peacock, 2010
acrylic on canvas
41 x 51
Collection of Cynthia Girard

13 Cynthia Girard
Peacock costume, 2010
paper and wood structure
on easel
various dimensions
Collection of Cynthia Girard

14 Cynthia Girard
*Pussy Willows and Easter
Eggs*, 2010
acrylic on canvas
182.88 x 152.4
Collection of Cynthia Girard

15 Cynthia Girard
Sun-Clock, 2010
paper and wood structure
152 x 178
Collection of Cynthia Girard

16 Cynthia Girard
Table, 2010
paper and wood structure
245 x 225
Collection of Cynthia Girard

17 Cynthia Girard
The Black Glove, 2010
paper
40.5 x 32
Collection of Cynthia Girard

18 Cynthia Girard
*The Nuthatch and the
Stadium*, 2010
acrylic on canvas
41 x 51
Collection of Cynthia Girard

19 Cynthia Girard
The Owl and the Mouse,
2010
acrylic on canvas
182.88 x 152.4
Collection of Cynthia Girard

20 Cynthia Girard
The Tree and the Snake,
2010
acrylic on canvas
182.88 x 152.4
Collection of Cynthia Girard

21 Cynthia Girard
Woman's legs, 2010
paper and wood structure
350 x 100
Collection of Cynthia Girard

22 Ann Harbuz
Bowl of Easter Eggs, 1976
acrylic and pen on
masonite
30.5 x 40.6
Collection of Veronica and
David Thauberger

23 Roland Keevil
Ranch Scene-Foothills, 1957
oil on canvas board
55.9 x 76.2
Collection of Veronica and
David Thauberger

24 Roland Keevil
Untitled (Highway and
Mountains), 1961
oil on canvas
45.7 x 60.9
Collection of the Regina
Public Library PC90.8

25 William McCargar
Untitled (Morning After
The Night Before), n.d.
watercolour, gouache,
graphite pencil on paper
20.6 x 30.3
Collection of the Regina
Public Library PC87.10

26 William McCargar
Untitled, n.d.
gouache, pastel, wax
crayon, graphite pencil
and glitter on construction
paper
26 x 36.6
Collection of the
MacKenzie Art Gallery,
gift of Veronica and David
Thauberger 1990-037

27 William McCargar
Untitled (Sunset), c. late
1960's
watercolour, pastel and ball
point pen on paper
52.5 x 69
Collection of Jack Severson

28 Fred Moulding
Untitled (Pig Butchering),
c.1975
wood, string, tin, plaster,
paint
31 x 26 x 14
Collection of the
MacKenzie Art Gallery,
gift of Veronica and David
Thauberger 1998-050

29 Fred Moulding
Weasels, c. 1970
wood, plaster and paint
9.5 x 15 x 19.5
Collection of Susan
Whitney

30 Sam Spencer
Untitled (Three Birds in
Tree), 1982
carved relief, enamel on
wood
27.9 x 43.2
Collection of the
MacKenzie Art Gallery,
gift of the Estate of Sam
Spencer, 1992-063

31 Sam Spencer
Untitled, n.d.
carved varnished wood
34 x 28
Collection of Susan
Whitney

32 Jan Wyers
Winter Pasture, 1967
oil on masonite
59.7 x 77.5
Private collection

33 Jan Wyers
Working on the Farm, n.d.
oil on board
60 x 65
Private collection

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The Black Glove and the Peacock would not be without the enthusiasm, energy and effervescence of the artist Cynthia Girard, who embraced the themes and the work of Saskatchewan artists so readily. It has been very pleasurable working with you Cynthia and I thank you for bringing such beauty, light and darkness to your new works, to hang alongside others, for the enjoyment of our Regina audience. I also pay homage to all seven folk artists who hang alongside Cynthia's work in this special exhibition: Stanley Brunst, Ann Harbuz, Roland Keevil, William McCargar, Fred Moulding, Sam Spencer and Jan Wyers.

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Amanda Cachia

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Cynthia Girard

CYNTHIA GIRARD: THE BLACK GLOVE AND THE PEACOCK

June 26 - August 29, 2010

Curated by Amanda Cachia

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