

PRESS RELEASE

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LANDSCAPES: *GROUP EXHIBITION*

November 16 to December 30, 2011

MONTREAL, November 16, 2011 – This comprehensive exhibition deals with landscape as a theme, and builds bridges between various generations of artists with quiet intelligence and assiduous understanding of what makes good art tick. The show includes a range of artworks by Janieta Eyre, Anselm Kiefer, Ron Martin, David Rabinovich, Leslie Reid, Richard Serra and Monika Weiss. As a survey show, this one traverses generations, styles, and media. British-born photographer Janieta Eyre's *Rain* (2011) is a still narration using a combination of imagery and pure visual effect. The integration of multiple references within a single work causes the viewer to build a story, a fictional narrative, and to build a meaning out the various visual and photographic elements within a single work of art.

Central to the Landscape show is a major Anselm Kiefer piece titled *The Web of Autumn Runes* (2003). Using a dense surface of oil and acrylic media, Kiefer produces the effect of an earthscape in a gallery setting. Always imbued with historical, mystical and metaphoric connotations, Kiefer's art builds a landscape of memory, whose potential references include violence, war as well as a potential for healing, for achieving a new balance through it all. It is very rare to see substantial works by Anselm Kiefer on view in Canadian venues, so this makes Landscapes a must see show!

Canadian Ron Martin, who represented Canada at the Venice Biennale in 1978, combines a painterly immediacy with vivid colour in a painting that catches and hangs on the edge between abstraction and visual recognition. *Flat Container* (1991) could be a garden of flowers, or it could be purely visceral painterly action art by one of Canada's old standards. This piece is a Canadian collector's museum worthy choice!

Internationally renowned artist David Rabinovich, whose exhibition venues include the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (1988) and the prestigious Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris, France (1993) provides a minimalist floor sited steel sculpture that is effective as an integrative artwork. Combining traditional industrial materials with an aesthetic preoccupation, this Rabinovich produces a zone of perception through its angular, purist metasculptural dialogue.

For Monika Weiss, the body is a landscape and vice versa. Her intimate, sensitively rendered graphite and charcoal on paper works effectively build their bio-narration with a resounding sense of the ephemeral, transitory nature of life itself. Several small-scale works that integrate layers of paper with drawn elements bring a causal time related aspect to these works, as if the traces we visually read and interpret were part of a largely unrecorded, even sacred personal history.

Body and landscape fuse together in Ivan Chuikov's art. The juxtaposition of a colorful outline body surface with a landscape view of a surface horizon of sea and sky generates a dialogue on memory and place. Body superimposed on a view of landscape, the landscape as a body itself... Photography and painting likewise come together in Chuikov's process, just as the body and landscape do. Another landscape horizon is turned and angled, and transformed into a fragmentary cloud/icon. Pure blue colour above associatively becomes sky, while superimposed white cloud forms build a layered depth to the way we read this. Is it a memory, a landscape? Always interpretive Chuikov adds that extra quintessentially human dimension to our understanding of what a landscape is or could be.

Leslie Reid's *Calumet: Ellipse* (2010) is a scene right in nature, of swimmers in a river. Here, the atmosphere presents nature close up in a realistic style. The "substance" of the landscape is less significant than the reflective surfaces, ripple and wave patterns of light. And so Reid reframes the landscape and yet is the only artist in this show to present actual faces, personages within a nature setting. Yet the aura of this painting is less about Romanticism, or nostalgia than recognition of an illusionary moment in time. These two swimmers engulfed by nature make it seem all powerful, and recalls Northrup Frye's comment in *The Bush Garden* that Canada was a country that evolved differently than America, in that civilization comprised islands of civility surrounded by nature. In this case the two swimmers surrounded by nature express something of that spirit. As an evocation of the force of life, and our place in nature, Leslie Reid's painting is cathartic and engaging as artworks go.

Richard Serra needs no introduction. *Managua* (1986) is a full-scale wall piece painted with oil stick on Belgian canvas. Serra's rapport with space, with architecture, and art as the medium is unassailable. In New Zealand, Serra made a 257 metre long winding wall of CorTen steel titled *Te Tuhirangi Contour* (1999-2001). The success of his exhibitions confirms Serra's place as one of the living masters of American sculpture. The triangular flag-like *Managua* is both human and architectural in scale. This piece is characteristic of Serra's art and works well in the scale of the Samuel Lallouz gallery space.