

# THE BEST OF THE REST

## Other artists who have changed the face of sculpture in Canada

### Kim Adams

Canadian sculpture's horseman of the apocalypse, Adams has developed a reputation for his hybrid creations that sometimes look like Home Hardware on an acid trip. Scale is one of his favourite toys to play with; his works are either impossibly big (two minivans joined at the snout, or sculptures involving mini-tractors or prefabricated sheds) or impossibly small, like his compelling models of miniature artist-colony utopias built out of model kits and inhabited by swarms of inch-high citizens. His little *Attempted Kiss* (2001), which surfaced at the Canadian Art Gallery Hop auction this fall, is particularly timely, a whimsical Popeye-meets-Olive Oyl reprise of the Rodin classic.

### Brian Jungen

This British Columbia wunderkind hit the art-world radar in the late 1990s with his suite of what seemed like ceremonial Northwest Coast masks. In fact, they were made from Nike sneakers, cut up and re-assembled in ingenious ways. Then, last year, *Shapeshifter* rocked our world — an enormous white whale skeleton, meticulously fashioned from dismembered plastic lawn chairs, which has found a permanent home at the National Gallery of Canada. Next year, Jungen will have a show at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, where he will continue his subversive recycling campaign, possibly extending it to include the fabrication of blankets, armour and other ceremonial effects.

### Geoffrey Farmer

Another emerging talent in Vancouver, Farmer is making a name for himself with his quirky cartoon-like drawings and idiosyncratic sculptures. At the Art Gallery of Ontario last year, he showed his *Hunchback Kit*, a film crate fitted out with everything for the aspiring denizen of Notre Dame. These days, you can see his work in the exhibition *Promises* at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, where his new *Puppet Kit* is on show — a film crate full of Muppet necessities plus a video of a hand-made Oscar the Grouch snoring up a storm — a fuzzy reprise, perhaps,



Eric Cameron's Crouching lobster after 3,353 coats of paint.

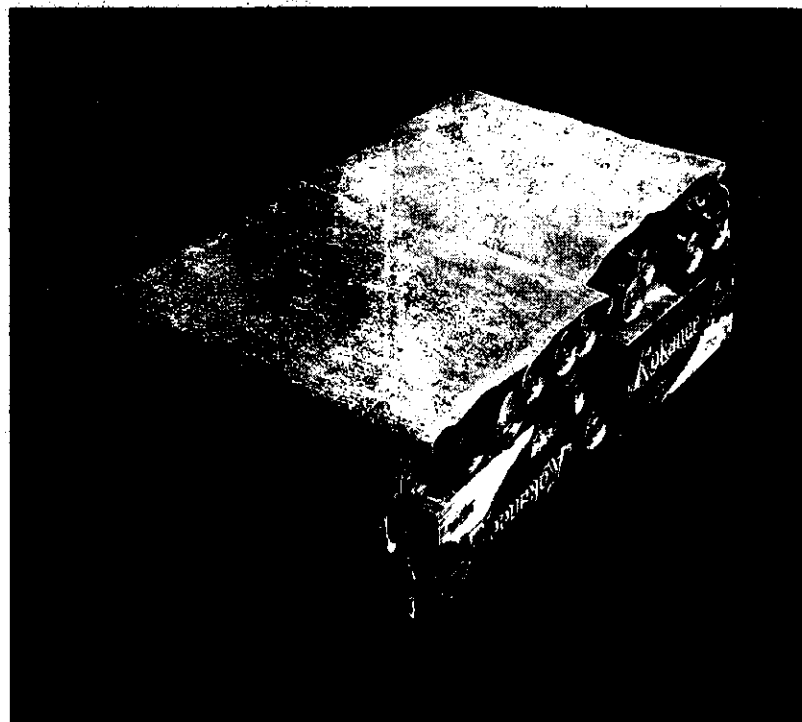
of Warhol's *Sleep*. Meanwhile, at the Catriona Jeffries Gallery, he is wreaking havoc with a month-long construction project that changes each day, culminating in a closing party next Friday.

### Germain Koh

When she is not making smoke-signal sculptures or hanging out in shop windows doing performance art, Toronto artist Germaine Koh is probably to be found beavering away at her epic *Knitwork*, a giant scarf made of unraveled found garments (sweaters, mittens, scarfs) that she has been working on for a decade. The resulting object, which may be the ultimate exemplar of art for a cold climate, is now roughly 60 metres long, and the size of a VW Beetle when heaped in a pile. Endearingly, it seems to hold within it the collective karma of all the sweater wearers who have unwittingly contributed to her effort. At the end of November, Plug In gallery in Winnipeg will open a survey of Koh's sculptural career to date curated by Contemporary Art Gallery's new director, Christina Ritchie — a show not to miss.

### John McEwen

For more than 20 years, McEwen has been a sculptor to watch, executing his works in the flame-cut steel that has become his trademark medium. It's McEwen who made the star-spangled *Search Light*, *Star Light*, *Spot Light*. (Who but he would have thought to evoke light with heavy metal?) Outside Toronto's Air Canada Centre. Others will recognize him for his cutout

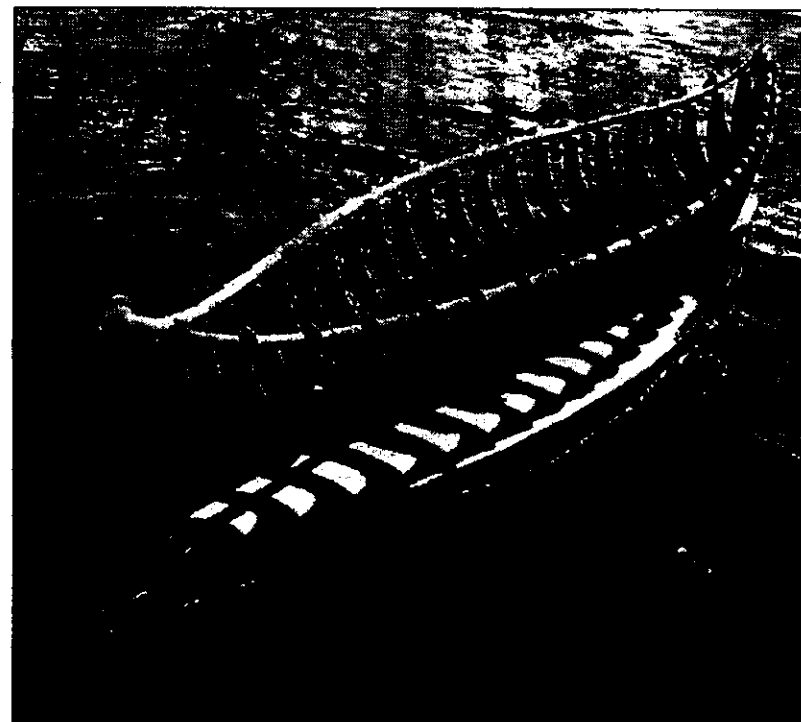


Liz Magor's Double Cabinet (blue): Redefining realism with towels made of latex concealing beer cans.

profile sculptures of wolves, which rove several sites around the city. His show opening today at the Olga Korper Gallery in Toronto includes a work he showed last summer on Montreal's Lachine Canal — a pairing of a bear and a phantom canoe, gloriously rusted to a warm cedar gold.

### Sarah Stevenson

Though Stevenson continues in the tradition of body art for which Montreal is so widely noted (Genevieve Cadieux, Betty Goodwin, Jana Sterbak), her work has a decidedly more buoyant feel. Some of her works are presented in small wooden vitrines, while others,



COURTESY OF OLGA KORPER GALLERY

### John McEwen's phantom canoe.

for us, never left. Moving on to study at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, she immediately set about creating her melancholy and moving testimonials to political suffering, which evoke, as well, the transience that is a part of all mortal human experience. Her village of diaphanous huts, a kind of ghostly refugee camp of the mind, was the standout piece at the National Gallery of Canada's Crossings exhibition in 1998. Until Nov. 24, this work, titled *Cradle*, is being shown again in expanded form at the Galerie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. She is also showing her new work, *Tulala* — a poetic archive of notebook drawings made with pencil and smoke densely arranged in a sculptural vitrine.

### Liz Magor

Her sculptures have comprised everything from faux hollowed-out logs (stuffed with sleeping bags) to immaculate latex facsimiles of the scruffiest of backpacks (filled with real Cheezies) or, more recently, what appear to be stacks of towels concealing beer cans and soft drinks. While makeshift or transient culture is one of her abiding interests (she has executed a wonderful series of photographs of hippie shacks in the back woods of her native British Columbia), so too is the definition of realism, which she continues to press upon in interesting ways.

### Tom Dean

In the seventies, Dean established his reputation with *Floating Staircase*, a gigantic and willfully failed monument to entropy which he

eventually set ablaze on Lake Ontario. *The Excerpts from a Description of the Universe*, which followed, was an eccentric compendium of forms both haunting and bizarre. With his charred babies and long-tailed bronze she-dogs of the nineties, he created icons of Canadian sculpture that stick in the mind like burrs, and probe the darker reaches of the imagination. His most recent flock of swans and romping babies shown at the Toronto Sculpture Garden this summer, continue his exploration of the themes of fecundity and transformation.

### Stephen Schofield

Schofield has a thing for materials. For decades now, he has been finding new ways to use stuff — from metal to silk to plaster and cement. His earlier works involved stitching up humble and truncated little humanoid forms filled with sand that exude uncanny appeal. Of the same vintage are his sculptures of strange tumour-like appendages (actually cast from clusters of chicken eggs) that bloom from metal pipes — the very sort of thing you fear may be growing under the stairs in your basement. Most recently, he made a suite of fabric sculptures which have been soaked in sugar for stiffening and then inflated with a vacuum cleaner. Some look like puffed-up miniature garments or bodily organs; others are complex formal investigations of the fractal curve.

### Eric Cameron

What do you get when you dip a book of matches in 4,493 layers of white acrylic gesso and acrylic paint? You need wonder no more. Cameron now lives in Calgary, but for many years he taught sculpture (or was it painting?) at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. All the while, he has been devoting himself to these painstaking works which one could be forgiven for finding a tad compulsive. (They are only complete when they are sold or, he says, when he dies.) From the quotidian acorns of everyday objects — a dead fish, a beer bottle, a telephone directory, an alarm clock, a Danish pastry — bloom exotic ocean-trench-dwelling shapes that scarcely hint at what lies at their core. The resulting works, which he calls *Thick Paintings*, are testimonials to the sometimes unexpected poetry of the material world, and to the passage of time.

— Sarah Milroy