

Art by gay men at Centre for Art Tapes

By ROBERT STOODLEY

THE THIRD ANNUAL ART by Gay Men show opened March 12th at the Centre for Art Tapes in Halifax, featuring pieces by six Atlantic artists.

In contrast to previous shows in 1982 and 1983, this year's show was built around a theme, "Private Lives/Public Spaces." Robin Metcalfe, one of the exhibit's organisers and contributors, says the theme "reflects a common tension in gay men's experiences, between 'private' desire and perceptions and their social contexts and consequences."

Metcalfe's contribution to the show was *Reconnaissance*, a series of postcards and photographs with written texts. The images shown are of locations in Halifax such as the public gardens and the Lord Nelson Hotel; the accompanying texts describe the often invisible presence of gay men in public

places and the dichotomy of outdoor sex, a "private" activity in a public area.

The show's other organiser, Jim MacSwain, exhibited *The Spiral and the Map*, a multimedia piece comprising a map of downtown Halifax constructed from found objects, a large spiral made from stones, and a tape providing a commentary on the work. The spiral, says MacSwain in the commentary, represents his private life and is a symbol for "the processes that characterize both physical growth and the growth of understanding." The map, made from discarded materials found on the streets it represents, symbolizes "the consumer trap" of "the economic slavery of patriarchal power." Although MacSwain says gay people do not fit into consumer society, his map contains a great deal of phallic/homo-erotic imagery, such as a picture of a muscular model, a pepperoni wrapper, and a top view of the Columbia space shuttle.

Moncton multi-media artist Guy Duguay presented two pieces, *L'Oeuf Graine* and *Le Jet Eternel*. The first consists of a marker drawing directly on one wall of a male figure with a colour Xerox of hands covering the crotch. The piece is strongly reminiscent of da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, although Duguay considers it more closely related to a crucifix, with the various hands

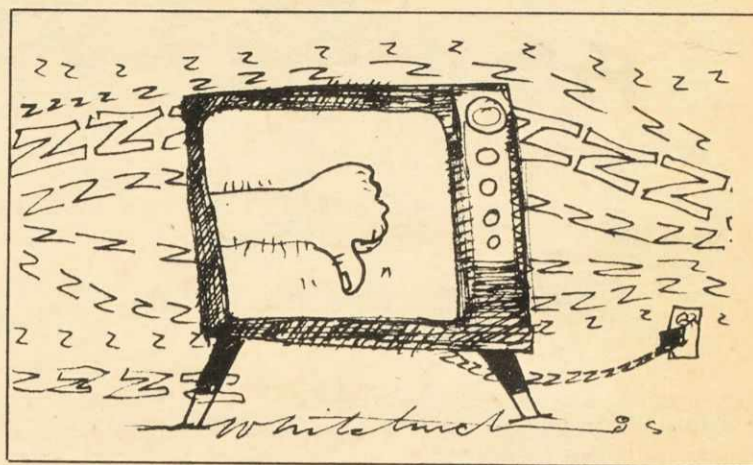
as the focal point. "I've been into hands for a while," says DuGuay. "It brings out wanting to touch art, to feel it."

The second piece, *Le Jet Eternel*, was one of the most commented-on exhibits in the show. It consists of a stoneware body cast of a man from the shoulders to the buttocks, hung on the wall with yellow nylon rope. Below this is a porcelain vase shaped like a penis with a spray of white dried flowers emerging from it, pointing at the buttocks of the stoneware cast.

"I like this one," says Duguay. "I keep it hanging over my stove in the kitchen. I toyed with the idea of putting the whole thing in a net, using more ropes and calling it *The Fisherman's Catch*. That way you'd get the seaman-/semen pun too. But I like it this way."

The other artists whose work was present at the opening were Ritchie Doucet, who showed a pair of acrylic-on-canvas paintings entitled *Washroom Sex—The Act* and *Washroom Sex—The Aftermath*, and Dan Anderson, with a short video about image and glamour called *Les Belles Images*. Greg Wight's pieces *Washroom Diptych* and *Washroom Triptych*, a "Photoxerograffiti series," were delayed in transit, and installed at the show on Friday, March 15th.

Thirty-two people showed up for the opening, says co-organiser Metcalfe. "We've had about 100 people at the Art by Gay Men show in the past. I'm hoping we'll get more than that this time around."



Bad videos...

By JEAN LEBLANC

WARNING: WATCHING THESE videos can bring along severe violent attacks of sleep.)

1. *Valotte*—Julien Lennon

What could be more incredibly dull than seeing Julien Lennon sitting at a piano, walking over to a stool and then sitting back down. This is truly a masterpiece of pure boredom. The late great director of the video must have used his immense talents to create such a work of incredible tedium. The little white dot that appears once you shut the television set off is more exciting than this video.

2. *Ebony and Ivory*—Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder.

Almost as boring as *Valotte*. In fact it would be if it was not for

Stevie Wonder's great head swinging. The winning stroke of this incredibly tedious video, is seeing both musicians sit around together for four minutes.

3. *I Want to Know What Love Is*—Foreigner

This video threatened to take Lennon's number one spot. Not only is the title too long, a good portion of the video is in slow motion. Its only salvation is the rather large woman in the New Jersey Choir. She gives the video about one second of minimum excitement.

4. *You're the Inspiration*—Chicago

Watching a group of men sitting in a room, singing a song is not my idea of exciting T.V. The video is almost saved by the Billy Idol and Madonna lookalikes, but they are not exploited enough.

5. *Too Late for Goodbyes*—Julien Lennon

The same as number one except that there is a mime in this video.

6. *Penny Lover*—Lionel Richie

Lionel is one of the biggest stars around right now. In this video he proves he can be one of the most uninteresting and dull. In this \$250,000 video, the people are dressed weird and are just escursively uninteresting.

7. *Drive*—The Cars

The whole video just falls apart. Rick isn't singing and there are hoards of people just standing around doing nothing. Blank walls have been known to be more interesting than this video.

8. *Method of Modern Love* (concert version)—Hall and Oates

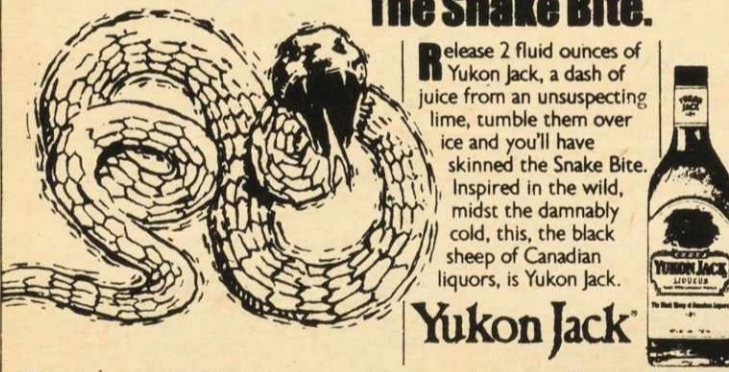
Are they really live in concert? I sometimes wonder when watching this video. It's hard to believe that living, breathing people could make a live appearance so incredibly mundane.

9. *Mistake Number 3*—Culture Club

I'd rather listen to the quotations of Chairman Mao than watch this video.

10. *The Longest Time*—Billy Joel

If you really want to go back to the 1950's, listen to Perry Como. Even listening to Como and watching a radio would be more exciting than this video.



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