

# New exhibition displays work of women artists

**Sylvie Bouchard**  
Partial view of installation at  
Appart'Art Actual Gallery,  
1984,  
oil on varnished plywood

Artistes Canadiennes/Canadian Women Artists is an exhibition that brings together the work of four women – Sylvie Bouchard, Susan Scott, Shelagh Alexander and Tomiyo Sasaki.

Painting, photography and video are the media they use. However, none of the women produces pure painting, formalist photography, or straight forward video.

They each use their chosen media in novel and inventive ways. This forces the viewer to look at things, that are normally taken for granted, in a new light.

**Sylvie Bouchard** was born in Montreal, in 1959. She studied visual arts at a college in Montreal and then at the University of Ottawa.

Her latest works consist of a series of installations formed of wood panels, which are varnished and painted with oils. These panels form routes for the spectator, who is led from one to the next. This notion distorts the traditional way of viewing a painting, since it forces the spectator to move, rather than to stand still and look.

Sylvie Bouchard's installations are inspired by the iconography of Renaissance. Streets, ladders, stairs and illuminated lanterns are the recurring figures she uses in her installations. These forms lead into fictional places, which contrast with the real places they purport to represent.

One of Sylvie Bouchard's latest installations is called *l'Observatoire des mille lieux* (1985) (The Observatory of a Thousand Places). As with much of her other work, a single point of view is impossible. The perspectives are distorted, the images doubled and sometimes reflected, and 'holes' suddenly open up and lead into different images and other places.

Although **Susan Scott** uses a more conventional format in her painting, she, too, alters the codes of pictorial tradition.



She was born in Montreal in 1949, graduated from high school at 15 and went to the Pratt Institute in New York. Until 1972, she studied at the Institute and six other art schools in the United States and Canada.

In 1980, she returned to Canada to teach painting. Now she lives in Montreal and lectures at Concordia University.

Her latest series of paintings are called *Are you really looking for me?* and *So you don't think this happens to other people?*

In one painting of the series *Are you really looking for me?* (No 8), Susan Scott has painted a telephone standing on a bright blue carpet beside an unmade bed. The presence of the person who has just got up can still be felt. The drama of a telephone conversation, or the distress of waiting for a call must (and can) be imagined. So the spectator is asked to complete the picture for himself.

The tension is accentuated by the composition, in which the bed forms a diagonal forcefully crossing the painting; by the working of colour; and by the whiteness of the crumpled sheets contrasting with the dark masses of the green cover and the blue carpet.

The pictures in this series are surrounded by a wide, white border in which is written the title phrase. These borders resemble those of a polaroid photograph, whose seizing of a fleeting moment is captured in the composition.



*Are you really looking for me?*



*Me chercher tu voudrais?*

**Susan Scott**  
Sixth in the series  
*Are you really looking for me?*,  
1985, oil on canvas,  
82 x 120 cm