

Alberta video art grows up

by Krista Solie

From the look of her studio, Cherie Moses is a busy person. On her walls is that latest paperwork she's creating. This work she says is a thematic successor to her previous works. They reflect the same concerns as her video. "But the works on paper change. They are different works than I would have made if I'd never made a video. So what happens for me anyways is a constant linking of what I did before into what I'm doing next."

Hers are among the videos showing at the Ringhouse Gallery's "A Tale of Two Cities". *Placing the Talent* focuses on a model's shooting session. We see only the model's torso as she reacts to the commands of four different photographers. Gradually these commands become more and more ludicrous, and we understand that the model is powerless to stop them.

"whether a dog was placed in front of the camera . . . or a person . . . or a monkey, it was all talent."

According to Moses, the video is "a metaphor for a situation where the person (in this case a female) is a silent partner to an activity . . . It's about the relentless do it again-do it this way-do it that way and then pushes to the point where it'd even be seductive, be angry. It has to do with the look of, for the sake of, a media activity. So it's very much a metaphor for that kind of manipulation, the kind of forcing someone to get in a position so that they will look natural, which is a real opposition in thinking."

Obviously it's a metaphor everyone can pick up on as it's been shown across the country and at the Montreal's Women's Film and Video Festival, which is international.

For Moses, the positive reaction has been a surprise because she was . . . being critical of media and critical of the position of the model in the media. I thought people would maybe find it a little too heavy or loaded or what ever. But it's (the reaction) been the exact opposite."

The idea for the video began when Moses took a video production class where

she was intrigued by the concept of talent. "One of the things hapening in the course was we would see instructional tapes about how you produce videos, and one of the common terminologies was talent. I found that quite humorous, because whether a dog was placed in front of the camera, or a person placed in front of the camera, or a monkey, it was all talent. So I thought of the idea of dealing with a video tape that looked at the notion of talent in front of the camera. That was the beginning of the idea." The actual formation of the video's script was unusual as Moses posed herself to figure out the model's movements and then wrote these poses into the script.

Video is the newest media Moses uses, however, she has had experience with photography, printmaking, sculpture, literature and theatre of the absurd, and is now the head of the Fine Arts Department at Grant MacEwan Community College.

Her interest in video stemmed from an interest in portraying movement. Recently she finds herself linking the different forms of art together. Her static work, she says is starting to look like it's come out of a video. "It (the static work) is very similar to video with a framing device, with the people enclosed in a very specific area that's defined in video by the monitor and in the case of my works on paper by the size of the sheet of paper. So there is that kind of framing device occurring in both situations. I am more consciously trying to link them together."

According to Moses, the subjects she deals with in her work are " . . . relationships, people in society, people facing each other, dealing with each other." For her the advantage of using video is its ability to tell narratives. Also, "video art is opposed to television, has attracted a certain type of audience who expect to

"Anyone can buy a typewriter, but can anyone write literature?"

have opinions, issues or critiques involved in what they are looking at."

The limitations of video are in the equipment and the expense. Moses believes that training is necessary to become a video artist. "Well, let me put it

to you this way: anyone can buy a typewriter, but can anyone write literature? The machinery doesn't make the art, it helps, it assists. It is really a knowledge base and a way to use the images and an understanding of how images work and how we represent things and what they mean." Therefore Moses tries to share this knowledge by teaching video in her multi-media course at Grant MacEwan.

What is next for Moses? Well, she is working on a new video. She says, "In a real general sense it is going to be about dignity, dignity in a circumstance where it's hard to maintain dignity." It should be as interesting as *Placing the Talent*.

"I thought people would maybe find it a little too heavy or loaded . . ."

by Krista Solie

Don't go to the Ringhouse Gallery's exhibition, *A Tale of Two Cities* expecting to see music videos. Instead, what you'll get is a variety of quirky images and ideas. The exhibition is a survey of Albertan art videos. The reason it's called *A Tale of Two Cities* is because it demonstrates the two main centers of video art: Calgary and Edmonton.

Anyway back to the quirky: although many of the videos have narratives to them, these were usually presented in a highly original manner. These are not the standard sex and violence music videos we're used to seeing. Many of these videos challenge the viewer's perceptions. Take for instance Heather Elton's *Wait for Me*. It is about women's relationships with the media, specifically in the world of modeling. There is no direct plot line but we gather that a model is picked up by a photographer who only cares for her looks. Before and during this relationship the woman is photographed in many different fashions — once she dressed as a business woman, another as a go-go dancer; but neither of these looks help her to achieve a successful relationship and eventually she becomes as lifeless as the manikin the photographer throws out of his apartment.

Another intriguing video is John Galloway's *Dream Voices, Day Voices*. Galloway examines how dreams affect our lives. A man's fears are expressed as he encounters his lover, his workmates and his parents, in his dreams. These sequences are whispered giving them an eerie feeling. But unfortunately the day sequences don't live up to the dream sequences, as we are told by a voice-over what the man does instead of being shown it.

A video that relies on pure image and sound is John Freeman's *Audio Effects Video*. The sounds on the video literally affects the images. When the sound pulsates so do the abstract images.

A slightly more conventional video is *Skeetz Daddyo* by Kyle and Ryan Wagner, and Don Stein. This video represents technology by having a man caught in a vise. The man's movements are as jerky and discordant as the video's music. However, when he tries to escape the vise, he is not successful. Another video with a science fiction theme is Charlie Fox's *Television Tells Me What To Do*. This time human lives are controlled by television announcements. Finally, in a rebellious response one man drinks himself to death while ignoring the television statements.

A more up-beat video is Marcella Bienvenue's *I Believe in Myself*. Despite continual opposition, a woman is able to assert herself by saying, "I believe in myself," thus reaffirming her dignity.

If you want humour, Henry Van Rijk's *Why Ask Questions????* supplies it. The video involves a writer trying to find the answer to "Why do we live?" He asks all sorts of people and gets several hilarious responses. However, he doesn't get an answer. Finally, he is so desperate that he asks his cat. Later frustrated, he abandons the question by throwing away his typewriter.

The most conventional video has to be *Land of Milk and Honey* by Vern Hume. It is a typical documentary of prairie life that is redeemed by its slow-motion photography of a rodeo.

Every exhibition has its failures and this exhibition is no exception. Alan Barkley's *Barn, Bridge, House, Trestle* commits the sin of being boring. It tries to illustrate architectural forms and movement, but presents nothing revolutionary. Instead it becomes *Sesame Street*-ish by moving across a trestle and then announcing "we went across (the trestle)." Grant Poier's *Abendstern* is an improvisation on the topic of stars, both the natural and celebrity types. Unfortunately, the actor becomes totally obnoxious as he rambles on reciting the names of Gloria Swanson, Charlie Chaplin and Laurence Olivier.

Yet, all in all, the exhibition is exciting and interesting, and certainly more intriguing than the typical music video. It cannot be said that the ideas presented in the videos are dull, even if the presentation is. If you want something more substantial than a regular music video, then certainly view the exhibition while it runs until Nov. 16.

Open your minds to Petra

Back To The Street
Petra
A&M Records

review by Scott Gordon

A while back, I wrote a review on Petra's live album and discussed their music in terms of philosophy. I will not repeat what I said then: "Open your minds, not your trends."

I have heard Petra studio albums before, most of which progressed from soft rock to hard rock to heavy metal-influenced. *Back To The Street* presents a harder, cleaner edge to their music and it works very well.

The title song and "Run For Cover" are the best cuts on the album, and they can very

comfortably stand up to any rock songs out today or from the past. The lyrics, of course, are Christian orientated. Nothing wrong with a different opinion and way of expression. The music is pure rock; hard, fast, and features excellent musicianship. The production, by Dino and John Elefante, is top notch and shames some producers of non-Christian rock and modern music.

I must emphasize that the music is great, and that is how Petra should be taken, pure and simple. If you are Christian, you will enjoy the lyrics and the hard-edged rock; if you are not a Christian, you will enjoy the music, and the lyrics are better than most today, if you even bother listening to them.

Yuk Yuk's

COMEDY LABARET

PROFESSIONAL STAND-UP COMEDY
NEW SHOW STARTS THURS. 9 PM.
November 6, 7 & 8

FRANK PRINZI (Los Angeles)

Poncho Parish (Buffalo)
Ken Valgardson (Edmonton)
as M.C.

DO YOU WANT TO BE A COMEDIAN?
IF SO, AFTER THE 9:00 P.M. SHOW
WE HAVE "OPEN MIKE". PUT A 5
MINUTE ROUTINE TOGETHER AND
SERVE IT TO A LIVE AUDIENCE.

THURS. STUDENT NIGHT
\$2. Cover

RESERVATIONS
BOX OFFICE HOURS
TUES. - SAT. 2-6 P.M.

466-2131
7103-78 AVE.

S.O.S. INFO CORNER

Student Ombudsman Service

Instructors are required to announce at the beginning of a course the manner in which the grading system is to be implemented, ie. the distribution used, any absolute measures used, or combinations of both.

Ensure that you have this information now to avoid problems later if dissatisfied with a mark.

For any assistance, advice or information on any University policies or related problems,

Please stop by:
Room 272 SUB
432-4689 (24 hrs.)

Pat Perron	Shawna Stonehouse
M W - 9-12	M - 3:30-6:00
F - 9-11	T R - 6-7
	W - 2-5

If you are unable to meet during these times, please leave a message to set a convenient time.