

## TRUE COLOURS

Canadians shine internationally  
in the visual and media arts

**O**n the international visual and media arts scene, Canada is gaining in stature. For proof, read the list of invited artists at the Venice Biennale, one of the world's leading arts events.



photo: courtesy Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller created the multimedia work *The Paradise Institute*, winner of the Special Award at the 2001 Venice Biennale.

In 2001 the Canada Pavilion featured *The Paradise Institute* by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller (see *Canada World View*, Issue 12, p. 10). The work won the Biennale's Special Award—a first for Canada—plus the Benesse Prize. Cardiff is known internationally for her “audio walks”; in these installations, visitors move physically through a narrative composed of sounds and story fragments. In *The Paradise Institute*, she and Miller created a hybrid of video, audio, sculpture and performance. The installation challenges perceptions and blurs the line between reality and fiction.

Another prominent Canadian at Venice two years ago was Jeff Wall,

recipient of the 2002 Hasselblad Foundation International Award in Photography. Wall has an outstanding body of work—rich, meticulously composed photographic images framed in back-lit boxes. The compositions appear both modern and reminiscent of 19th-century genre painting.

Canada's official representative at the 2003 Biennale will be Jana Sterbak of Montreal, Quebec, who burst on the scene in 1991 with her notorious *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic*. Made of raw meat, the dress sparked controversy when it was displayed at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. At this year's Biennale Sterbak will present *Through*

*Another Eye*. This is the working title for a multi-screen video installation that chronicles the adventures of Stanley, a young terrier, in Venice and on the banks of the St. Lawrence River.

Canadian artists appear not only in Venice but at similar events in Istanbul, São Paulo and Sydney, as well as at festivals and exhibitions around the world. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) helps them participate through the Visual and Media Arts Program run by its Arts and Cultural Industries Promotion Division. The program provides support on a number of levels, including the presentation of Canadian contemporary art