

Graham Gillmore

You do not belong to you,
1985; oil, tar, horn and
enamel on canvas;
427 × 274 cm

In the 1940s, a combination of existential lament for the human condition and an ardour for spiritual truth created the urgency of the abstract expressionist project. 'The Gang of Four' working in the fifth decade of the Cold War era, are de facto decadents. They revel in decrepitude and the opulence of ruin.

Nietzsche comes to mind when contemplating the production of these artists. The works are a combination of the brutal, the artificial and the 'innocent'; thus, to paraphrase the German philosopher, they speak all at once to the three senses of the modern soul.

The gratification these paintings offer is disturbing. Their sensual appeal is immense, the subject matter arouses our curiosity, the aura of transgression gives us a feeling of liberation from outmoded values. And, if the world of these paintings seems as if it comes to us from nineteenth century chambers long ago sealed shut by the avant-garde impetus of modern art, we nonetheless must recognize it as our own exhausted and enervated historical moment.

Derek Root's *The Hunter Home from the Hunt* — executed in a brilliant palette of putrescence, illuminated not by a new dawn but by the last flicker of light from the age of reason — presents us with a baroque heap of straw and slaughtered deer crowned by an infant.

Attila Richard Lukacs' large painting of a stadium is a pastiche of nineteenth century academic spectacles.

Angela Grossman's ghostly figures are literally embedded in the rubble and wreckage she paints them on. They emerge from the cheap plywood panels like stains.

In Graham Gillmore's transfigurations, we find ourselves inside a realm that is partly alchemical laboratory, partly crypt and entirely inside the body and its functions.

All four painters work their surfaces extensively, scraping, scratching, digging, as if they were excavating an archaeological site. Problems of composition are solved by casual reference to the piles of reproductions which litter their studio. These



same reproductions are the source of many of the figures in the paintings.

This pillage of European art history is conducted more or less frivolously and with nostalgia, like rifling through an old trunk in an attic. As North Americans, these painters are animated by the inarticulate and restless energy which is the basis of the New World experience.

Angela Grossman

Born in 1955 in London, England, moved to Canada in 1971. She studied journalism in Toronto and then attended the Emily Carr College of Art in Vancouver. Since 1982 she has exhibited in a number of Vancouver art galleries as well as the 49th Parallel Gallery in New York. She is at present working in a studio in Paris funded by the Canada Council, (an award for one year).

Graham Gillmore

Born in 1963 in Vancouver, he attended the Emily Carr College of Art in Vancouver. Since 1983 has exhibited mainly in Vancouver galleries and took part in an exhibition of Canadian painters in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.

Attila Richard Lukacs

Born in 1962 in Edmonton, Alberta, moved to Vancouver in 1981. He studied at the Banff School of Fine Arts and then went on to the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Victoria. Since 1983 has shown his work in a number of Vancouver galleries as well as in Houston, Texas, USA.

Derek Root

Born in 1960 in Vancouver, he has exhibited his work in a number of Vancouver galleries since 1982. He is at present working in London, England.

Angela Grossman
The Wedding, 1985;
enamel, oil and tar on
wood; 155 × 290 cm

