



National Gallery of Canada

Martha Hanna - Director, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography
Annual Public Meeting, December 1, 2008

Good evening

The Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, the affiliate museum of the National Gallery of Canada has a mandate to collect, interpret and make known contemporary Canadian photography, both as an art form and for its documentary value. I am please to have this opportunity to present some of the recent additions to the collection and to highlight CMCP's exhibition activity, and presence across the country.

New to the collection are photographs such as this still life by Montreal's Chih-Chien Wang. The still life photographs of Chih-Chien Wang transform everyday objects into exquisite visual statements, which exhibit an underlying tension of beauty and discomfort.

Robert Bourdeau is an Ottawa based photographer known for his technical mastery, and the formal excellence of his photographs. His photographs of abandoned industrial sites in North America and Europe on transition and the waning of the industrialized age. Rather than focusing on their utilitarian function, Bourdeau concentrates on their aesthetic qualities emphasizing a lyrical interplay of elements. For Bourdeau, these structures are not simply derelict or obsolete. Rather, they are in a transitory and transformative state.

Greg Girard, a Vancouver native, spends most of his timing working as a photojournalist, in Asia. In spectral colour, his series Phantom Shanghai aims to depict in his words, "Shanghai's lived-in-ness, the vanishing evidence of the hard flow of time through this city." In many of his photographs we see the transformation of Shanghai into a modern metropolis. Other purchases include photographs by artists Shelley Niro and Kent Monkman.

In his series Emergence of a Legend, Kent Monkman creates images that reference both the history of photography, and the representation of native peoples. In this photograph, which emulates an antique daguerreotype, Monkman's alter-ego appears, as a performer, from the wild west shows, which toured Europe in the late 1800s.



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Shelley Niro and Kent Monkman are represented in the current exhibition *Steeling the Gaze: Portraits by Aboriginal Artists*. This group exhibition explores representations of Aboriginal people by Aboriginal artists. The works of 12 celebrated artists are included. From the whimsical to the reverential, the poignant to the political, these artists refashion the view of Native people not only by way of the camera lens, but also through their own cultural perspectives.

To accommodate the temporary closure of the CMCP galleries at 1 Rideau Canal, a dedicated exhibition space for CMCP's exhibitions and programming was allocated at the National Gallery's main facility, in June, with the opening of the summer program, *Imaging a Shattering Earth*. For *Steeling the Gaze*, a banner on the exterior of the National Gallery gives greater prominence to the presence of the CMCP exhibition at the National Gallery. The exhibition is on view until the 22nd of March.

Opening next April is a solo exhibition of the work of Scott McFarland, titled, *A Cultivated view*. The garden is a recurring theme in McFarland's photographs, as well as depictions of our relationship with animals, as seen in his images of equestrian activity. These subjects represent the delicate balance that can be achieved between human and natural worlds. The cultivation of nature is echoed in McFarland's construction of the image. Not only does he use a large format camera, maintaining strict control of framing and composition, he also digitally alters the photograph to aesthetically control the final image.

Across the country, works on loan from the collection have been seen in exhibitions organized by other institutions. Twelve photographs taken by Sam Tata, in 1949, were a key element of the historic exhibition, "*Shanghai Kaleidoscope*" at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Collection works by Tim Clark were seen in Montreal, at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University. The works of Carlos and Jason Sanchez were on view at the Maison des arts de Laval, Montreal.

Suzy Lake's, *A Genuine Simulation of ...* was shown at the Vancouver Art Gallery as part of the exhibition *WACK! Art and Feminist Revolution*, a touring exhibition that was organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

In closing, I invite you to refer to the newly re-designed web site for additional information on CMCP's current and upcoming exhibition activities, in Ottawa, and on tour, across the country. Thank you.