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SKETCH

WINTER 2006

A Publication for the Alumni, Students, Faculty
and Staff of Ontario College of Art & Design

IMAGINATION
IS EVERYTHING



SKETCH

COVER
VISITORS ENJOY OCAD'S A GLOW IN THE DARK.
GEOFFREY PUGEN
(WITH COLLABORATORS JESI THE ELDER, CLAIRE EGAN, JOCELYNE TREMBLAY AND WILL HOURIGAN)
THE DAY ROOM, 2006
MULTIMEDIA INSTALLATION
PHOTO BY HORST HERGET

The Ontario College of Art & Design is Canada's "university of the imagination," engaging in education and research and contributing to the fields of art and design, local and global cultural initiatives, and knowledge and invention across a wide range of disciplines.

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A Publication for the Alumni, Students, Faculty and Staff of Ontario College of Art & Design

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



ON CAMPUS

OCAD continues to shine as we enter a stellar new calendar year.

Our brand-new strategic plan, “Leading in the Age of Imagination,” proposes our university as a vital resource for our contemporary times – an age where the rich fermentation of art and design will provide intrinsic and instrumental value. Like any great contemporary art or design work, the process of creating the plan has been as telling as its outcome. We dug deep into the past, brainstormed 15 years into the future, drew and sketched alone and together, debated and then focused back to the present. We engaged many – students, faculty, staff and alumni, our Academic Council and our Board of Governors as well as local and international creators and thinkers in the fields of art and design, science, engineering and business.

Students are the essence of OCAD. We are eager to energize our curriculum, campus, services and outreach in order to stimulate, support and reflect their talent. “Leading in the Age of Imagination” poses a challenge, but it is one that OCAD can meet with panache. Art and design require that learning be grounded in the experiential and embodied, with a coherent integration of concepts and ideas. OCAD will be a brilliant, specialized university, capable of significant research, with animated undergraduate and niche graduate programs – a clarion of art and design education.

Our university is energized – recent events and plans portend well for our future.

After a rigorous review, OCAD was admitted as a university member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Ontario’s Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has agreed to fund OCAD’s first graduate programs beginning in 2007/2008. We are opening a new Student Centre at 51 McCaul Street, designed by Baird Sampson Neuert Architects. It will provide splendid service and help student groups create a radiant on-site culture at OCAD. The imminent launch of a Web 2.0 approach to our website will initiate a spirited virtual community. Thanks to our newly gained eligibility, we are successful co-applicants in two research infrastructure proposals submitted to the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI). Our faculty has been increasingly successful in research awards and recognition. The exemplary work of Judith Doyle and Job Rutgers is discussed in this issue of *Sketch*. With post-secondary, industrial and government partners, we began CONCERT, a research and innovation consortium for cultural and entertainment industries.

We are linking OCAD with the diverse cultural and professional communities and neighbourhoods outside our walls. This fall, we dazzled more than 13,000 visitors with our memorable alumni show during Scotiabank Nuit Blanche, Toronto’s first all-night art extravaganza, and Look Inside, our second annual open house. Whodunit? The OCAD Mystery Art Sale was a magical success, raising more money than ever before to support OCAD students. Thank you! Our public lectures continue to draw record crowds to hear our roster of speakers, including Gary Younge, William Pope.L and Bruce Sterling. OCAD continues its internationalization with conference, paper and partnership travel to the U.K., France, Italy, Finland, Turkey, Korea, India and Mexico.

Our university remains active in public policy development. I am a member of the Minister’s Advisory Council for Art and Culture (MACAC) for the Honourable Caroline Di Cocco and an advisor for “Campus 2020: Thinking Ahead,” a review of post-secondary education for the Government of British Columbia.

OCAD is a multi-faceted creative jewel, able to refract, reflect and focus the potential of the Age of Imagination. We will need the fine setting of our partners, donors and government as well as the extensive multi-disciplinary and diverse communities around us to truly glitter.

—SARA DIAMOND

FROG POND

How fitting that Think Tank, a holistic three-year course informed primarily by the Faculty of Design's mission statement, is growing ponds. Think Tank encourages students to create objects, communications, environments and experiences that nurture community, humanize technology, satisfy human needs, respect the environment, employ sustainable principles and empower individuals.

At the end of the 2004 fall semester, enthusiastic Think Tank students challenged their professors to create an initiative that would help them tackle real projects of genuine value, both to communities and society at large. These students sought to apply what they were learning in the classroom beyond the classroom.

In the fall semester of 2005, three professors – Bruce Hinds, Lewis Nicholson and Keith Rushton – along with a small group of first-, second- and third-year students from the Faculty of Design grew Frog Pond. This student-mentor enterprise made its primary goal the partnering of students with organizations outside of OCAD. The organizations would have real needs and problems, which required sustainable or innovative solutions. To meet these needs and create solutions to these problems, Frog Pond founders would “grow” many “ponds,” comprised of students from all years at OCAD, and instructors from all faculties in the university.

Frog Pond's internal initiative involves a core group of student leaders. This group will eventually grow their own ponds in order to bring interested students into projects generated by Frog Pond mentors. Already in the

works are project alliances with the City of Toronto; Participation, Acknowledgment, Commitment and Transformation (PACT), a not-for-profit crime-reduction program for young offenders; and a women's initiative out of Africa.

Students or faculty interested in Frog Pond are welcome to contact Keith Rushton (krushton@faculty.ocad.ca).

BELOW

MARTHA DIGBY BOYLE, CHAIR, WHODUNIT PREVIEW EVENING COMMITTEE; EVENING EMCEE GORD MARTINEAU; AND AUCTIONEER JAY MANDARINO WITH TONY SCHERMAN'S PAINTING, *TERESA'S EVIL TWIN*. PHOTO BY ALINE SANDLER

PG3

WHODUNIT?

What the National Post calls “The \$75 Question” had at least 3,500 people guessing during this year's Whodunit? Mystery Art Sale. On Saturday, November 25, 2006, that \$75 question raised a record \$175,000 in support of the student experience at OCAD. This staggering achievement is just one of the many that marked the fifth anniversary of Whodunit?

The BOMBAY SAPPHIRE® Blue Lounge took centre stage in the Auditorium on November 22, 2006, when 500 Preview Evening guests gathered over delicious martini cocktails and more than a thousand pieces of mystery art. This year's gala event was hosted by City TV news anchor Gord Martineau and featured a live auction. On the block were nine pieces of celebrity art – the only art that wasn't a mystery.

But the mystery is part of the fun, particularly for Ron Wadden, who missed a full day of work before Saturday's Sale. Wadden arrived at OCAD at 11:30 Friday morning, becoming first in an impressive group that elected to spend the night on the sidewalk for first dibs on the art. Forty-five people entered the building at 6:00 am, led of course by Wadden, who purchased pieces by Natalie Waldburger, John W. Desrochers and Christopher Hayes.

Says Nada Ristich, BMO Financial Group's Senior Manager, Corporate Donations, “We're thrilled to extend our support to this event, and to further our partnership with OCAD. And we're not in the least bit surprised by the public response to Whodunit? The enthusiasm the event generated – how successful it was once again – shows us that our community values art and art education. We at BMO value it also, and we're proud to help bring the community together to this end.”



Thanks to BMO Financial Group for so generously presenting Whodunit? for a fourth consecutive year. Thanks also to event sponsors HP and Torys LLP, and to dedicated media sponsors Newstalk 1010, CFRB, 97.3 EZ Rock, *The Globe and Mail* and *NOW Magazine*. A gracious welcome to OCAD's new media partner, ONESTOP Media Group, and thanks to OCAD's other partners, whose combined support made the event a massive success: a la Carte, Aboveground Art Supplies, Annan and Sons Ltd., BOMBAY

SAPPHIRE®, Burry Sign Studio Inc., Canadian Art, Colourgenics, Grassroots Advertising, Hardy's, NewPage, Roma Moulding, Soapbox Design Communications, Steamwhistle Brewing, Unisource Canada Inc., Westbury National Show Systems and Loretta Zanetti.

Finally, thanks to our Live Auction artists and to the countless mystery artists and designers who so generously contributed their work. Without you, this event would not have been possible.



LEADING IN THE AGE OF IMAGINATION

PRESIDENT SARA DIAMOND SPEAKS WITH *SKETCH* ABOUT OCAD'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

ON CAMPUS

ABOVE
SARA DIAMOND
PRESENTS OCAD'S
NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Why was it necessary to start the planning process with an exercise envisioning art and design as well as the post-secondary institution in the year 2020?

Scenario planning encourages institutions and business to think outside the box. In considering the two worlds we inhabit and what these worlds might be in 2020, we were able to tell those stories and to author scenarios about the future that allowed for focused, imaginative leaps. The process allowed us to mobilize the wisdom inside and outside the institution and to consider the broader context, producing scenarios that felt very robust. Given their potential, we asked ourselves: How do we build a path?

Why is the title of the strategic plan “Leading in the Age of Imagination”?

The Age of Imagination emerged in the strategic planning process as an overarching vision for the period of time we’re now entering. The Information Age has given way to a creative economy and society that require new ideas and focused risk taking. Throughout the planning process, we acknowledged the many advances in technology as well as its limitations. We looked at some of the problems that we as a society face, such as global warming, violence and challenges to healthcare. And what we saw we needed was the ability to imagine a way sideways, a way forward, a way through.

The goal was to equip OCAD to face the future successfully under changing circumstances. Given the imaginative capacity of artists and designers, we as an institution saw the opportunity to take a leading role – to really help shape that future.

What does the Age of Imagination mean for OCAD?

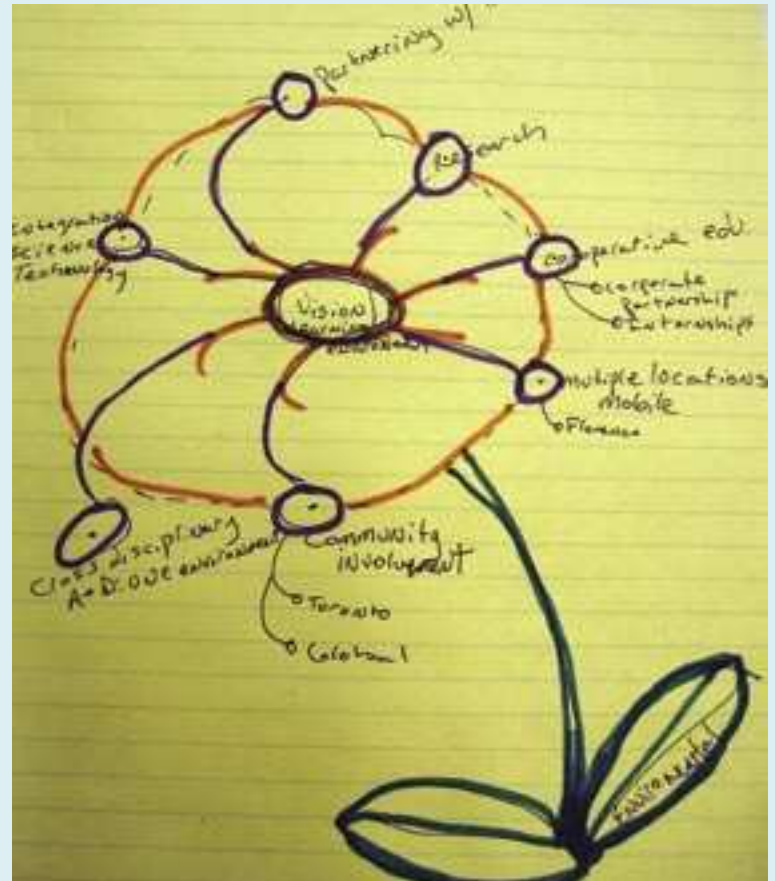
The scenarios demonstrated the need for a repositioning, not only of the institution but also of art and design. We realized we wanted to be more instrumental, to make cultural producers and OCAD central players, driving players within Toronto, Ontario and Canada as well as internationally. This would mean forging partnerships assertively and building a role for the university as a cultural institution and as an institution engaged in innovation in a catalyst role.

The Age of Imagination requires the integration of cross-disciplinary knowledge – linking, for example, cognitive science, computer graphics and installation practice – into basic studio learning. We want students to be successful as individual artists and designers, and yet we are also saying that artists and designers need to know how to work as a team, with team members who may come from entirely different disciplines.

So we said: Here are the four things we need to do. We need to address learning in the undergraduate environment, research and graduate programs, outreach programs and funding. Why? Because this is what will serve students. And by serving students we’ll serve knowledge and OCAD.

What is the New Ecology of Learning (NEL)?

The word ecology came out of visualization work we did in the planning process. In an exercise that had us redesigning OCAD, many of the people involved produced images of ecological systems. These images represented OCAD as a biological entity. There was permeability between walls, a sense of the fluidity of a living organism. This is also what students tell us they want – more mobility and curricular flexibility, and more engagement with the learning process and the outside world.



ABOVE
EARLY STAGES OF THE
PLANNING PROCESS

ABOVE
VISUALIZATION WORK
DEPICTS OCAD AS A
BIOLOGICAL ENTITY

PG5

The NEL is one of the plan's core concepts. Critical to it is the notion of rethinking, of refreshing how learning happens within the studio, how the studio environment can couple theoretical, contextual knowledge with embodied ways of knowing and learning. The NEL reflects a core question: How do we sustain a tradition of learning through "making" and still upgrade it? How do we give it a theoretical context so that people understand how they're learning? Finally, what measures can we take to support students – to really encourage engagement – so that students also have the opportunity to shape the learning environment at OCAD?

Can you explain the significance of the strategic plan's themes?

The world has multiple sources of creativity and that's exciting! For this reason, there is a fundamental commitment throughout the strategic plan to diversity. One approach to diversity has to do with being located in a community as culturally diverse as Toronto. We really want our demographics to reflect that. We're also looking at diversity as contemporary knowledge sets – a requirement for a sophisticated individual in today's local and global settings. In part, this means that diversity is reflected in our research engagement, which very much crosses disciplines.

Cross-disciplinarity is a major theme. We want a dynamic curriculum based not only in knowledge that's fundamental, but also knowledge that's shifting. And we want an institution that fosters cross-disciplinary exchange, learning and research in ways that are agile.

A third theme is sustainability. Any institution that teaches design as well as art has to be concerned with sustainability. This means our programs will take into account the materials students use and dispose of, energy use and efficiencies, and sustainable economies and products. These

programs will also consider new models for design. Biomimicry, for example, which is part of the curriculum, looks to the processes of nature as models for new materials or architecture. Microeconomics is important, too – OCAD students could design for and with emerging economies, not only the developed world.

The changing nature of technology is also key. Some institutions have abandoned the "physical-making" for the digital, but I think it's exciting to ricochet between them. We'll combine existing areas of curricular strength to build new 21st-century learning opportunities such as new design processes that focus on business development, brainstorming new inventions and the futurist prediction of emerging technologies. Artists and designers should be inventors; they should work with engineers, scientists and medical researchers. In doing so, they will inspire technologies that might never be invented without their presence.

This also applies to the area of wellness. We're in a world that is increasingly facing challenges with respect to health and wellness, and to the delivery and management of health information. Artists and designers have something valuable to say at each of these points.

Finally, there is the question of ethics and social responsibility. Some of the most interesting thinking in this area comes from philosophers and cultural theorists, and as an institution we're on the ground – we're working with related decisions all the time. It's not to prohibit in any way what is taught here, or what is produced or researched. It's to have some important 21st-century checkpoints, which we really feel are criteria for relevance.



It's viable and contemporary, and it grapples with many of the issues that challenge business, government and alternate communities.

Why is research an important growth area for OCAD? How will our environment benefit?

Research as a focused area is important for the institution because it's a way of defining a set of activities that produces relevant knowledge and develops methodologies and ways of articulating them. It involves the teaching of methodologies within the undergraduate environment, allowing students to emerge with research skills. An ongoing, dynamic research environment will inform the classroom, as faculty and student researchers take what they learn and bring it back. This creates a knowledge flow.

A research environment isn't only about bringing humanities, science or social science methods into the making of art and design, although that is important, indeed! It's also about the other flow, wherein relevant art and design approaches – forms of experimentation, ways of understanding the phenomena of creation, improvisation and investigation – are applied to other fields such as engineering and manufacturing processes.

Why are graduate programs important for OCAD?

This strategic plan gives graduate programs weight and impetus. Graduate students bring in another level of rigour. They bring maturity. And they increase the number of people making their way into the professions. Graduate students go on to become researchers and teachers as well as practitioners, which means they play an important role in the big arc of what art and design is and will become. And they really inspire undergraduates.

Right now, we're primarily an undergraduate university. Yet, one of the four strategic priorities is "outreach" – or creating reciprocal relationships. Why is this important?

Our reciprocal outreach with other institutions, communities and businesses is going to make all of this possible. It's going to make the knowledge and resource gathering possible. Art and design learning and research are context-driven – you really need a strong sense of context to work effectively. OCAD is becoming a deeply networked institution.

What excites you most about our future?

I'm particularly excited about our potential to dialogue with the larger community, about the ethics of generosity this represents. I believe in this circuit and in the way it pours energy into an institution. We saw it with Look Inside this year and also with Nuit Blanche. We saw it with the Night of the Unboring in 2005, with the Partners in Art event here last May, and with our Speaker Series as well. And we became a kind of magnet because of it.

What I like about the plan is that it's assertive. It gives us enough of a blueprint to make decisions. It's viable and contemporary, and it grapples with many of the issues that challenge business, government and alternate communities. Art and design are communication forms, and this document, this strategic plan, really emerged out of that assumption.

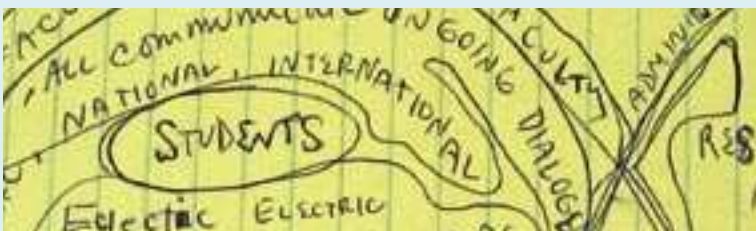
ABOVE
EARLY STAGES OF THE
PLANNING PROCESS

ANOTHER MAN'S POISON DONATES 5,000 VOLUMES TO OCAD'S LIBRARY

For 25 years, one of Toronto's best-kept secrets – and one of the world's best design bookstores – was situated just a few steps south of OCAD. Hollis Granoff Landauer, founder and proprietor of Another Man's Poison (AMP), closed her doors last March and donated her books to the Dorothy H. Hoover Library at OCAD.

"This is an immensely valuable collection," says Jill Patrick, Director of Library Services. "It significantly enriches our library holdings. We're extremely grateful and will continue to develop our design library, inspired by Landauer's vision."

That vision was apparent from concept to execution throughout the 25-year history of AMP, which was among the world's first design booksellers. Its mandate distinguished design from art – rather than making it another adjunct – and gave equal weight to its components. It embraced the old and the new in architecture, graphics and design, foregoing books on "interior" and "faux" design, as well as many media and big-box favourites. AMP was as an "old-fashioned" bookstore, and a serious one. For that, and for this significant donation, we extend our hearty thanks. The AMP bookstore will be missed.





LEGACY GIFTS

A necessary part of imagining the future of OCAD is looking to the students who will carve out that future on the university's behalf. Concerned members of the OCAD community are working to create opportunity for these students through dedicated gifts and scholarships.

Design icon John Schofield Manuel is one such community member. In 2006 he established a scholarship for Environmental Design students through the gift of a life insurance policy. Manuel is sensitive to the fact that young, aspiring artists need help. "I want a student to get ahead," he says. Decades ago it was his own good fortune to be mentored by interior designers Albert Hadley and Billy Baldwin and decorator Rose Cummings. Since then, Manuel has helped launch the careers of countless young designers. He regularly attends OCAD graduate exhibitions and makes a point of hiring OCAD graduates. And while Manuel is quick to admit how much he enjoys "guessing who will be the next great artists," his primary concern is their careers. He'll tell you that helping students through an education – particularly one at OCAD – is just another way of promoting their work. It encourages others to do the same.

Also this year, OCAD alumna Vicki Cowan established a scholarship in honour of her late mother, Michele Cowan Kolber. Cowan explains that she endowed the prize in material arts, which is issued annually, so that her mother's name would forever be associated with this creative practice. Cowan's mother was a successful fashion designer and manufacturer, as well as a painter. "It's what gave her financial independence and an artistic community at a time when many women had neither," Cowan says. "She would have been profoundly honoured to be recognized in this way."

OCAD is honoured as well.

OCAD SPEAKER SERIES

Inviting the outside in is critical to circulating – and generating – new ideas at OCAD. The Speaker Series in the Faculties of Art and Design, as well as those presented by OCAD's Professional Gallery and President Diamond, do precisely this each year.

This year's Faculty of Art series, "Art Creates Change: Performing Time," has been made possible through the generous support of the Musagetes fund. It features a provocative lineup of speakers whose work reflects, in some way, the notion of temporality. It kicked off on November 15, 2006, with American visual and performance theatre artist and educator William Pope.L.

Pope.L is best known for addressing themes of race and class in his work, but much of it is also extended and durational. *The Great White Way*, for example, a 2002 undertaking that is an extension of his larger eRacism project, plays out in stages over a period of five years. In it, Pope.L crawls across New York City in a superman outfit, "performing struggle," in a sense, by calling attention to what we lack – empathy and equality – and also the way we all struggle, or crawl, through our ordinary lives.

The Faculty of Design Speaker Series looks this year to design as an instrument of change. Internationally recognized cyberspace theorist and science fiction writer Bruce Sterling launched the series on October 2, 2006. Sterling's latest book is *Shaping Things*, which considers the creation of objects and the environment. Sterling – who claims "designers are even cooler than architects and scientists" – spoke to a packed auditorium



about design, sustainability and the future. Award-winning artist/designer Michael Rakowitz followed Sterling with a talk on November 27. Rakowitz is best known for his ongoing paraSITE project, in which he custom-builds inflatable shelters for the homeless. The Faculty of Design Speaker Series is presented with the generous support of M.C. McCain.

The Professional Gallery marks its contribution to the OCAD community with a Speaker Series that predates the Gallery's spring 2007 opening. Future events held in the Gallery will connect or coincide with exhibitions, but they won't necessarily be discipline-specific. Journalist Gary Younge launched the Gallery's Speaker Series on October 25, 2006, with a visit that was supported in part by the British Council. Younge spoke about his most recent book, *Stranger in a Strange Land: Encounters in the Disunited States*. And on November 8, 2006, the Professional Gallery presented a lecture by Mark Lewis, whose work explores and exploits the capacity of film to re-invent the picturesque. Lewis's visit was supported in part by the Faculty of Art.

The President's Speaker Series adds another level of breadth and

ABOVE, FAR LEFT
JOHN SCHOFIELD
MANUEL

ABOVE, LEFT
MICHELE KOLBER,
CIRCA 1940S,
WHEN SHE WAS
AN ART STUDENT IN
NEW YORK CITY

BELOW
WILLIAM POPE.L,
LAUNCHES THE 2006/07
ART CREATES CHANGE
SPEAKER SERIES ON
NOVEMBER 15, 2006.
PHOTO BY ERIC SCHWAB

PG7

perspective, featuring experts from the international community who cross disciplines or work in non-traditional fields. This year's speakers, for example, cover such diverse topics as prostheses for the cognitively impaired; architectural/design solutions to global, social and humanitarian crises; and social ethics.

Save these Dates in 2007

January 25: As part of the Faculty of Art series, Michael Snow, internationally acclaimed filmmaker, multi-disciplinary artist and 1952 alumnus appears in conversation with Bruce Elder, filmmaker, critic and Director of the York/Ryerson Universities Joint program in Communication and Culture.

March 29: New media artist Camille Utterback, whose interactive installations and reactive sculptures have received worldwide acclaim, appears as part of the Faculty of Art series.

Sara Diamond will also welcome the following speakers as part of the President's Speaker Series: Dr. Ronald Baecker, Cameron Sinclair and Kate Stohr, Rosi Braidotti, and Indira Samarasekera. Check our calendar at www.ocad.ca for confirmation of dates.





ALUMNI ART IS THE LUMINOSITY OF A GLOW IN THE DARK

by Janis Cole



Scotiabank Nuit Blanche, likely the most significant art event of the century in Toronto, began at dusk on Saturday, September 30, with its organizers, curators and artists poised to unveil to the public more than 130 art exhibits. The city's first "free all-night contemporary art thing" was spread out over three downtown "zones," clustered around Yorkville, Queen West and McCaul Street, with OCAD at the hub of activity on McCaul.

ALL PHOTOS BY
HORST HERGET

OPPOSITE
DAVID ROKEBY
OVERSEER, 2006
SITE-SPECIFIC REAL-TIME
VIDEO INSTALLATION
FOR SCOTIABANK
NUIT BLANCHE

BELOW
VISITORS ENJOY
A GLOW IN THE DARK,
OCAD'S CONTRIBUTION
TO SCOTIABANK NUIT
BLANCHE

ABOVE
VISITORS RELAX IN
OCAD'S GREAT HALL
DURING SCOTIABANK
NUIT BLANCHE

PG9



The phrase *nuit blanche* references a natural phenomenon in high-altitude places where dusk meets dawn, creating a night without darkness. A sleepless night. A white night. Conceived in Paris in 2002, the concept of a nuit blanche event has since been adopted by half a dozen cities worldwide, including Toronto, which hosted its own version this year for the first time.

I spoke with the organizers beforehand, and right up until Scotiabank Nuit Blanche actually got underway, they were wondering what to expect. Would it work? Would people stay out all night to experience art?

For starters, a cold, steady rain during the day threatened to dampen spirits and attendance. However, a large canopy of umbrellas on University Avenue, where eager people huddled in the rain watching *Counting Sheep* – a DVD projection by prolific artist Michael Snow (Environmental Design, '52) – hinted at the magic that was about to permeate the city. The dome of the Royal Ontario Museum Planetarium was enlivened in an unexpected way. Strangers seemed excited about being squeezed together in the rain, at night, to watch Snow's deceptively simple shot of sheep grazing on a grassy field with a backdrop of the Atlantic Ocean's rhythmically rolling waves. It reflected Nuit Blanche's playful approach to art exhibition, and from Snow's work, I got a subconscious message: be mindful of quiet observation; don't rush to see everything at once.



ABOVE
A VISITOR TO
A GLOW IN THE DARK
VIEWS WORK BY
GEOFFREY PUGEN.
THE DAY ROOM, 2006
MULTIMEDIA
INSTALLATION

ABOVE
MARY ANNE BARKHOUSE
WORK BASED ON
PETITION, 2006.
SCULPTURE INSTALLATION
BRONZE, WOOD AND LED
LIGHTS

ABOVE
JOHN McEWEN
IMPERFECT PARADISE
SCULPTURE IN
BUTTERFIELD PARK

The crowd at OCAD, when I arrived there, was lively, and several hundred strong. The purple glow of the Sharp Centre for Design, which has been heralded as Toronto's boldest architectural statement to date, illuminated a path for the more than 10,000 visitors passing through the doors of OCAD to view *A Glow in the Dark*. This exhibition presented a cross-section of work by some of the university's illustrious alumni, spanning film, performance, interactive media, sculpture, installations, painting and photography.

At the university's foyer, I experienced the gargantuan Styrofoam sculptures of Kristan Horton (*Sculpture/Installation*, '96). They set a playful mood that matched the enthusiasm of the crowd, packed tightly into the space and mostly comprised of young people. Their eagerness to touch the art, along with the occasional offhand remark that I would overhear, revealed that many *Nuit Blanche* visitors are not of the art world.

This makes them as interesting to observe as the art, and demonstrates the event's true value – thousands of people unabashedly and spontaneously taking pleasure in art in the middle of the night, and having a good time doing it.

Just past the foyer, in the Elizabeth and Goulding Lambert Lounge, filled to standing-room-only capacity, was an experimental video screening of *A Life of Errors* and *The Paper Wall* by Nick and Sheila Pye (*Photography*, '02; *Integrated Media*, '02). This couple's narrative style had many visitors enthralled, while others looked tentative, not quite sure what to think. The vignettes featured the two filmmakers performing several activities – stripping, spewing and kissing until a certain point, when these actions appear to exhaust them. Narrative comprehension seemed not to have been the crucial aspect for most viewers, as I overheard several of them talking about the film afterwards. Instead, what seemed to have mattered to them

was the chance to engage with the filmmakers' stark performances and experimentation with the genre.

Moving into the auditorium later, I joined another good-sized crowd to view several Michael Snow films. Snow's experimental cinema is legendary and has a tendency to generate mixed emotions: intrigue, frustration, curiosity, exhilaration and awe. Local artist Petra Chevrier, who handled the 16mm film projection, said that she "went into the screening marathon thinking this could be a complete failure!" But as it turned out, there was a steady stream of visitors all night. Some of them sat through entire films – including the three wonderful hours of *La Région Centrale* (which actually garnered applause) and the 45-minute 1967 classic *Wavelength* (admired by young people to this day).

Two large-screen projections from installation artist Geoff Pugen (*Integrated Media*, '04) filled the Great Hall, as did mats and stools for lounging. Clearly, Pugen wanted

people to take in his sounds and images in comfort. He had set out to transform the space into a meditation room where people could relax and be drawn back to nature. And he succeeded: the open space felt intimate, romantic and slowed-down.

Then I entered a room featuring a bronze beaver sculpture on an 18th-century sculpted hall chair, and I knew immediately that this was the work of Mary Anne Barkhouse (*Integrated Media*, '91). For *Nuit Blanche*, Barkhouse reconfigured two of her installations, positioning a beaver (from *Night Beaver*) on a backlit, disco-style floor with an interactive glowing red light (from *Petition*). She'd set a specific and all-encompassing goal and, remarkably, met it. She'd wanted a unique piece indicative of her current work and yet reflective of the OCAD program that she'd graduated in. She'd planned something that would exemplify the theme of *A Glow in the Dark* and also showcase her conceptual intent – to have the audience expe-



ABOVE
GEORGE WHITESIDE
PHOTOGRAPHS,
2002, BEING VIEWED
BY VISITOR.
MEDIUM-FORMAT
POLAROIDS



ABOVE
VISITORS TAKE IN THE ART AT OCAD'S
PROFESSIONAL GALLERY. FOREGROUND:
"NARCISSUS," 1994 BY IAN CARR-HARRIS.
WOOD, ARBORITE, BOOK, FLUORESCENT AND GLASS

PGII

rience a reactive and interactive connection to human culture and the environment.

Down the hall, I entered a room of extraordinary photographs by acclaimed artist George Whiteside (Photo/Electric, '79), whose exhibition included two large photographs of the Taj Mahal that were serene as well as haunting.

Meanwhile, artist David Rokeby (Experimental Arts, '84), brought the outdoors in with his clever side-by-side, floor-mounted projections of Butterfield Park, as if spying on the action six storeys below through an invisible floor. In keeping with his distinct style, this piece focused on real-time events, directly engaging the viewer with artificial systems of perception. According to Rokeby, the basic bones of the piece were predetermined, but the art exhibit, which incorporated an oversized chess game in Butterfield Park, was a happy accident that perfectly matched his concept. He wanted the piece to be friendly, to give people

the feeling they could jump right in. Once again, I found myself struck by how rich the OCAD alumni contributions were, and how plentiful. Then I entered a room dedicated to The Manifold Project and I was reminded of an even greater wealth of alumni talent. Glowing onscreen were the names of more than 80 graduates, each accompanied by images of their selected works.

In the Professional Gallery, I encountered a selection of paintings and installations by Joanne Tod (Drawing & Painting, '74), Gary Neill Kennedy (Drawing & Painting, '60) and Ian Carr-Harris (Sculpture/Installation, '71). I then ventured outside to view the final exhibit, *Imperfect Paradise*, a large and very impressive installation by John McEwen (Sculpture, '70).

It was just a flicker before dawn when I sat down, grateful to the Student Union volunteers who told me they served over 1,000 free pancake breakfasts that morning.

Speaking to several of the participating OCAD alumni after that night, I asked them about their experience with Scotiabank Nuit Blanche. Busy as they always are, these artists managed to squeeze in the time to participate in the event, and all of them were emphatic – and unanimous – in praising the hands-on support they received while setting up and dismantling their work. Some of the installations were complicated to mount, they said, and the staff, faculty, technicians and students helped make the artworks stand out and made the whole experience a joy.

Many months before Nuit Blanche, a small committee at OCAD had coordinated the gathering of exhibits for A Glow in the Dark. It was comprised of faculty members Johanna Householder and Rosemary Donegan as well as Blake Fitzpatrick, Dean, Faculty of Art; Professional Gallery Curator Charles Reeves; and Media & Communications team Laura Matthews and Sarah Mulholland.

President Sara Diamond contributed to the planning and determined the scale of OCAD's involvement. She also created a special rapport with alumni by personally inviting them and thanking them for participating.

The sprinkling of rain at the start of the evening did nothing to derail Scotiabank Nuit Blanche. Participation in OCAD's contribution, A Glow in the Dark, was enthusiastic. President Diamond expressed the hope that the event would "ignite the imaginations" of Torontonians. On that magical night of art, both participants and visitors – young and old and from all walks of life – demonstrated that it did precisely that.

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Janis Cole is a Professor in the Faculty of Art. She is an award-winning filmmaker of 30 years and a writer for publications including *NOW Magazine*, *POV* and *Montage*.



INTEGRATING ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY:

GLOWING PLACES
A COLLABORATION
BETWEEN PROFESSOR
JOB RUTGERS (FORMERLY
OF PHILIPS DESIGN)
AND MEGUMI FUJIKAWA
OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE
OF ART, PHILIPS
HEADQUARTERS IN
EINDHOVEN,
THE NETHERLANDS.
PHOTO BY NORBERT
VAN ONNA

BELOW
 WORK BY OCAD
 VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES
 STUDENT ANTHONY
 PAYNE AND INSTRUCTORS
 JUDITH DOYLE AND
 MARTHA LADLY
 "I SPY" ORIENTATION
 MAP AND GAME, 2005
 DIGITAL MEDIA



MEMORY LINK: THE ART OF REMEMBERING

"Artists and designers are often skilled at representing emotions in subtle ways. This requires processes of fully embodied listening," says Judith Doyle, Associate Professor, Faculty of Art (Integrated Media). In her artwork, Doyle uses gaming and computer technology to investigate and represent the emotional dimensions of memory.

Foxscape, part of Doyle's Urban Fox Project, investigates the relationship between place and memory. During her residency as a CanWest Global Fellow in 2005, Doyle worked with a team at the Banff New Media Institute, using Maya 3D animation graphics and the Unreal 2 videogame engine to create an interactive model of a virtual house. In Foxscape, the viewer, for instance, could choose to pass a photograph on the wall or to click on it. Clicking would start a film that takes the viewer to another space with a

retrieve new memories. Mike Wu, a Ph.D. candidate at U of T, and supervisors Dr. Ron Baecker and Dr. Brian Richards have developed a prototype of the Orienting Tool, a Palm Pilot-based program that helps amnesics store information they might not easily remember. Doyle leads the OCAD team participating in related research.

Doyle's groundbreaking contribution to this project is the development of prototypes for computers, video games and other everyday technologies to represent the emotional dimension of memory, so that amnesics can better recall their feelings. "When events are forgotten, the feelings surrounding those events are also lost," says Doyle. Her research examines how clients can access not only the logical and practical dimensions of memory, such as remembering appointments, but also their feelings – or sense memories – about particular experiences.

JUDITH DOYLE'S "WARMWARE" and JOB RUTGERS' "DYNAMIC SPACES; DYNAMIC IDENTITIES"

by Leanna McLennan

PGI3



different set of options. This is much like what occurs when a place triggers a memory.

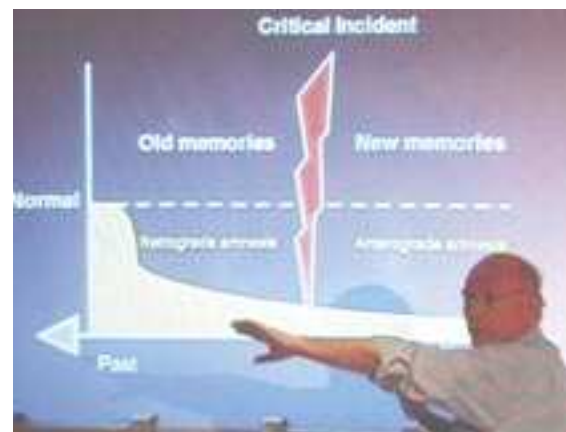
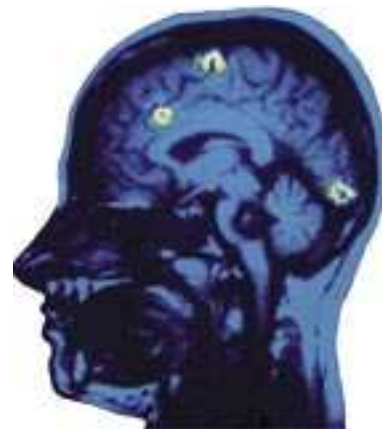
For another project working with Memory Link, Doyle explores how representing emotions can enhance reminder and orientation tools designed for amnesics. According to medical writer Carolyn Abraham, amnesics often become "marooned in the moment," which happens because they are unable to acquire and retain memories following brain injuries.¹ Memory Link connects clients with acquired brain injuries with neuropsychologists and computer scientists in order to explore memory and orientation strategies using new technologies.

Doyle met Dr. Richards and became involved with Memory Link while assisting her friend, artist and OCAD graduate Robin Len, who sustained a brain injury in a cycling accident. Both Richards and Doyle recognized the potential for artists and designers to make important contributions toward enhancing the lives of people struggling to remember the most basic information. "Artists have expertise in emotional representation and embodied memory," says Doyle. "They can help create richer memory scaffolding that might also be helpful for people with milder cognitive impairments."

Memory Link is a program headed by Dr. Brian Richards at Baycrest in Toronto, one of the world's premier academic health sciences centres focused on aging. Collaborators from Baycrest, the University of Toronto Department of Computer Science and OCAD are designing software to help clients store and

Students at OCAD also benefit from Doyle's involvement with this project. She incorporates portions of her research into the Virtual Communities course that she team-teaches with Associate Professor Martha Ladly. In this course, Doyle asks students to focus on specific memory impairment problems and to develop tools that address them. They create an array of multime-

ABOVE
 WORK BY OCAD VIRTUAL
 COMMUNITIES STUDENT
 VICTOR LEUNG AND
 OCAD INSTRUCTORS
 JUDITH DOYLE AND
 MARTHA LADLY
 "I SPY" ORIENTATION
 MAP FOR AMNESICS -
 CELLPHONE INTERFACE, 2005
 DIGITAL MEDIA



TOP
JUDITH DOYLE IN
COMPUTER LAB.
PHOTO BY
PATRICIA PASTÉN

ABOVE
JUDITH DOYLE
FOXSCAPE: *EN EL PAIS DE LOS ZORROS*:
ROTSKOPEO FOX,
2004. STILLS FROM
A SHORT FILM

ABOVE
STILLS FROM A GAME-ENGINE PROJECT, A NAVIGABLE
HOUSE WITH CINEMATIC ELEMENTS. DIGITAL MEDIA
PRODUCED WITH MAYA 3D GRAPHICS FOR THE
UNREAL 2 GAME ENGINE AT THE BANFF NEW MEDIA
INSTITUTE, BANFF, ALBERTA

TOP
NEW NEURO-IMAGING, SUCH AS THIS COMBINED
PET AND FMRI SCAN, OFFERS A NON-INVASIVE VIEW
OF MEMORY IN ACTION. IMAGE COURTESY OF GUY
PROULX, BAYCREST, TORONTO

ABOVE
DR. BRIAN RICHARDS,
DIRECTOR OF MEMORY
LINK AT BAYCREST,
LECTURES AT OCAD.
VIDEO STILL,
COURTESY OF
MARTIN ISKANDER

dia emoticons (visual reminders of emotions, much like the faces people insert into e-mail messages) and use multimedia signposts to produce memory maps, interactive calendars and reminders.

“Warmware” is Doyle’s term for the art and design of the emotional content used in memory augmentation tools. This content, which can be customized for each user, facilitates diverse emotional vocabularies rather than closed systems that require everyone to use the same symbols. And it fosters autonomy because it allows for the possibility of unique identity formation. Each user has a set of personally meaningful symbols that express a chosen range of emotions.

Doyle sees the role of art as facilitating conversation rather than creating objects for consumption. French curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics inform her creative practice. Bourriaud, who sees an artwork as “a chain of relations” claims that

“any artwork is a relation to the world made visible.”²²

Doyle’s creative contribution to Memory Link facilitates relationships between people and their experiences as well as those between art and technology. It unearths new possibilities for people with acquired brain injuries, allowing them greater access to the emotional, evocative and symbolic dimensions of memory. Her artwork is the prototype for new research with Baycrest’s Director of Psychology, Dr. Guy Proulx, who sees the potential for developing “memory scaffolds” for patients with progressive brain disorders such as dementias and Alzheimer’s disease. Clients and caregivers might use game technology to explore the nonlinear components of remembering, imaginative reveries and stream of consciousness.

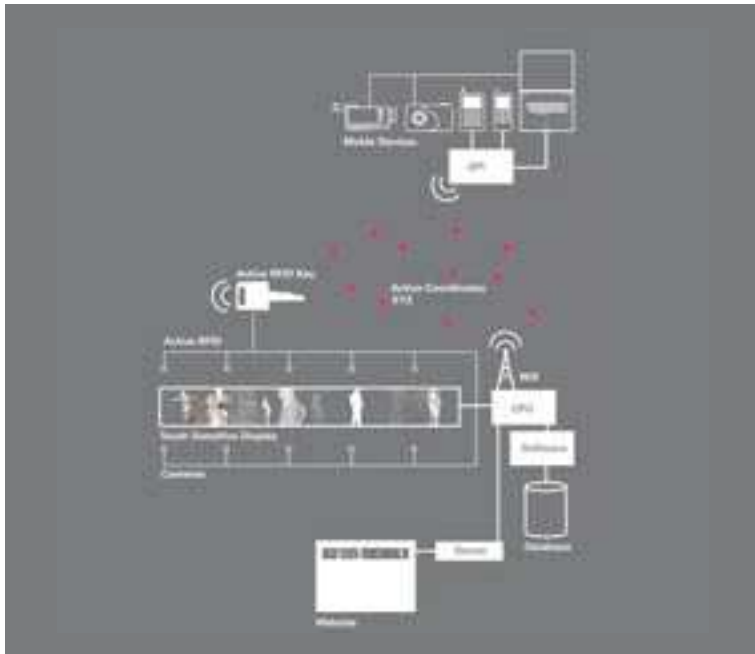
“DYNAMIC SPACES; DYNAMIC IDENTITIES”: DESIGNING COMMUNITIES

Job Rutgers, Professor, Faculty of Design, approaches memory in another way. Rutgers heads a research team at OCAD that is working with Philips Design to develop an interactive “ambient experience” in a hotel environment. The “Dynamic Spaces; Dynamic Identities” team, comprised of current OCAD students Catherine Macintosh and Richard Martin, is exploring the possibility that art, design and technology can be integrated into architecture.

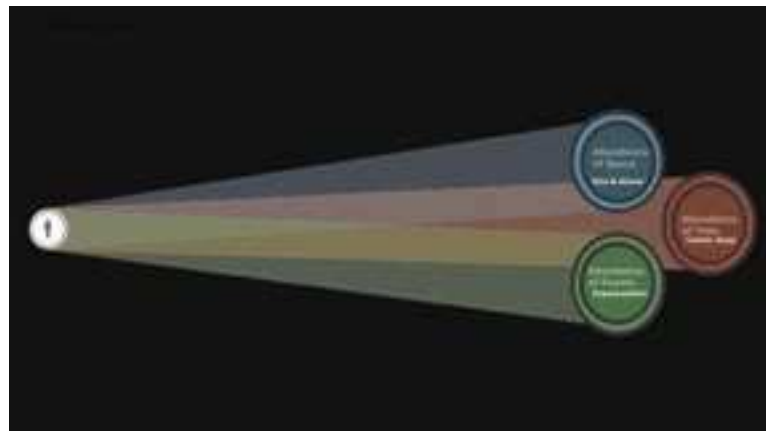
Plans for the hotel include digitally projected wallpaper, which gives each floor a distinct appearance; interactive computer screens for retrieving information; and electronic “bulletin boards” that allow guests to upload information they want to share with other guests.

According to Rutgers, technology has the potential to work against alienation in the contemporary world by creating meaningful associations with places and facilitating connections between people. His research utilizes the Art of Memory, an associative technique credited to the Greek orator Simonides (556-468 B.C.E.). This technique uses architectural spaces as mnemonic (memory-assisting) devices. For instance, in order to remember a speech, you associate each idea in it with a place, such as a room in a house. As you speak, you imagine yourself travelling through this house, letting your memories be triggered by the places you pass.

Rutgers brings this idea into conversation with cultural anthropologist Marc Auge’s claim that people spend increasingly more time in non-spaces like airports and hotels, where they are disconnected from history, collective memory and other people.



ABOVE
FLOW CHART DEPICTING THE TECHNICAL
INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SOCIAL MOSAIC CONCEPT.
ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD THOMAS



TOP
DIAGRAM DEPICTS AN INDIVIDUAL'S
DISCONNECTION WITH SPACE, TIME
AND EVENTS IN "NON-SPACE," A
CONDITION THAT RUTGERS' TEAM
COUNTERS WITH INTERACTIVE
TECHNOLOGY. ILLUSTRATION BY
RESEARCH ASSISTANT RICHARD
THOMAS

ABOVE
PROJECT TEAM FOR "DYNAMIC SPACES;
DYNAMIC IDENTITIES." (L-R): RICHARD
THOMAS, PHILIPS DESIGN CONSULTANT
LOTTA PARTANENM, PROFESSOR JOB
RUTGERS AND PHILIPS SENIOR DESIGN
CONSULTANT MENNO DIEPERINK. PHOTO
BY CATHARINE MACINTOSH, RESEARCH
ASSISTANT

PGI5

“Can we link memory and place in ways that are personally and socially meaningful – in ways that don’t allow only for narrative of solitary individual experience, but allow for connection between people in the spaces? Can we use technology to do that?” asks Rutgers. He then continues, “Digital image will soon be part of the built environment. Some architects are developing the means to project dynamic images onto buildings using image technology.”

This does not have to result in the alienating dystopia represented in the film *Blade Runner*, notes Rutgers. According to the “Dynamic Spaces; Dynamic Identities” team, the research question is this: “How can we create meaningful and relevant applications of image technologies that present counter scenarios to the trend of ‘disneyfication’ – where urban space transforms into theme park – giving place and context to people’s imagination and activities in space, rather than prescribing pre-scripted and staged experiences?”

Designed to facilitate better communication between hotel staff and guests, and between guests themselves, the “Dynamic Spaces; Dynamic Identities” project has two major conceptual directions: Magnified Routing and Social Mosaic.

Magnified Routing features a system of computer screens that provide suggestions, directions and information about the city and that also function as mnemonic markers. Rutgers sees Magnified Routing as a way to “transform the waste spaces of hotel corridors and elevators into spaces for exploration and intuitive orientation.” To challenge a top-down approach to information sharing, researchers at OCAD developed the Social Mosaic, an architectural electronic bulletin board that guests can use to post images and text. For example, if, as a guest, you find a great café, you can post a recommendation for it on a dedicated wall. Software will register your presence and create a shadow image of yourself on

the wall; you can then upload your image (photographed with a digital or phone camera) and text recommending that café. This scenario allows guests to be both receivers and sources of information, merging public knowledge with personal observation. In this way, Rutgers says that “the guests’ relationship to the city is not advertised but informal, accidental,” and other guests’ findings become part of a “living memory.”

OCAD’s Rutgers and Doyle are making valuable contributions to a contemporary creative movement that explores the relationship between art, design and technology. Their projects also raise intriguing philosophical questions that invite further explorations. What is the role of art and design in society? What happens when art and design are created in commercial environments? How can we integrate art and design to enhance both practical and aesthetic experiences of the world?

¹ Abraham, Carolyn. “Marooned in the Moment.” The Canadian Foundation for Innovation’s Online Magazine: Showing Excellence in Canadian Research. 26 September 2006. <<http://www.innovation-canada.ca/18/en/articles/carolyn-a.html>>

² Bourriaud, Nicolas, and Moss, Kate. Interview by Stretcher. October 18, 2002. Walter McBean Gallery, San Francisco Art Institute. 26 September 2006. <http://www.stretcher.org/archives/i1_a/2003_02_25_i1_archive.php>

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Leanna McLennan is a Maritime-born, Toronto-based writer and academic. Her work has been published in *The Antigonish Review*, *Broken Pencil*, *Fiddlehead*, *Taddle Creek* and *Third Floor Lounge: An Anthology of Poetry from the Banff Centre for the Arts Writing Studio 2004*.

“Our goal is to see students graduate – and to see them satisfied. Student services are a piece of that.”

Sarah McKinnon
Vice-President, Academic



by Larissa Kostoff

CONSTRUCTION AND CONNECTION AT OCAD: BRINGING STUDENT SERVICES HOME



ABOVE
WORK IN PROGRESS: OCAD CONSTRUCTION ON
McCAUL STREET

BELOW
PETER CALDWELL,
VICE-PRESIDENT,
ADMINISTRATION,
SPEAKS ABOUT
CAMPUS EXPANSION

PGI7

“If students are involved and connected, they will learn more and be happier.” Sarah McKinnon, Vice-President, Academic, speaks matter-of-factly. Much of what McKinnon says circles the softer side of the student experience, but in addressing this she is utterly serious. She is also confident and that’s no wonder. Enrollment at OCAD has increased by 50 percent since 2000 and there is considerable pressure to provide adequate space for campus activities. But there are also more resources, which gives OCAD the impetus and the ability to really impact student life.

Then there is 51 McCaul, the site of the university’s first-ever student centre. The site has long had the attention and the tremendous enthusiasm of Peter Caldwell, Vice-President, Administration. “With 51 McCaul, we’re really going to increase the profile of the student experience,” Caldwell says.

McKinnon agrees. “At OCAD, expanding physically has coincided with a look at improving services,” she explains. In the same way that building a home roots our imaginative capacity to consider – and build on – a life, building this home has enabled OCAD to look at the lives of its students, to consider what set of services they really need.

Services in this context contribute to the quality of the student experience. That experience forms what Josephine Polera, Director, Student Services, refers to as the “whole student.” It’s an approach that’s garnering attention of late, in part because initiatives, such as the annual National Survey of Student

Engagement (NSSE), help demonstrate that it isn’t just the classroom that makes for a good experience. It’s the interaction that students have with one another and with faculty. It’s the kind of support they receive outside the classroom.

Student engagement also relates to student success, even in a studio environment, where students already benefit from one-on-one time with faculty. “We’ve got all this evidence about why the student experience is important,” says McKinnon. “This dovetails nicely with what we’re trying to do.”

Of course, what OCAD is trying to do – what it’s doing right now – is improve facilities and access to important student programs. The current academic year represents a confluence of these efforts, as new and increased services herald the opening of the student centre. The “storefront” nature of the building will make the services housed in it more prominent. But that these services finally have a dedicated





ABOVE
STUDENTS ENJOY LIFE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM IN "ACTIVATE THE PARK"



ABOVE
STUDENT BENEFITS FROM OCAD LAPTOP PROGRAM



ABOVE
NEW AND FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN "DO-IT-YOURSELF HENNA" DURING SEPTEMBER ORIENTATION 2006. PHOTO BY BRENT EVERETT JAMES

home is perhaps the better indication of how prominent they've already become.

The student centre follows OCAD's \$42.5-million SuperBuild project, which launched six years ago to address what Caldwell calls "our crying shortage of space." At the time, the university had just 37 percent of the space it needed based on enrollment. SuperBuild created, among other things, the Sharp Centre for Design and 90,000 square feet of additional campus space. Then enrollment doubled. "Now," says Caldwell, "we have 40 percent of what we need."

Which brings us back to the issue of funds. OCAD is seeking a major donor, someone willing to contribute a \$1 million lead gift, for this exceptional commemorative naming opportunity. Half of the gift will be applied to the centre's construction costs, and half will be endowed in perpetuity to fund the student-related activities housed within the centre. These

activities will reflect the work of four administrative departments: the Centre for Advising & Campus Life, the Centre for Students with Disabilities, the Health & Wellness Centre, and Financial Aid & Awards. The building will also house the OCAD Student Union, which will benefit most from the street-level real estate, the "storefront" aspect that puts student activities front and centre.

In June 2004, *Applied Arts Magazine* explored the evolution of OCAD via its new cornerstone and graphic identity, remarking: "It's not easy to project dynamism and stability at the same time, but the Ontario College of Art & Design is attempting to do precisely that." It's a sentiment that might easily be applied to 51 McCaul, which shelters a working streetcar loop and will ultimately shelter some of the services that bring home the student experience at OCAD.

Even the history of the building, which has always been owned by the organization that, in essence, moves Toronto – the Toronto Transit Commission – is dynamic. In its first and perhaps most notable incarnation nearly 40 years ago, it was a restaurant called The Trolley, which incorporated two streetcars into its interior and won its architect, C. Blakeway Millar, a Governor General's Award. A subsequent restaurant capitalized on the success of the movie *Fame* by featuring servers who would spontaneously break into song. Hot Jam, as it was called, was a short-lived success, and numerous restaurants followed.

What OCAD actually acquired from the TTC three years ago was a sublease agreement on a "slice" of the property – two floors and 13,500 square feet that is sandwiched between the apartments above and the parking garage below. It was an affordable piece of real estate – before construction – with a peculiar set of challenges. Construction, for example, could

not be undertaken without TTC approval. Nor could it interfere with TTC use of the loop. Noise was a concern, as was meeting OCAD's institutional commitments to accessibility and sustainability. Then there was the legacy of the Sharp Centre for Design.

"We've experienced a great deal of scrutiny since we opened the Sharp Centre," admits Caldwell, "I'm sure a lot of people are saying, 'Well, how can they top that?' This won't have the same impact, but I'm really proud of it as a follow-up. We could have done something boring. Instead we've taken on a real challenge."

Award-winning Baird Sampson Neuert Architects of Toronto rose to this challenge, with George Baird, Dean of the University of Toronto's School of Architecture, Landscape and Design, and Barry Sampson, who is the project's lead architect and who also teaches at the U of T's School of Architecture. "What they've come up with is



ABOVE
LORNE TOEWS,
PROFESSOR, FACULTY OF
ART, AND FOURTH-YEAR
OCAD STUDENT
CHRIS LÉVESQUE



ABOVE
(L-R) MENTORS APRIL
STEELE AND SARAH
McCARTY ASSIST NEW AND
FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS
DURING SEPTEMBER
ORIENTATION 2006.
PHOTO BY
BRENT EVERETT JAMES

“We’ve experienced a great deal of scrutiny since we opened the Sharp Centre for Design. I’m sure a lot of people are saying, ‘Well, how can they top that?’ This won’t have the same impact, but I’m really proud of it as a follow-up. We could have done something boring. Instead we’ve taken on a real challenge.”

Peter Caldwell
Vice-President, Administration

PGI9

something that makes absolute maximum use of the site,” says Caldwell. “One of our goals was to make sure everybody had a significant improvement in space. They have that now. All of the activities involved are getting at least 25 percent more space than they had before. And it’s better space.”

But the opportunity for connection and the programs that facilitate it are university-wide. “This needs to be an interactive institution,” McKinnon says, “That’s what makes for a positive experience.” And what this means – for 51 McCaul and beyond – is that support is fluid, and it’s often hard to distinguish between initiatives that support learning and those that lend themselves to student happiness. This is exactly as it should be.

The Laptop Program, for example, began as a pilot project two years ago. By 2007/2008, it will have put affordable, industry-ready machines into the hands of 900 OCAD Design students. In combination with

wireless Internet access and the introduction of “smart” technology, this enhances what happens in the classroom. Perhaps less obvious is the degree to which it makes student life easier.

For international students, improved services will ease the difficulties involved in adjusting to a new culture. With this in mind, the Writing & Learning Centre is launching a pilot conversation project this January wherein ESL students will meet informally with a peer tutor. The program will likely incorporate gallery-type excursions outside the OCAD community.

Also in the works are enhanced international opportunities for domestic students, in addition to OCAD’s Florence Off-Campus Studies program. The Office of Student Services is forging Mobility/Exchange Partnerships that will give students more choices about where and how they study abroad.

Partnership and opportunity are always key themes at home. Financial Aid & Awards is implementing new needs-based programs and workshops, some of which involve or are conducted by outside partners.

The Health & Wellness Centre and the Centre for Students with Disabilities stand to benefit significantly from the new centre, which will provide visiting physicians more opportunity to work directly with OCAD students. Students with disabilities will also have greater access to assistive technology as well as dedicated space for exams.

Says McKinnon, “With our new centre and services, it’s conceivable that a student can visit Financial Aid and then go on to visit a counselor – both will be housed under one roof.” Naturally this kind of overlap will contribute to the sense of community the University is fostering, and McKinnon points to OCAD’s mentoring program as having laid the groundwork in this respect.

Now in its second year, mentoring is a proud development of the equally youthful Centre for Advising & Campus Life. The program pairs successful upper-level students with students in their first year, and the relationships that come out of it both nurture and inform. The social and the academic come together yet again in Orientation activities and Student Groups initiatives. The Centre also has a brand-new Career Services Advisor.

With initiatives like these – and there are many more – it’s possible that OCAD’s commuter campus will be a source of strength and inspiration to the community. Already it’s been a source of ideas and, in its own way, a home. “That home, its physical space, is awkward. But it’s also funky and interesting,” McKinnon says of OCAD’s newest building, “And it’s a challenge. In all respects, this suits us.”



GORD PETERAN: FURNITURE MEETS ITS MAKER

It's not surprising that Gord Peteran and his work are difficult to categorize. Peteran teaches Advanced Visual Language and Furniture 1 and 2 in the Industrial Design program, and yet he rarely creates work for multiple production. Beth Alber, Chair of Material Art & Design, doesn't believe he fits in the tradition of fine craft either. "He's something of a hybrid," says Alber. Ginette Legare, Chair of Sculpture/Installation, sat on the jury that awarded Peteran the 2004 Chalmers Art Fellowship. She recalls his work as being multidisciplinary as well as "whimsical, resourceful, ingenious." Says Charles Reeve, Curator of OCAD's Professional Gallery, "Gord produces objects that operate in a realm where the words *art* and *design* are not part of the vocabulary."

Finding a point of view on Peteran's work is best left to the curator, and this role was recently taken up by Glenn Adamson, formerly at Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and now Head of Graduate Studies and Deputy Head of Research at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Adamson is responsible for creating Gord Peteran: Furniture Meets Its Maker. This solo exhibition will tour six American states over the next two years and marks a significant moment in Peteran's career. Promotional material for the exhibition describes this career as boundary-crossing, "opening up the category of furniture to an unprecedented range of psychological and conceptual content."

In his catalogue essay "Undertaker: Gord Peteran and the Black Art of Furniture Making," Adamson, who considers Peteran's process as a point of entry, a way of understanding the nature of Peteran's work, writes:

ABOVE, LEFT
GORD PETERAN
STUDY STATION, 2006.
94 CM X 53.3 CM X 68.9 CM
FOUND WOOD AND METAL,
LEATHER, THREAD, BRASS,
GLASS AND HAIR.
PHOTO BY ELAINE BRODIE

ABOVE
GORD PETERAN
AN EARLY TABLE, 2004.
91.4 CM X 101.6 CM X 43.2 CM
TWIGS AND STRING.
FROM THE COLLECTION OF
WILLIAM ANDERSON.
PHOTO BY ELAINE BRODIE

TOP
GORD PETERAN
TWO, 2006.
37.5 CM X 37.5 CM X 171.5 CM
BRASS BRACE:
50.8 CM X 40.6 CM X 22.9 CM
WALNUT AND BRASS.
PHOTO BY ELAINE BRODIE

"The found object is a good place to start with Gord Peteran. That, after all, is where he often starts. A rickety ladder-back chair from a dumpster, a pile of scrap wood, a pencil, a heap of twigs: these are some of his raw materials. Peteran will take one of these things and operate on it in some way, creating a work while leaving the thing itself more or less intact. The strategy does not have to be literal, though; it is best taken as an analogy for his practice in general. He has taken the category of furniture, or more precisely, that which he calls the 'furnitural,' as a found object in its own right – a thing to be operated upon conceptually while at the same time left in place. At Peteran's hands, furniture dies a fascinating death, without ever quite going away."

According to Adamson, the tight parameters, or the "opportunity" to restrict possibilities, make the commission process a welcome proposition for Peteran. This clearly sets him apart. Adamson argues that Peteran's work is neither expressive studio furniture nor creative sculptural craft. The nature of his process marks him as a "child of Conceptualism." His interest is not to liberate form from function, but rather to leave form or function unresolved, to explore the "logic of the found object" through restraint.

Adamson also wonders how to categorize the artist. In the following last paragraphs of his catalogue essay, he returns to the notion of singularity, and to what only time can reveal – the true character of Peteran's position in art history.

“Peteran’s fundamentally resistant nature raises, inevitably, the question of his true ambition. So far, his relation to other artists has been that of a provocateur, not a leader. Whether he even belongs to a ‘field’ (in the sense of a community of like-minded souls) is doubtful. There are certainly other artists who use furniture forms in their work and who freight those forms with psychological weight, such as Mona Hatoum and Doris Salcedo. But these artists deploy furniture from an exterior position, exploiting its generic qualities to operate on some other concern, such as autobiography, gender construction, or received cultures of domesticity. Peteran, by contrast, has taken up a position within furniture, if only in order to

better destroy it. In this stance lies his real singularity, yet he claims that his maneuver is an obvious one: ‘The area between the intimate objects of the home and the psyche is exactly where [great sculptors] would want their work performing. This is what sculpture claims it wants but has never had the wherewithal to do. I don’t see my work as sculptural furniture; I see it as the only place to point my arrow. I have no interest in furniture. It just seems to be already milling around in the only territory worth targeting...or very close to that territory.’

“Call him what you will: a fly in the ointment, an upsetter of the apple cart or just a wise guy, but in the end, Peteran’s work is the acid test for those who operate in the terrain of the ‘furnitural.’ In fact, he may already have killed off what they thought was worth saving. And, as he is fond of saying, ‘I’m just getting started.’ What happens in the future will reveal, in retrospect, the true character of Peteran’s position

in art history. As for the final aims of his undertaking, they can best be summed up in his own elusive words (for, as a final Peteran shop rule has it, ‘What people say is quite often a clue to what they’re thinking.’).

“When I told Peteran the title of this essay, he responded approvingly: ‘That’s what I do, I guess. Primp it, box it and bury it. By the end of my career, I will have made everything invisible. Or at least harder to see.’ ”

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Excerpts from “Undertaker: Gord Peteran and the Black Art of Furniture Making” were printed with the permission of the author. For a copy of the complete catalogue essay, visit www.ocad.ca

**Gord Peteran:
Furniture Meets Its Maker
Exhibition Itinerary**

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin
October 5, 2006–January 7, 2007

Cranbrook Art Museum
Cranbrook Academy of Art,
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
February 3–April 1, 2007

Winterhur Museum
Winterhur, Delaware
May 12–August 12, 2007

Bellevue Arts Museum
Bellevue, Washington
September 13–
December 9, 2007

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