

In 1987 the Department of Art staged what was known as The Last Faculty Show. Included in this exhibition were Tom Johnston, Pat McCormick and Madge Gleeson. Absent for the time being was Bob Urso who had shown with the studio faculty in the past. What made this show historic was the fact that the art and industrial arts building (1949) was being remodeled. First, the Western Gallery was being closed; it had been a small exhibition space on the second floor since the building opened in 1950. In its place a brand new gallery was to be added to the Art Building itself. The exhibition space was to be greatly enlarged and standardized with environmental and security controls. Secondly, the graphic arts, design and photography sections of the industrial arts program officially moved into the Department of Art, thus, making Elsi Vassdal-Ellis' and Bob Embrey's alliances with art official.

When David Marsh, Professor Emeritus, had become Chair of the Department in 1959, he had instituted the idea of annual faculty exhibitions. After The Last Faculty Show, exhibitions in the new Western Gallery have occurred every two years. This less ambitious schedule at their own institutions's gallery has been replaced by the stepped-up pace of the faculty's exhibitions elsewhere. Throughout the nineties, eight new studio faculty have joined the Department: Cristina de Almeida, Sharron Antholt, Ed Bereal, Aris Georgiades, Cara Jaye, Mark Newport, and Kent Smith. The theme of this year's show - Review and Preview - reflects this forward thinking Department. As artists, they experiment and select themes which refocus our routine driven minds. As teachers, they sharpen our observation skills in the way they verbalize their work and goals. No doubt, part of the enthusiastic response on the part of the community to this year's exhibition has to do with the flexibility of educators who experiment without dissolving their expertise in one area.

In this exhibition textual and photography based works predominated: from the page and book cover as written and sensuous visual image in the prints of Joni Papp to the actual hand-held books constructed by artist/author Elsi Vassdal-Ellis; from the poetic narrative locked into the language based design of Cristina de Almeida to the literal words rising out of the rich textures of Kent Smith's versatile posters; from the witty transference of tradition and popular culture onto new covers- boxers and quilts- by Mark Newport to the manufacture of new objects uncovered and retagged in the digital collections of Madge Gleeson; from the embroidered meanings of the staged photographs of the female by Cara Jaye to the manipulated chromatic photographs of Bob Embrey.

In paintings, the ideas ranged from Bob Urso's freshly expressed homage to landscapes to Tom Johnston's conceptual reconfiguration of space enriched by shape and texture; from Sharron Antholt's geographical and cultural memories of past travels collaged into paint to Ed Bereal's assemblage of political past and future questions about our national character. In three-dimensional work, Pat McCormick's ceramic set-pieces challenged thought patterns on the wall and floor while Aris Georgiades' (and collaborator Gail

Simpson's) site-specific sculpture functioned as a model for community based work.

Just wait until the next showing!

Sarah Clark-Langager
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