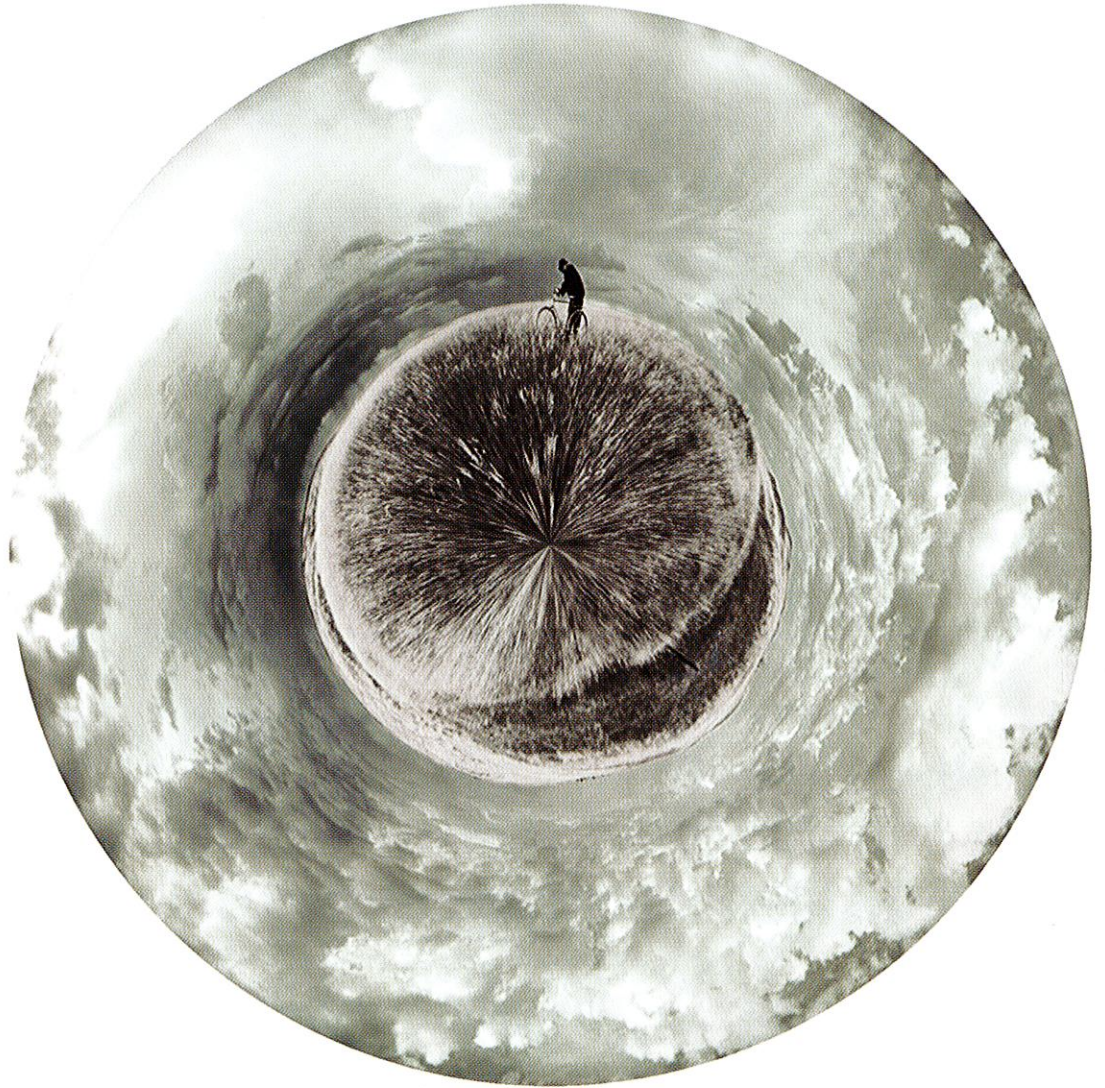


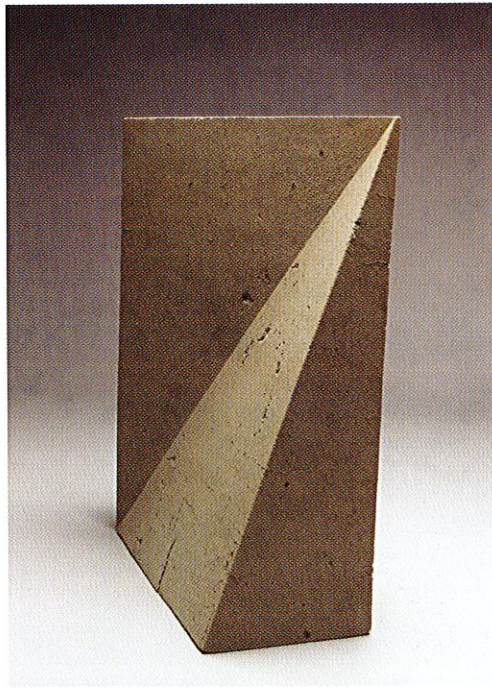
VANISH: Art and Illusion



Art Gallery of Regina

Chris Cran
David Garneau
Jay Gazley
Katharine Harvey
Marc Hutchinson
Joe Kelly
Angela Lucas
John Noestheden
Gerald Piowar
Jon Sasaki
Jeremy Stanbridge
David Tuttle
Zane Wilcox

December 11, 2008 - January 24, 2009

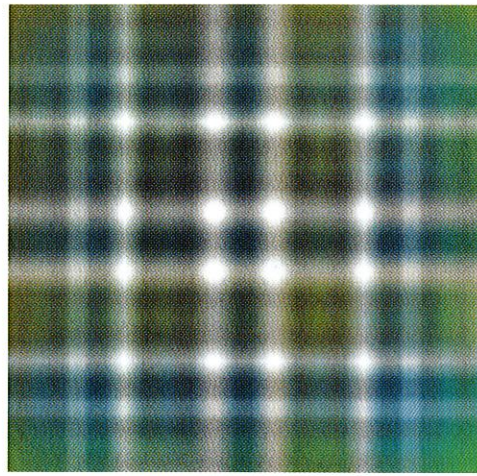


Zane Wilcox, *Slant 4*, 2007, reduction fired stoneware,
49 x 37 x 17cm



David Garneau, *After Image (Gabriel Dumont)*,
2008, acrylic and charcoal on canvas, 4' x 5'

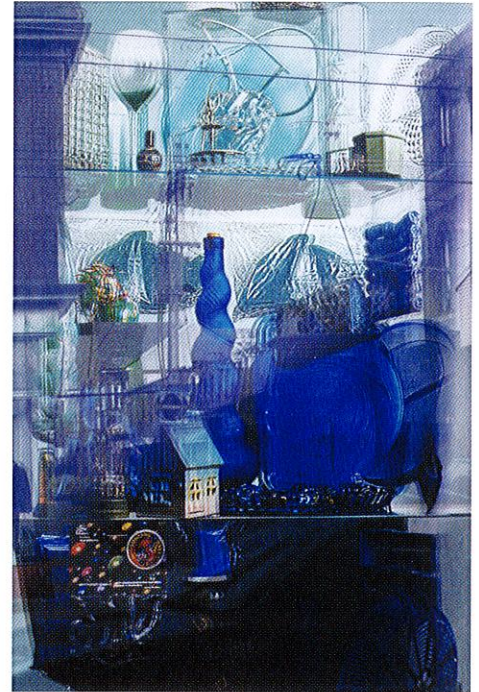
Cover: Marc Hutchinson, *Incident with the Prairie*, 2007, inkjet print, 30" x 30"



Jeremy Stanbridge, *Abstract Painting (Humble Pie)*, 2004, digital lightjet print, 48" x 48"



Chris Cran, *X*, 2008, 30" x 24", oil and acrylic on canvas



Katharine Harvey, *Home*, 2003, 3-D Lenticular print, 42" x 28"



Angela Lucas, *Haunted Spaces: Laura*, 2008. Digital Anaglyph, 47 x 34.7 x 6.9cm

Art and Illusion

"Proposition... : ... To state the existence of indeterminate phenomena in the structure and visual reality of the work, and from there to conceive of new possibilities..."

GRAV (Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visual); Paris, 1962

Optical art starts in the relationship of eye to mind.

Identified by the critical press as mere eye candy when it first exploded on the art scene in 1964, pulsingly hallucinatory Op Art - the most familiar thread of optical art - failed to correspond to the then prevailing demands of formalist abstraction which insisted that painting be stripped back to its core elements. Rather than offering up abstract values, Op offered up visual fun. Rather than prompting a mystical art experience, Op made us clumsily dizzy. Rather than oppose kitsch, Op became kitsch.

Instead of casting its gaze backward to that period of art history though, *Vanish* looks at the work of contemporary artists who mobilize Op Art's aesthetics and perceptual strategies in their work. Unleashing visual instability, their volatile, retinally stimulating paintings, photographs and sculptural objects assert viewing as an active psychological event. Despite their apparent playfulness, they distort what we see and how we see it by disclosing gap spaces where normative, traditionally understandable links break down. Indeed, by alerting us to the mechanics of vision and various models of perception, the work here disassembles the traditional visual languages we have constructed in order to know, structure and represent the world: via optical perception, these fascinating contrary images prompt us to consider our personal and cultural perceptions - thus playing havoc with our relationship to reality.

Artist/tinkerer **Joe Kelly's** viewing gizmo, like early filmic technologies of the 20th century such as kinoscopes and zoetropes, confounds the eye by producing in the mind the effects of motion where none truly exist. Triggering the phenomena of 'persistence of vision', his brief ironic mini 'film', *Yawning Trout*, points to simplistic nature films while the device itself recalls science-center displays where nature is documented, configured via basic interactive displays. Paralleling low-fi technologies of the past with the digital technologies of the present, we are this trout who endlessly flows with and is inseparable from the data/media rivers we are immersed in.

Similarly filmic, **Gerald Piowar's** self-portrait pop-up book literally de-constructs the traditional flat 2-dimensional image, unfolding it into actual 3-dimensional space. Like a layer-by-layer MRI, the artist's body has been re-imaged to suggest the 'interior' self. Looking past the surface, this work challenges photography's 'truth' claims to objectivity and impartiality. Of course, as truth is much more than objective fidelity, this work understands that our individual identities hold unique and unfixed forms of it.

Conversely, **Zane Wilcox's** small abstract ceramic sculptures invoke 2-d space while actually occupying 3 dimensions. As simple objects occupying real space, they refer to the simple cubic forms of Minimalist sculpture; but when seen from various physical points of view, they appear to de-form almost into perspective drawings. Like Cubist art which offers multiple points of view rather than a singular one, this disobedient work implicates not only space but time and not only mind but body in our knowledge of the world.

As state-of-the-art digital paintings which thus refuse the 'authentic' painterly hand, **Jeremy Stanbridge's** ephemeral grid paintings ambush 1950s - 70s Modernist abstraction (such as 'the Plaid Paintings' of Regina Five painter Ted Godwin). Indeed, with their roots in theories written by

1950's -70's formalist critic Clement Greenberg and media critic Marshall McLuhan, these intersecting bands of lines are literally sourced in the words taken from their very texts, which have been stretched into optical information instead. Synthesizing content into form via contemporary image-making technologies, the resulting visual blur becomes a subversion – an emptying out - of those prior image and media codes.

Recalling Samuel van Hoogstraten's peepshow box from the 17th century, **Katharine Harvey's** small 'watery' *Porthole* suggests an optical device - a kind of telescope - that locates us as viewers in an unnerving space simultaneously distant from, close to and within the image itself. Using digital software that both un-laces and then re-laces the spatial relationships implied but never manifested in a flat photographic image, her lenticular photograph similarly identifies us as gazing participants. Finding ourselves lost in the spectacle, we gaze and are drawn into a slippery space of imagination, memory and desire: a shop window made elusive and foreign with now-strange kitsch-y consumer goods.

In **David Tuttle's** rigorously puzzling maze-networks, the repeated linear structure becomes a skeletal frame work on which color is hung. Employing color dynamics as explored by many formalist American colorfield painters of the 1960s and 1970s, these complex patterns appear to pulsate. Refusing to allow the eye rest, they map fugitive non-spaces that, although mathematically organized and although sourced in the border decorations of Celtic illuminated manuscripts, decline direct association with any organized system.

Resembling the 1960s and 70s abstract mandala paintings of Regina Five painter Art McKay, **Marc Hutchinson's** anamorphic photographs refuse the typical prairie landscape model in which a flat horizon line bisects the picture plane. As well, they oppose the landscapist's traditional one-point perspective by locating both the lens and the viewer within the center of an endless flattened out landscape. Based on experience rather pictorial or scientific paradigms, Hutchinson's encompassing panoramic images - produced with a rotating camera made by the artist - are vistas that can only be traversed via memory, the subjectivity of the 'mind's eye' and our own desires.

David Garneau's dotted portrait of charismatic late 1800s Métis leader Gabriel Dumont interlaces traditional Métis beadwork patterns atop all kinds of Eurocentric art theories and movements from pointillism (Seurat) to pop (Lichtenstein) to commerce (Ben Day dots are familiar to us from early forms of mechanical reproduction). Like all those, this elusive image fluxes literally and metaphorically in and out of readability depending on our literal and figurative proximity to this figure. Garneau's similar landscape image differentiates colonial and Metis relationships to nature: who is doing the seeing here and from what position?

Based in film history, technology and lingo, **Jon Sasaki's** *Flashback/Timelapse* clock has a lenticular face in which the hands seem to move illogically forward and backward, propelling us – like film - out of localized time and into the contrary time-space of memory and imagination. Likewise, his small lenticular photographs – snow globe-like aerial views of Manhattan – were taken from top what was the now mythologized World Trade Center. Positioned in a spectacular but unstable threshold space that similarly takes us backward in time, we are reminded not only of global political events which deny us any pleasure we might find in viewing these works but that viewing itself is never neutral.

In **Chris Cran's** three largely monochromatic paintings, swooping brushstrokes articulate geometric forms that – as a result of the light play on their surfaces and our physical relationship to them – seem to flip-flop optically from positive to negative images. At the same time, the stripes of hot color applied overtop them at regular intervals call attention to themselves, forcing a dizzied figure-ground equivocation. Sifting and sorting through optical spaces, Cran prompts our consideration of the viewer's role in the reception of the work of art – what has been called the 'techniques of the observer.'

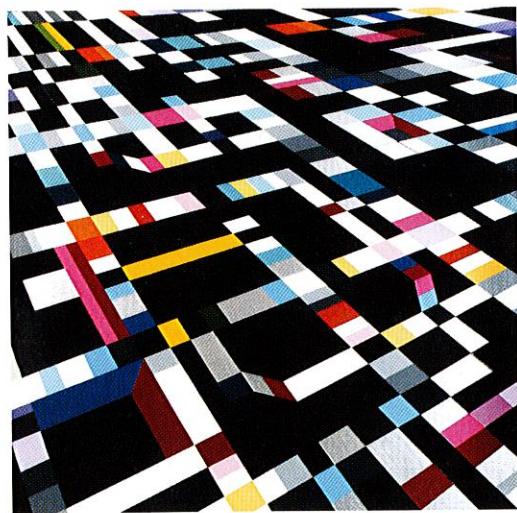
As a representational image, **Jon Noestheden's** *Milky Way Mirror Two* – a dense cluster of reflective crystals - diagrams a section of the actual star field we inhabit, as taken by the Hubble space craft. As an optical space, it suggests a small but vast time-space portal through which we are plunged into a space of the imaginary. As a mirror, it instantaneously returns us to ourselves. Playing with the mechanics of light, the physical operations of vision, and science's systematic descriptions of physical reality, this work equivocates between tangible/intangible, organized/chaotic, near/far, and now/then; playing with the notion of the mirror, it reconfigures us fractured as a sparkling 'zip' of light and energy beyond the temporal phenomenal present.

Jay Gazley's complex spatial terrains reference urban architectures. Although dominantly comprised of colors linked together as interlocking flat rectilinear shapes, what is revealed is a thin tracery of thin white lines between them. These linear networks abstractly map any manner of complex pathways - from digital circuitry to urban transportation routes to the internet. Paralleling but denying the utopianism of Russian Constructivism at the turn the last century (which in some ways these paintings resemble), these complex images are graphical representations that unfold social systems and circuits of meaning operating sub-rosa in the uneasy cultural present.

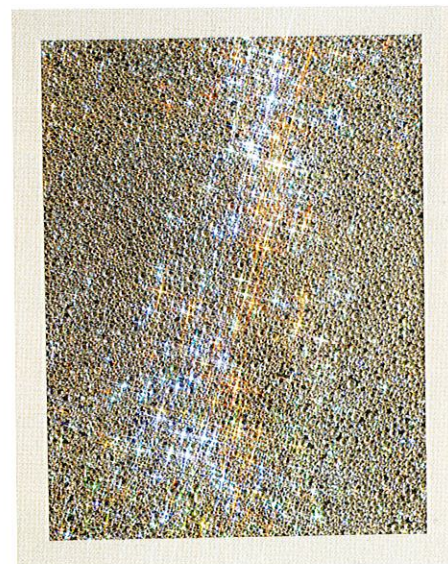
And **Angela Lucas'** digital painting of a ghostly young Victorian girl standing in a vast unidentifiable landscape metaphorically represents the social constructions inherent in the Internet. Using binary code and electronic devices to create a real of mere resemblances, she traps a cyborgian other in a virtual space somewhere between real and unreal, and somewhere between the needs of the human and the endeavors of the machine. Seeking a space of contemplative stillness, Lucas creates here a haunted space – a virtual locality that hints at the residual electronic imprint of human occupation.

Jack Anderson

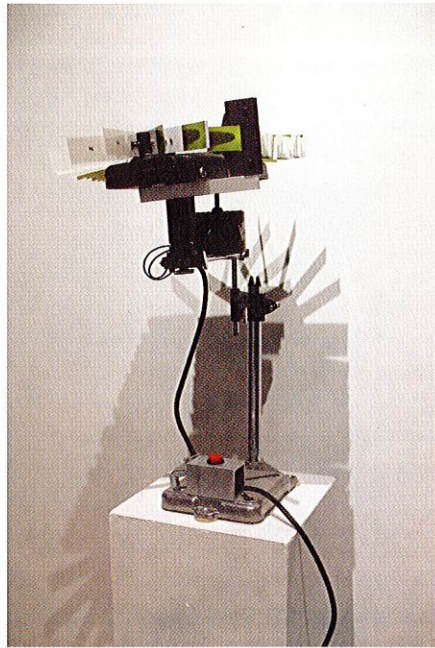
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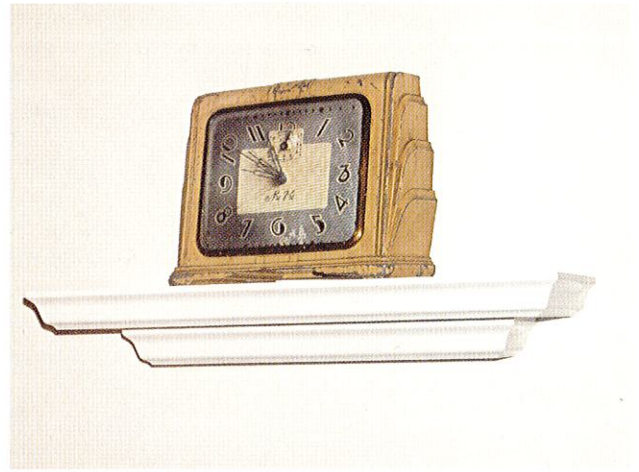
Jay Gazley, *Bungalow*, 2008, acrylic on panel, 24" x 24"



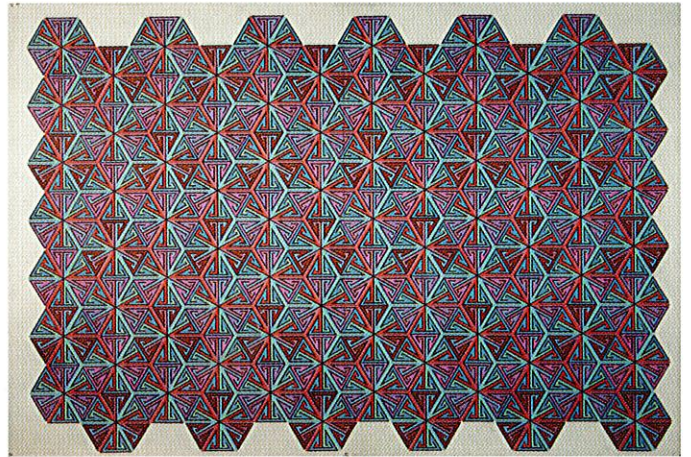
John Noestheden, *MW Mirror Two*, detail, 2008, 40" x 60", acrylic, glue, silver crystals, paper



Joe Kelly, *Tyrachoscope*, 2006, mixed media, 24" x 9" x 14"



Jon Sasaki, *Flashback/Timelapse Clock*, 2007, lenticular face on modified vintage clock, 5.5" x 8" x 5.5"



David Tuttle, *Hexagonal Maze Pattern 1*, 2008, gouache and permanent marker on paper, 51" x 37"



Gerald Piwowar, *Nude (side view)*, 1981, photographs w/mixed media, 14" x 33" x 34"

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ART GALLERY OF REGINA


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