

Judy Anderson, "Assembly Line Chief", detail, Plastic beads and safety pins, 2010. Photo: Trevor Hopkin



Erin Gee, "Synthesis", wood, plaster, acrylic paint, copper, glass beads, electronics, 108 cm x 108 cm x 183 cm, 2011.

# GeNext@AGR

January 26 - March 9, 2011

## ART GALLERY OF REGINA

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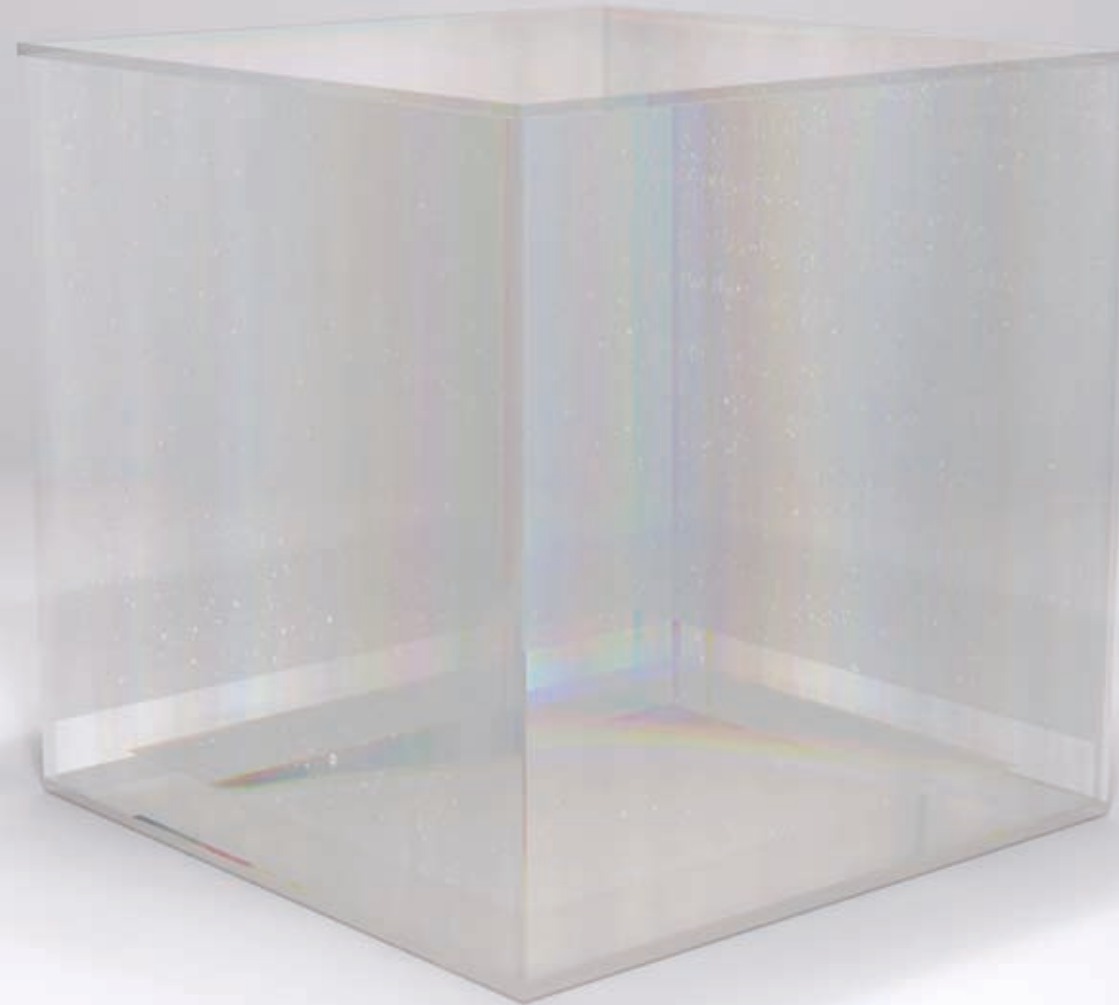
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Judy Anderson

Erin Gee

JG Hampton

Nick Louma

Dakota and Jonah McFadzean

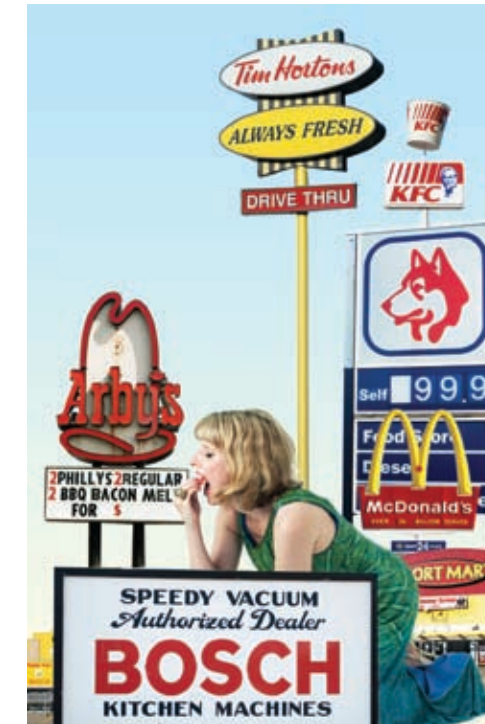
Bruce Montcombroux

Julie Oh

Biliana Velkova



Julie Oh, "Together", inkjet print, 82.5 cm x 95.25 cm, 2009.



Biliana Velkova, "The Temptations of Dr. Antonio" (detail), 40 digital prints on archival paper, 35.6 cm x 55.8 cm, 2010.

Cover: JG Hampton, "Hans Haacke's Condensation Cube", Transmounted C-Print, edition of four, 61 cm x 61 cm, 2011.



## FORWARD

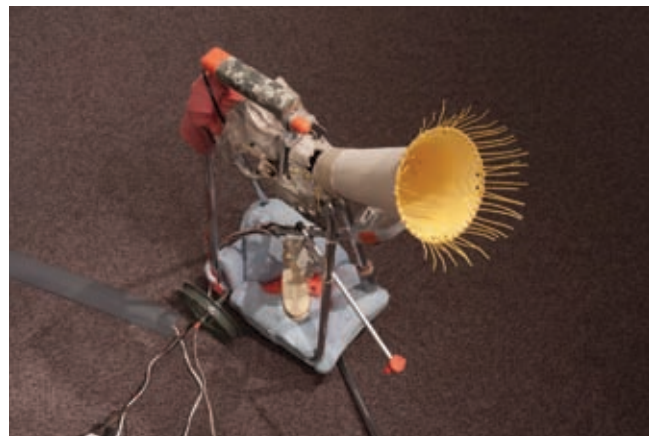
2011 marks the Art Gallery of Regina's 35th anniversary. It has become a tradition here at the AGR to review the evolution of contemporary art in the province at the turn of each new decade. This process began in 1992 with the exhibition **The Next Generation**, a two-part show that focused on the newest generation of young artists from both Saskatoon and Regina. The show explored some of the aesthetic divisions that had been evident for decades within the province's art world. These divisions were based on the distinctly different social and political histories of the two cities as well as the influences of particular individuals associated with the art schools in both Saskatoon and Regina. By the 1970s, the impact of the Emma Lake Workshop in the north and the California Funk influences in the south part of the province had led to easily identifiable 'schools' of art - the formalist work associated with Saskatoon and the northern part of the province and the more humorous representational imagery coming out of the Regina region. The Next Generation exhibitions revealed a shift away from these histories towards post-Modernism fostered by the growth of artist-run-centres and alternative galleries in both cities along with greater access to alternative forms of expression from outside the province.

A decade later the 2001 exhibition **Generation Next(1)** revealed a further shift away from the traditional schools and even post-Modernism towards what curator Jack Anderson called "de-centralization". The work of these young artists could no longer be distinguished by its location of origin within the province.

**GeNext@AGR** is our third exhibition to position the evolution of Saskatchewan art at a particular point in our history. Like the previous projects, this show focuses on the newest generation of young artists just beginning to make their mark on the Saskatchewan art scene. I would like to thank our guest curator Jack Anderson for undertaking this project and for his thoughtful insights into the work. I would also like to thank the artists for their enthusiasm and cooperation and express our appreciation to SaskTel for generously sponsoring this show.

The Art Gallery of Regina is grateful for the continued support of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the City of Regina Civic Arts Funding Program, Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture & Recreation, and Sask Culture Inc.

Karen Schoonover  
Director/Curator



Bruce Montcombroux, "Monogaffe: combine", mixed media with lights, 91.44 cm x 71 cm x 45.7 cm, 2011.

## GeNext@AGR

**GeNext@AGR** is a trans-local sampling of work by nine young Saskatchewan artists who are all recent BFA or MFA graduates. While it would be tempting and predictable to suggest that this work is somehow the outcome of 'a sense of place' or 'community' or even the consequence of earlier directions that Saskatchewan art has taken, there is little reason to do so. Indeed, this work refuses these tired simple linkages. Instead, it finds its location in larger pan-global issues and directions being taken in the most current art. As such, it reveals how we (now an inclusive pronoun redefined and expanded by migration, immigration and the globalism of the internet) are moving in both art and culture not along a single trajectory or path but now multiply through a broader field.

The title to this exhibition - **GeNext@AGR** - implies numerous things, foremost among them that a change has occurred in the way artists approach and use language (verbal to textual to digital), time (now future to present to past - rather than the usual reverse modality) and technology (here hardware meets software) in their making (analogue handwork now brushes (!) up alongside computer generated objects and images) and our reading (through the agencies and mother-tongues of non-dominant social communities, private languages and covert digital alphabets) of art.

**Judy Anderson** references traditional First Nations beadwork in her work of her dozens upon dozens of miniature chiefs' headdresses that are all the same. Using modern plastic versions of traditional quills and holding them together with safety pins, she remind us of how and through what covert codes dominant culture continues to stereotype Aboriginal people - and it is often through cheap kitschy items such as these. Indeed her motif of the minimalist grid itself reinforces notions of sameness over those of the unique and individual.

Moving easily between sculpture, music and digital realms, **Erin Gee's** hanging 'chandelier' from which pearls on copper wire rather than crystal are hung becomes less an ornate object of Baroque-style beauty than an interfacing element between object and viewer. Ignited into voice by the static electric charge of our touch, this uncanny work erupts into voiced communication - the telling of a fairy tale that (with all the vowels removed) devolves - or is it evolves - from verbal meaning into pure sensual vocal sound.

**John Hampton's** two separate but inter-related pieces - one, a series of four digital prints wholly created/assembled in the computer despite their photographic appearance; and the other, a fugitive figurative sculptural work made of four separate laser-cut parts that when seen frontally coheres as a female figure but when seen obliquely disassembles into separate elements - challenges our definitions and epistemological understandings of what is 'real' - of what is 'there' and 'not-there'.

Although deploying a soft toy-like rabbit as the central figure in his narrative drawings, **Nick Louma** reverses our expectations by taking us to a dark psychic territory instead - to a kind of 'heavy metal' minefield where skulls and claws creep forth from the soft and snuggly. Influenced by outsider iconographies found in tattoo art, video games, music videos, comic books, and graffiti art, this work creates a universe of dark fantasies that explore the irrationality, fear and grime of relationships and identity.

In childhood, brothers **Dakota and Jonah McFadzean** often worked on cartoon-style drawings together. Years later, they engage collaboration again in their whimsical single drawing that references but personalizes the iconography of Disney, Mad magazine, and so on but in a much more 'manic' way. More an elusive journey filled with wrong turns and dead ends than a straight forward frame-to-frame comic narrative that travels from beginning to end, this work is effusive with incoherence and tentativeness - becoming more a meditation on isolation, on the fragility of our identities and on our fleeting relationships with all 'others' - including our brothers.

**Bruce Montcombroux's** work defies traditional aesthetic notions, opting instead for a kind of handyman's 'rubble' art. Avoiding traditional sculptural confines, his work erupts within the gallery offering reworked materials and obtuse narratives that seem impenetrably to cohere into...into.... By short-circuiting not only notions of workmanship and process, Montcombroux recasts cast offs and leftovers - thus thwarting meaning and hinting that it can only ever be implied but can never congeal into anything more than that.

Stylistically **Julie Oh's** photographs are perhaps the most accessible work here - they have the appearance of family photographs. Yet despite this familiarity, they code a sense of non-familial isolation and distress. The question they ask is indeed about family: as a Korean-Canadian, she sits on the fence between two identities but is refused full identification with either. Trying to gauge the present and future, Oh as well configures into her internal dialogue the problems of immigration, isolation, difference and abundance versus environmentalism.

Raised behind the Iron Curtain, **Biliana Velkova** reveals her fascination with the abundance of Western consumer culture. Deploying capitalism's own advertising strategies, she asks questions about how our material desires are constructed. In dozens of billboard-style digital posters she recasts herself to appear not only as a gigantic all-consuming King Kong-type figure but as a sex symbol as well - thus tying consumption to sexually-driven marketing strategies. Spoofing the idea of 'the sweet life' that the signage in these images represents, her colourful work decodes the consumer landscape of Saskatoon, transforming it into something colourfully garish but somehow flat and meaningless.

If there is a coherence evident in this show then, it is dis-coherence. This lack of a unifying visual language speaks beyond the acceptance of a unitary but confining position, location, style or voice to more unique, individual views and positions. Focusing on issues and urgencies related to art and to the way we live with each other at this point in time, at its core there is something in all this work about how we are all attempting to find footing in this brave new world. Rarely agreeing with the past, this work transgresses several borders from the cultural to the geographic, the 'handmade' to the technologically driven and the philosophical to the emotional. Given this range, there is as much concern, confusion and disappointment to be found in this inquisitive work as there is a wry knowing humor. Throughout it all though, we find an itchiness skimming its blemished anarchic skin - an itchiness that if scratched still reveals we are burdened by our personal anxieties and social confusions.

Jack Anderson



Nick Louma, "Intermission", charcoal, graphite, ink and gesso on paper, 55.9 cm x 76.2 cm, 2011.



Jonah and Dakota McFadzean, "All My Pets Are Buried in My Parents' Backyard", detail, India ink and graphite on paper, 1.27 m x 3.17 m, 2010.