GERALD DAVID PEDROS
PERIPHERAL

Cover Image: Detail: *Untitled 2*, 2017, acrylic and graphite on mylar, 36" x 31"

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Photography: Moira McKee
Design: Laura Woermke

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'*As our eyes grow accustomed to sight they armour themselves against wonder.*'
- Leonard Cohen

Michelangelo's *David*, Manet's *Olympia*, Schiele's *Fighter*, De Kooning's *Woman*—the nude is a subject firmly entrenched in the history of art, and as a genre, one of the most representative means of depicting a particular moment within history while functioning as a powerful vehicle for political and social change. Figure painting has come to be seen as hopelessly out of date and is once again under threat, with references to prurience, sensationalism and the spectacle overriding the importance of assessing its interpretations as essential to the ethical dimension of humanity. This outcry begs the question, what are the connotations of our 'shells' and the highly politicized nature of their portrayal? Furthermore, what are the affirmations of the nude in a contemporary Western Culture that is rife with ambiguity, censorship and confusion surrounding decorum and boundaries?

For Gerald Pedros, a series begins with questions, then an idea that leads to a progression and a rapid unpacking as the artist works through the subject. Unpredictable, exceedingly curious and energetic, at 66 Pedros has reached a stage in his lifelong career as an artist where he wants less and less to do with the familiar. Peripheral vision, which is the vision outside the very centre of our gaze (and the opposite of tunnel vision) began as the inspiration for Pedros' most recent collection, aligning both his eye and hand to create optical and tactile qualities in a body of work sensory to our peripheral.

A source of fascination with what is a notoriously weak capability in humans in determining detail, colour and shape, Pedros' interest in vision emerged at a cultural moment when it is pivotal that we ask ourselves what we see, what we infer from what we don't see, what is being hidden from our direct line of sight and why. The compositions in this body of work entertain a certain measured stillness in the peripheral perspective. Forms become snapshots of a sideways glance, where the awareness of a protruding or deformed limb, a face unrecognizable due to our limited range, or a lurking, shadowy figure, reveal scenes propagated within a collective imagination so desperately looking for visual coordinates, but whose vision is obscured.

One cannot assume that because Pedros' subjects are depicted with a shifted perspective that his world is illusory; his subjects possess rather ordinary proportions that deviate from the Classical, delectable, idealized figure and are a revision to a more primitive, loose style. This Fauvist approach to the form, exercises an emphasis on the simplification of the shapes and parts that comprise the body. Pedros utilizes this method in defiance of a strictly literal representation that can often be seen as self-conscious or fraudulent, allowing the viewer to be freed from the limitations of Realism, opening the door to interpretation while nurturing an images ability to carry varied implications.

Colour functions as a vehicle in this approach, as in works such as *Untitled 13* where pure form and colour meld in a way that is not directly representational, but expressive. Our peripheral vision and its limitations on the range of colours we see, is distilled in the specific hues applied in these works. Extreme periphery of the retina, in fact, does not see colour. At a particular range in our peripheral vision, the eye is no longer able to see blue, at an even wider range, the eye begins to be unable to see red, and so on.

Acrylic applied in full, wet dabs onto the Mylar has its own effusive flow, bleeding out, bruising and mapping itself across the transparent flesh of the figures. Pedros manipulates the paint by blocking it off or diverting it, in instances consciously censoring a face, breasts and genitals as discernable identifiers of the subject, or in

works such as *Untitled 8*, alluding to a foundational symbol of inflicted suffering by brushing a crucifix of dark navy pigment over a naked female figure—trapped symbolically, with arms splayed in retribution.

The way in which the form is conveyed from the peripheral has no intention of communicating explicit detail, as in *Untitled 5* where the approach to expressing the form recalls blind drawing: the process of sketching the contour of a subject without looking at the paper, reducing the image to an outline in one swift, continuous stroke on the page. Body parts become augmented, distorted and caricaturesque—a calf appears swollen, a hand transforms into an oversized claw, the basis of skeleton, musculature and skin supporting and embracing the form loses its relevance and the eye seeks to repair the form back to an identifiable wholeness. Even the androgynous depiction of figures such as *Untitled 19* produces a compulsion to ascribe gender as a category to limit our unease.

Pedros' subjects are sometimes playful, but even in the silliness of works such as *Untitled 30* there is a silent, menacing quality—a secret at play. Three rakish men stand naked, facing forward, grins splayed across twisted faces; their nakedness, rather than being erotically potent, subverts any essence of machismo, and is oddly disconcerting. Men appear as simultaneously cowering and immense figures in *Untitled 15* and *Untitled 20,* positioned so we can clearly see their sex, however their faces are cropped, debasing their masculinity and calling into question objectified portrayals beyond a realm that historically has been distinctly female.

Women, alternatively, are most commonly portrayed in confrontation with the viewer, as in *Untitled 7* where the relentless gazes of the three figures are matched only by their unabashed nudity. Multiple identities of the same subject are presented as companions transparent, or silhouetted. These mythical, mysterious figures are the embodiments of their own narratives and each look carries a tension for what we don't know: who is the victim and who is the subject, what are the roles ascribed to them and what imposed identities do they reject or emulate?

Duality exists as a prevalent theme throughout this body of work, much as Sigmund Freud's theories correlate the link between sex and death, pleasure and pain, Pedros explores this notion in scenes depicting the melding of bodies, revealing a sort of convoluted aggression where the physicality of the forms appears at once, violent and intimate—opposing but not adversarial. The peripheral and its link to our defenses plays a key role in survival, and works such as *Untitled 2*, suggest a carnality that merge those extremes.

Conflating history through a contemporary lens sees the power of the nude in Pedros' paintings as a response to outside conditions and a reality lived by the artist. In a way, this collection eulogizes the nude in contemporary art, but is also an acknowledgement of the need for a re-examination and embrace of the genre both in conversation, and in Pedros' case, by exploring a new way of looking.

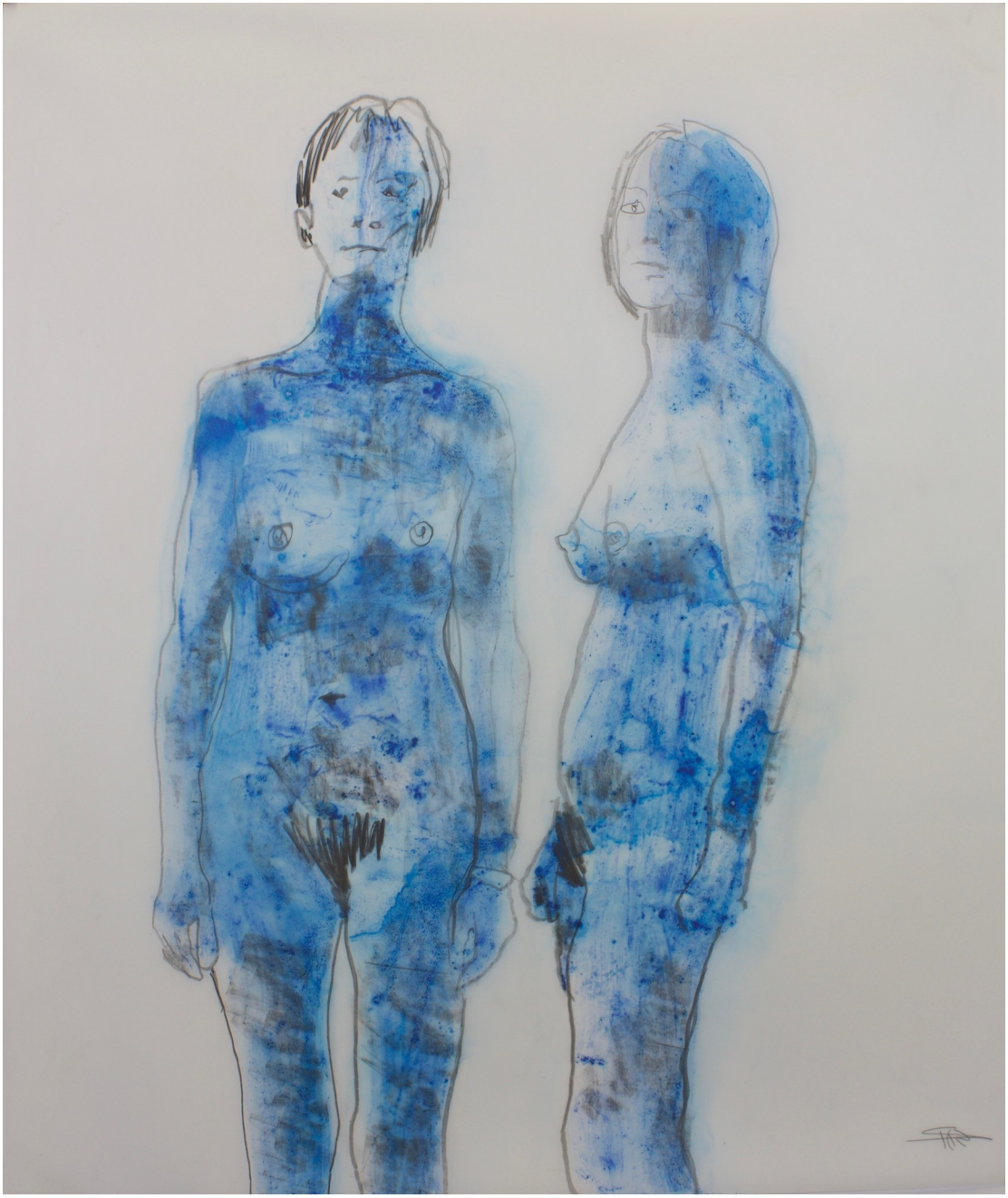
Moira A. McKee
Founder and Curator, EXCAVO Fine Arts

IMAGES

Untitled 1, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 2, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar,
36" x 31"

Untitled 3, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar,
22" x 18"



Untitled 4, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 5, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
24" x 18"

Untitled 6, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar,
31" x 36"

Untitled 7, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar,
31" x 36"

Untitled 8, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
31" x 36"

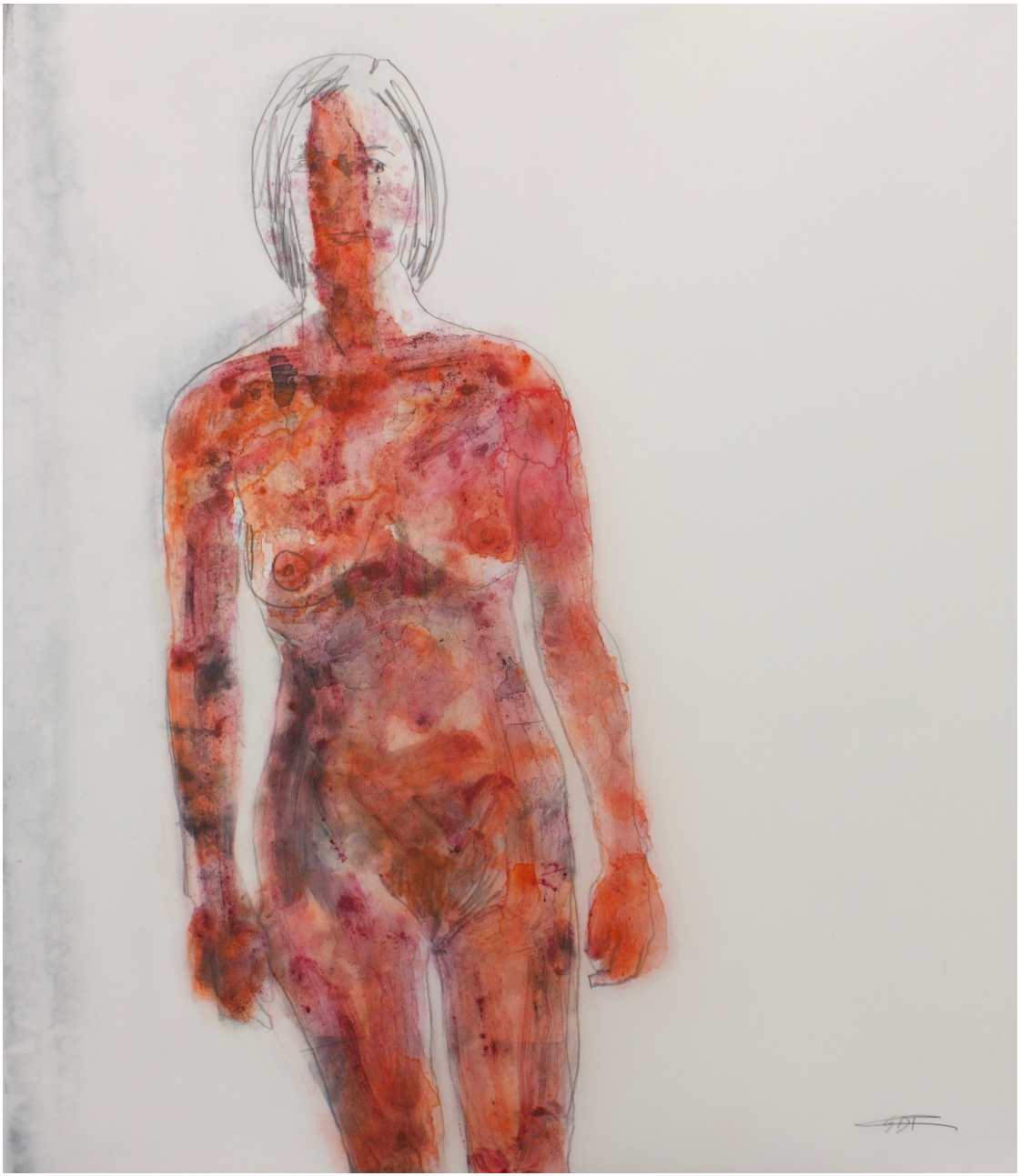
Untitled 9, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
31" x 36"

Untitled 10, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
18“ x 18”

Untitled 11, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
18" x 18"

Untitled 12, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
24" x 18"

Untitled 13, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"



Untitled 14, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 15, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 16, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
18" x 18"

Untitled 17, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
31" x 36"

Untitled 18, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 36"

Untitled 19, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 20, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 21, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 22, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
31" x 36"

Untitled 23, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
31" x 36"

Untitled 24, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 25, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
22" x 18"

Untitled 26, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 27, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
22" x 18"

Untitled 28, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
36" x 31"

Untitled 29, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
31" x 36"

Untitled 30, 2017
acrylic and graphite on mylar
31“ x 36”

CURRICULUM VITAE

BORN:
Montreal, Quebec, Canada 1951
STUDIED:
Dawson College, Montreal, 1972-74
Concordia University, Montreal, 1974-77 (BFA)
Concordia University, Montreal, 1980-83 (MFA)

STUDIOS:
Central Studio, London, Ontario (2015 - present)
Potrero, Costa Rica (2015)
Pouch Cove Foundation Art Residency Program in Newfoundland (2005)
Banff Centre Leighton Artists Colony, Banff, Alberta (1993)
La Sociedad mexicana de Artes Plasticas 9S.O.M.A.R.T.) Mexico City, Mexico (1987)
Le Centre Genevois de Gravure Contemporaine, Geneva, Switzerland (1978)
Toronto, Ontario
Montreal, Quebec

AWARDS:
Ontario Arts Council (1997,1995,1992,1989, 2001)
Canada Council (1979)
Greenshield Foundation Graduate Assistantship (1976.1977)

SELECTED CANADIAN EXHIBITIONS:
2017 - Thielsen Galleries, London, Ontario, Canada
2017 - Big Print Project, Roundhouse Community Centre Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
2017- Big Print Project, Chinese Cultural Centre Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia
2015 - Thielsen Galleries, London, Ontario, Canada
2015 - St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario
2014 - Big Print Project, Waterfront Theatre, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
2012 - Thielsen Galleries, London, Ontario, Canada
2011 - St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario
2010 - Stewart Hall Art Gallery, Pointe-Claire, Quebec, Canada
2009 - Fieldcote Memorial Park and Museum, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
2009 - Thielsen Galleries, London, Ontario, Canada
2009 - St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Gallery, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada
2007 - MacLaren Art Center, Barrie Ontario

2007 - Thielsen Galleries, London Ontario
2006 - Woodstock Art Gallery, Woodstock Ontario
2006 - Thielsen Galleries, London Ontario
2005 - St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St.Thomas, Ontario
2005 - James Baird Gallery, St. Johns's, Newfoundland
2004 - Outline in Black, Jens Thielsen Gallery, London, Ontario
2001 - Thielsen Galleries Inc., London, Ontario
2000 - Roberts Gallery Limited, Toronto Ontairo
1999 - Jean-Claude Bergeron Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario
1997 - Thielsen Galleries Inc., London Ontario
1997 - Blyth Festival Art Gallery, Blyth, Ontario
1997 - Wallace Galleries Ltd., Calgary, Alberta
1996 - Elgin - St. Thomas Art Gallery, St.Thomas, Ontario
1996 - Thielsen Galleries Inc., London,Ontario
1995 - Ottawa School of Art, Ottawa, Ontario
1995 - Centre Interculturel Strathearn, Montreal, Quebec
1994 - Thielsen Galleries Inc., London, Ontario
1993 - Cenre of Contemporary Art, St. Thomas, Ontario
1992 - Temiskaming Art Gallery, Temiskaming, Ontario
1991 - Elgin - St.Thomas Art Gallery, St.Thomas, Ontario
1989 - Galerrie Samuel Lallouz, Montreal, Quebec
1985 - Centre Saidye Bronfman, Montreal, Quebec

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS :
2015 - Museum Gallery, Biograd Na Moru, Croatia
2013 - University of North Carolina, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA
2011 - Provinciale de Artes Plasticas y Diseno, Santiago, Cuba
2010 - Galeria Jose Peon Contreras, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico
2008 - Salon de La Plasticas Mexicana, Mexico City, Mexico
2006 - Public Exhibition, Berezategui, Argentina
2006 - Faculty of Arts Universidad Nacional de Tucuman, Tucuman, Argentina
2006 - Public Exhibition, Catamarca, Argentina
2006 - 2005 - 4th International Conference on Public Art & Muralism, Tlaxcala , Mexico
1994 - Swords into Plowshare Peace Museum, Detroit, Michigan
1991 - Galeria Praxis, Mexico D.F.
1991 - Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico
1991 - Kilkenny Arts Festival, Kilkenny, Ireland

1991 - Guinness Hop Store Gallery, Dublin, Ireland
1990 - Ernst Brant Galerie, Cologne, Germany
1987 - Sociedad mexicana des Arts Plasticas, Mexico City
1978 - Centre Genevois de Gravure Contemporaine, Geneva
1978 - Galerei Paralelle, Geneva, Switzerland

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS:
- Museo Nacional de la Estampa, Mexico City
- Consejo Nacional Para La, Mexico City
- Musee d'Estampes Geneva, Switzerland
- Centre de Gravure, Geneva, Switzerland
- S.O.M.A.R.T., Mexico City
- Guinness Brewery, Dublin, Ireland
- Bibliotheque Gabrielle Roy, Quebec City
- Consulate General of Morocco, Montreal
- St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas
- Teleglobe Canada, London, Ontario
- Woodstock Art Gallery, Woodstock
- London Life of Canada, London, Ontario
- Concordia University, Montreal
- St. Joseph's Hospital, London, Ontario
- St. Thomas - Elgin General Hospital, London, Ontario
- University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario
- Canadian Art Bank
- Air Canada Corporation
- Museum London, London Ontario

CURATORIAL PROJECTS:

Francis Caprani, *Recent Works*, July 6, 2017, 711 Central Ave, London, Ontario, Canada

Brian Saby "*Playas Tropicales*", November 19, 2016, 711 Central Ave, London, Ontario, Canada

Laura Woermke *Paper Crown*, August 27, 2016, 711 Central Ave, London, Ontario, Canada

Pamela Williams *In the Midst of Angels /*
Esther Rausenberg *Anima of Air Spirit Soul*, January 17 – March 18, 2009
St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Gerald Vaandering *Under the Influence*, November 10 – January 6, 2008
St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Leslie Putnam *Alternate Route*, November 10 – January 6, 2008
St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Tobey C. Anderson *The New American Century Project*, November 14 – January 10, 2009
St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Aidan Urquhart *Making Memories* Helene Lefebvre *Social Queen*, September 6 – October 26, 2008
St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

The Bank Job: Three Canadian Painters- La Raza Artists Event September 2008
353 Richmond Street. London, Ontario, Canada

John Krygsman *Upon Closer Introspection* John Maggio *Images Along the Way*, July 12 – August 31, 2008
St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Richard Tetrault *Urban Topographies*, January 19 – March 8, 2008
St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Ron Milton *Symbols*, January 20 – March 3, 2007
St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Jan Row / Julie Berry *Discovering a Different Shore*, January 20 – March 3, 2007
St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Brian Saby *99-06*, September 2 – October 21, 2006
St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Montreal Artists Holly King, Francois Morelli, Lorraine Sims, Michael Smith, Shelly Reeves, Giuseppe Di Leo
June 16 – August 18, 2007, St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Collective Projects:
Big Print Chinatown Project, 2016, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

The Elusive Landscape: A Canadian Collaboration, June 18-July 6, 2015 Kastel Benkovac, and
July 15-25, 2015 Zadar State Archive Gallery, Croatia

Big Print Project, 2014, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Residency Point of Contact - mural project and exhibition, 2010-2011, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba

London Mural – A Canada/Argentina Collaboration, 2007
King Street, London, Ontario, Canada

Contact:

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