

jane **ADENEY**

michael **ALLGOEWER**

jewel **GOODWYN**

clare **PEARSON**

reinhard **REITZENSTEIN**

curated by ivan **JURAKIC**



November 4  
to December 17, 1994

**Hamilton Artists Inc.**

SUBCONSCIOUS

MYTHOLOGIES

## Subconscious

n. part of the mind that is not fully conscious but is able to influence actions

## Mythology

n. traditional narrative usually involving supernatural or fancied persons and embodying popular ideas on natural or social phenomena

In the art world of the late 1960's, the minimalist aesthetic promoted a reduction to the essentials of geometric abstraction. The formal fabrications of artists like Donald Judd, which denied the human touch, ultimately gave way to a process oriented art. The post-minimalists attempted to balance both the intellectual and spiritual nature of art-making with the desire for physical presence. In Western Europe, Joseph Beuys and artists from the Italian Arte Povera movement such as Jannis Kounellis, sought to reflect the impermanence of the human body in their sculpture. Similarly in America, artists Hans Haacke, Lucas Samaras and Eva Hesse were committed to setting in motion an ideal of making three dimensional art that was in and of itself a means to an end. Ultimately the process was as important as the finished product. In its purest incarnation this was a sculptural installation that existed in a site-specific context and was of a non-permanent nature.

## a selective view of some journeys...

**jane Adeney** works with clay.

Her vision encompasses the strength and versatility of her chosen material, while surpassing expectations of what can be done with the medium. Her work is representative of a metaphysical vessel.

This vessel takes the form of an enclosed box

that acts as the receptacle for the psychic matter of the unconscious. The references are to extreme states of psychological being. Each piece investigates levels of meaning that are placed upon our consciousness and the barriers that we live within. Her series of smoke-fired clay boxes entitled *Secrets and Desires*, continue her explorations into the world as both curious Pandora and elemental fury. Her works evoke a seductive body that is protective of its intimate nature. The goddess is within her fortress. Those who can see beyond the walls are welcomed.





## michael Allgoewer

uses the metaphoric journey as his touchstone. He works almost exclusively with natural materials and found objects in his assemblages. He builds sculpture out of components that refer to connections between the natural and spiritual world.



He chooses to refer to specific symbols and stories that have a loaded religious or mythic significance, which are then recast as universal themes. In *First Sign*, his wall-mounted slate installation he uses one of the most common and misunderstood icons, the cross. We are forced to recognize it as a primal symbol, that has had its pagan meanings fragmented by history. His investigations into minutiae become a dialogue about the exploration of the sublime and the esoteric quest for hidden knowledge. These journeys are the most important part of discovery. The final destination is only a memory.

### along the broken path...

Each body is constructed of particular material.

These materials act as the receptacle for the essence or spirit.

The vessel is representative of body. The meaning is therefore of mind.

This relationship is inseparable, but there is a conflict for dominance.

The physical body is constantly hampered by the intellectual mind,

and the soaring spirit is constantly bound to a restrictive flesh

In the Canadian art scene of the late 1960's and early 1970's, there was not the same polarization of movements. While the country celebrated its centenary year in 1967, elements of performance, video and installation, developed and cross-pollinated. Contemporary sculpture evolved and co-existed in the artist-run network as well as in the public and commercial gallery systems. Artists with new ideas emerged onto the same playing field. Murray Favro, Colette Whiten, Irene Whittome, An Whitlock, Tony Urquhart and others all developed work in the 70's and 80's that fostered this mixed heritage, combining the formal with the temporal. What remained essential was the focus on process and the residue of human experience. Today, artists such as Micah Lexier and Jana Sterbak veer back towards fabrication, but they do not limit themselves to the pursuit of pure abstraction. They create works in space that address the body and mind on a social, and visceral level.

**jewel Goodwyn** is the most overtly political. She combines textual elements with personal, found and fabricated objects in an installation context. Her approach to the myths in our society are taken with a sugar-coated pill. Her concern is with challenging the notion of the socially constructed female. She juxtaposes appropriated text with the trappings of prescribed female archetypes; princess, virgin-mother, and whore. By challenging the inherent authority of her chosen texts, she subverts and recontextualizes their original meanings. In her site-specific installation *Wings of Desire*, "(part of the Purple Heart Series)" she combines an excerpt from a treatise on the physiology of love with representations of domesticity, casts of angels and salt-dried cow hearts. Unlike the ideal of romantic love, human sexuality can be intense, awkward, horrifying and wonderful. It is a subjective interpretation of love and domestic bliss in an metaphoric household.



## there are no signposts...

**clare Pearson** has developed a unique approach to her sculpture. It encompasses the element of fibre-work with the aesthetics of assemblage. Her style has developed around the construction of figures out of obsessively bound materials.

Much of her materials are made up of the detritus that others have discarded. Her constructions of exo-skeletal effigies, represent the state of a body in the midst of entropy. It is thoughtfully constructed yet still intuitively chaotic. Her ongoing

*Security Blanket #1*, alludes to the body and the corporeality of the shells within which we live. The body is in constant peril from both physical and spiritual contamination. Paradoxically, the entropic nature of this work gives it a particular strength that belies its external fragility. Her constructs do not represent an idealized physiology. It is the mortal piece of armour that we live within, and it can and will break down.





**reinhard Reitzenstein** is an urban shaman. His work is about natural systems and how they are intrinsically linked to the function of society and ritual. In recent years his work has focused almost exclusively on the great importance of trees. On a spiritual, environmental and mythological level, we are linked to the tree and what it represents; life, garden and guardian. As well, he has made strong associative use of materials such as honey and scented oils, combining them with cast bronze fragments and other fabricated materials. *Memory Loop*, is part of a continuing series of works that investigate the cosmology of natural systems and their relationship to our human physiology. The works can be read on multiple levels.

They can be taken as fact, metaphor or mysticism. The individual components can and do appear in other contexts.

They are as pervasive and elusive as the mythic green-man.



**and those who know the way will return.**

*Subconscious Mythologies* is an exhibition that seeks to define a context for contemporary sculpture in this region. Although each artist has a unique and distinct approach to their individual work, and their choice of materials, there is a collective connection in their use of intuition as a pathway towards creation. Their choices as artists are diverse, but are tempered by an assertion of formal values in both the execution and presentation. These are not conceptual works, yet they contain clear ideas that speak of the intellect. These are not truly temporal pieces, but they do contain components that can be recontextualized over a period of time. As sculpture they exist in space and demand the viewer to interact with them on a physical and an emotional level. By contextualizing this work with post-minimalist ideals, I do not mean to imply that the work is of a particular period. The work is very much about its current time and place, but it refers to an ongoing dialogue that began in the turbulent 1960's. This placement allows the artists in question to exist in a paradigm that is both modern and post-modern. There is a desire for the object of art as well as an understanding of the temporal nature of the body that is being created.

ivan JURAKIC, curator



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