

OUTSIDE — IN

April 4 - May 10, 2003
Hamilton Artists Inc.



Gray Girl
Ian MacKenzie
13" x 11"
Acrylic on canvas
(Kindly loaned by Thomas Alexander Taylor)



Annoyance
Maryse Ratte-Mercier
26" x 20"
Chalk pastel on paper

Welcome to the first mainstream art exhibition in Hamilton, coordinated by the Outside In Collaborative, for artists who experience mental illness. We are hoping to educate the community about the wealth of talents these individuals have and, at the same time destigmatize some of the myths of mental illness.

The original idea for this show was inspired by Beatrice Pearson, who in the mid-nineties, sought to give opportunities for artistic expression to mental health consumers through the creation of the Cottage Studio. With the support of Barbara Mersereau, founder of the Friendship Centres, the Friendship Centre Talent Bank was created. Following this Beatrice Pearson secured studio space at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church along with an ongoing source of art supplies and made her own commitment to offer art instruction. When Beatrice died in 2000 it was felt that there was a continued need for this service so the Cottage Studio was carried on through the efforts of volunteers and the support and services of the Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia.

Once there was a steady stream of artwork being produced by creative individuals who took advantage of these services, the possibility of having an art exhibition started to become a reality. In 2001 I decided it was time to have an exhibition at a mainstream gallery. Hamilton Artist's Inc. rose to the challenge and agreed to host the first exhibition in their members' space.

Through the generous funding of the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation plans for the exhibition have become a reality. This exhibition has been organized with the support of various community members and organizations including Fiona Wilson, Deborrah Sherman, Mental Health Rights Coalition, the Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia and the Community Schizophrenia Vocational Rehabilitation Foundation.

Enjoy!

Susan Pearson,
Curator, Outside In Art Exhibition.



ALL CONTENTS COPYRIGHT



Art is the meeting ground of the world inside and the world outside.¹

Elinor Ulman

Creativity is a universal human characteristic. Ideas, thoughts, opinions and emotions can be expressed in a variety of creative ways; poetry, prose, painting, music, sculpture and performance to name a few. Some people possess rare talent; through persistence and hard work develop their creative vision and if fortunate, are able to produce work that is seen and praised by both the general public and critics. Others, however, have an innate talent, produce numerous pieces of work and yet, because of a multitude of barriers the public rarely sees their work. For any practicing artist, finding support can be difficult, however, it is those individuals who create with limited resources, often-unschooled talents, with little if any exposure to an audience and that have experienced the disabling effects of mental illness whose work is often left outside of the mainstream.

The barriers faced by artists who experience mental illness are more often than not the systemic consequences of having a disability, and not caused by the symptoms of the illness itself. In fact, it has been argued at various points of time in the last two centuries that mental illness, or “madness” as it was once referred to, promoted creativity. Indeed many surrealist artists tried to bring on the experience of “madness” in order to achieve the freedom of imagination they perceived came with mental illness.² The connection between mental illness and creativity, however, was not new to the 19th and 20th centuries; it is an idea that can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle.³ In a letter to poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, fellow author Charles Lamb wrote: “I look back upon madness with a gloomy kind of envy. For while it lasted I had many hours of pure happiness. Dream not, Coleridge, of having tasted all the grandeur and wildness of Fancy, till you have gone mad.”⁴ This idea of the enviable “mad genius” has long been lost—one cannot help but suggest that many who have experienced the devastation of serious mental illness would look upon those who never have, with equal if not significantly more envy for their lack of experience.

The issue at hand, however, is the barriers that exist today as a result of mental illness—primarily financial and social. Individuals who experience mental illness come from all socio-economic backgrounds, however a significant number live on some form of social assistance, and therefore cannot afford to purchase oil or acrylic paints, brushes, canvas or film, let alone pay

for art classes or go to art school. Many individuals have never been given the opportunity to meet other like-minded artists or to explore their creativity outside the isolation of their home or a rehabilitative setting. Many have become isolated in their community and alienated from their friends and family due to the stigma that accompanies mental illness. Others have become entrenched in the mental health system—this is often where they feel safe, where they are accepted and where their friends are—with little exposure or access to the community at large. These are just a few of the barriers those artists who experience mental illness have faced in trying to become part of the mainstream arts community. These are the things that have kept them on the outside.

Creative Expression and Recovery

“Art releases unconscious tensions and purges the soul”
Aristotle⁵

Creative expression by any individual can be beneficial. A creative endeavour can offer opportunities to reflect the issues in one’s life—either deliberately or not—for many this may be an emotionally cathartic experience, while for others an opportunity to find their voice in an increasingly diverse community of ideas and debates.

Within the context of recovery, creative expression or specifically art making can provide further opportunities for artists who experience mental illness to share their experiences and/or find a viable place for themselves and their voice in their community.

Making art is often about being able to do things on your own terms—the decision making process is one that is unique to each individual and

independent of outside authorities. Creative Expression is intertwined with self-determination. By embracing and supporting independence and self-determination we simultaneously create and support environments that promote recovery and empowerment.⁶ Recovering from a mental illness is a discovery of who we can be and what we can do⁷—creative expression can be an important part of this journey. As author John MacGregor states “a work of art is an image that says to another human being “This is who I am and what I feel inside. This is how I perceive the outer world. Have we anything in common?”⁸

History of Outsider Art

*There is no more an art of the insane than there is an art of dyspeptics or of those with knee problems.*⁹

Jean Dubuffet

In the early 19th century asylum inmates in areas of Europe were encouraged to express themselves through drawing and other forms of art making.¹⁰ However, it wasn’t until the 1920’s that the transformation from therapy to art began when avant-garde artists such as the French artist Jean Dubuffet became interested in the creative expression of these isolated artists. Dubuffet collected the works of often marginalized and ignored artists by giving their work the name “art brut”—literally translated “raw art—believing they represented uncultured, unrefined and spontaneous expression.¹¹ It was psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn, however, who was one of the most influential proponents of the art of psychiatric patients. Between 1890 and 1920 he amassed one of the largest and finest collections of artist-patient art work in Europe, including over 5000 pictures and pieces of sculpture by approximately 500 artists. Prinzhorn was one of the first

psychiatrists in Europe to take an interest in the art created by patients, not for diagnostic purposes but for the sheer pleasure and aesthetic value that it offered. Prinzhorn argued that there was no single characteristic that could distinguish the art of an artist-patient from the work of a “normal” creator:

“What is schizophrenic about this picture? We cannot be certain...instead we have to make up our minds once and for all to count on a separate creative component and to look for the value of a work only within the work itself”¹²

In his well-known book The Discovery of the Art of the Insane John M. MacGregor argues that Prinzhorn’s greatest contribution was to have forced the recognition that there is no psychopathology of art or expression. He goes on to say that “man’s images, to the extent that they embody and communicate human reality, however strange that reality may be, belong firmly and without qualification to that sequence of unforgettable images to which we give the name art.”¹³

By the 1970’s the notion of outsider art expanded to include not only individuals who suffered from mental illness, but a range of persons who made art outside of the mainstream, artistic community. Roger Cardinal, a British art critic of the time, who coined the term “Outsider Art”, defined an outsider as an artist with the “presence of an untrained impulse for making works that defied art historical classification.”¹⁴ In the late 20th century the term Outsider Art was used to encompass ethnic and folk artists, the homeless, prison inmates, elderly people, hospice patients

and others who were confined, isolated and who produced artistic work of aesthetic interest.¹⁵

In the 21st century the term Outsider Art does in essence become obsolete in the light of the post-modern art movement. As modernism was the era of contesting traditional boundaries of art and non-art, with outsiders struggling to become insiders, post-modernism is the era where anything could potentially be art.¹⁶ The question “what is art?” has been asked for decades and will continue to be debated for years to come. Since the onset of the post-modern era the doors have opened for artists from all backgrounds with a range of ideas and concepts, so that they may continually challenge contemporary notions of art.

Labeling

*I am always reminded that growth happens in a context and that in order for growing things to emerge, environments must change to accommodate that growth.*¹⁷

Patricia Deegan

Of course there is the danger that by labeling individuals as Outsider Artists we will further marginalize them and create a vacuum in which their work can be received. Michael Tillyer and Michael Accodino in their paper *Painting with a Broad Brush: Professional Careers for Artists with Psychiatric Disabilities*, argue that:

“Artists who are in mental health settings are also prejudiced by uninformed views of their psychiatric disabilities. Moreover, the quality of their creations is often made less credible when associated with their diagnosis.”¹⁸

In the world of mental health, labels are important. They carry with them a strong history of

both stigmatization and emancipation. Individuals living with mental illness have for centuries lived with the denigrating label(s) of “mental patient”, “psycho”, “madman”, “nut case”, “inmate” etc. These labels are reflective of how individuals’ identities were defined by their illness. In order to reclaim their identity and better describe their experiences with the mental health system, new labels have been created by those who experience mental illness. They range from “consumer” (of mental health services), “consumer-survivor”, “psychiatric-survivor” (survivor of those same services), “client”, etc. These labels, although still strongly attached to the mental health system, were a way of “consumer’s” taking back the power that had for so long been out of reach. Self-labeling can be empowering and provide fodder for discussion around the impact of mental health services on an individual’s identity. The same argument can be made with the label Outsider Artist. As described previously there is a lengthy history of Outsider Art which for-the-most-part was positive, in that it created opportunities for individuals to show work that would not have otherwise been seen. In fact, in some circles considerable market value has been put on such work. However, to label individuals as “Outsider Artists” means that we have accepted two notions; firstly that these individuals are mental health consumers making art, rather than artists who have experienced a mental illness, and secondly that they do in fact remain outside of the mainstream. As already noted, this is an antiquated concept in the era of post-modernism, but indeed it no longer fits in the changing climate of mental health reform and the emergence of the notion of recovery. As Tillyer and Accordino found in a survey of artists who have experienced mental illness, using the

term “artist” mitigates the stigmatic effect of the term “psychiatric disability” or “mental health consumer” that makes the term more specific to the relevance of recovery and has strong implications regarding how people feel about themselves.¹⁹

We are of course left with a dilemma; on the one hand we want to stop the marginalization of artists who experience mental illness and give their work equitable value in the mainstream community. On the other hand we don’t want to do this without talking about the unique experiences that may impact upon the work. Finally it is vital to show that rare and outstanding individuals can make their own compelling contributions to our visual world²⁰, and their work deserves to be brought in from the outside and viewed for what it is.

(Endnotes)

¹ Feder, Bernard and Elain. The Expressive Art Therapies. Prentice Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. 1981. p. 71

² Piery, Lucienne. Art Brut: The Origins of Outsider Art. Flammarion. Paris. 2001. P. 23

³ Bowler, Anne E. Asylum art: the social construction of an aesthetic category Outsider Art: Contesting Boundaries in Contemporary Culture eds. Vera Zolberg and Joni Maya Cherbo. Cambridge University Press. Uk. 1997. P. 13

⁴ Bowler. P. 13

⁵ Feder, Bernard and Elain. 68.

⁶ Deegan, Pat. Recovery and the Conspiracy of Hope. A presentation at the Sixth Annual Mental Health Conference of Australia and New Zealand. Brisbane, Australia. 1996.

⁷ Deegan.

⁸ MacGregor, John M. The Discovery of Art of the Insane. Princeton University Press,

Princeton, New Jersey. 1989. P. 316

⁹ Bowler. 29

¹⁰ Zolberg, Vera and Joni Maya Cherbo, editors. Outsider Art: Contesting Boundaries in Contemporary Culture. Cambridge University Press. U.K. 1997. Pg.

1

¹¹ Zolberg and Cherbo

¹² Piery. P. 23

¹³ MacGregor. 205

¹⁴ Zolberg and Cherbo

¹⁵ Zolberg and Cherbo

¹⁶ Zolberg and Cherbo. 4-5

¹⁷ Deegan.

¹⁸ Tillyer, Michael and Accordino, Michael. “Painting With a Broad Brush: Professional Careers for Artists with Psychiatric Disabilities.”(2002) Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 25 (3), 265-272

¹⁹ Tillyer and Accordino.

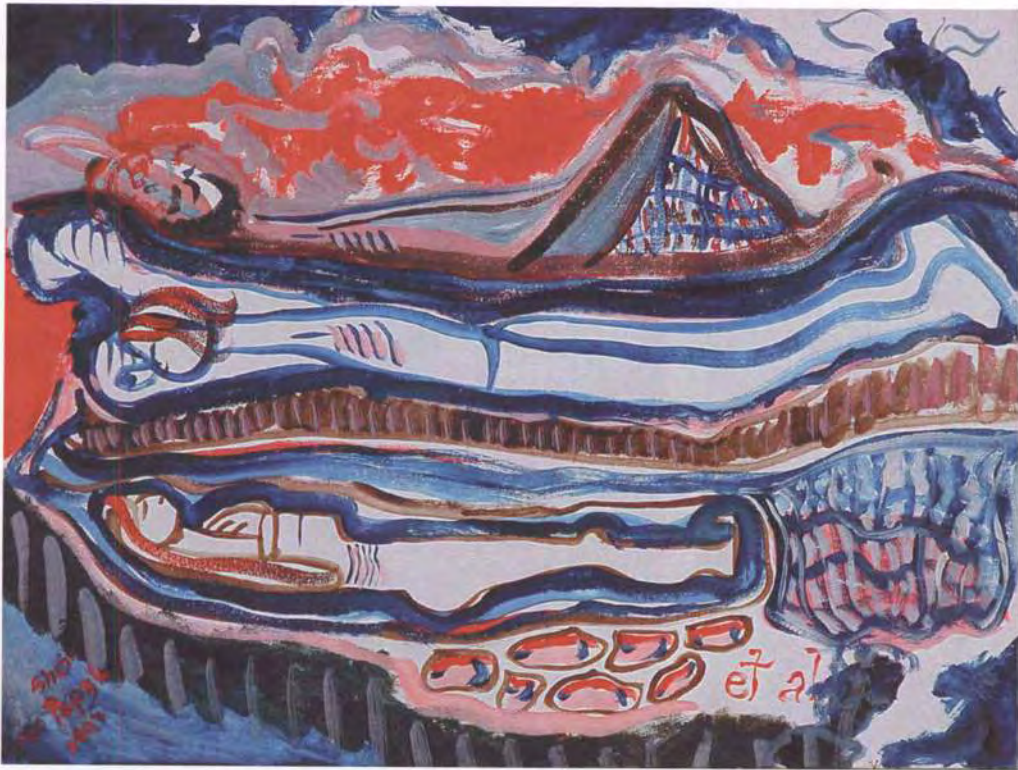
²⁰ Maizels, John. Raw Creation: Outsider Art and Beyond. Phaidon Press Ltd. 1996. P. 227.



Steve Lemeiux
Untitled
11" x 15"
Watercolour on paper



Luis Correia
Untitled
20" x 26"
Acrylic on paper



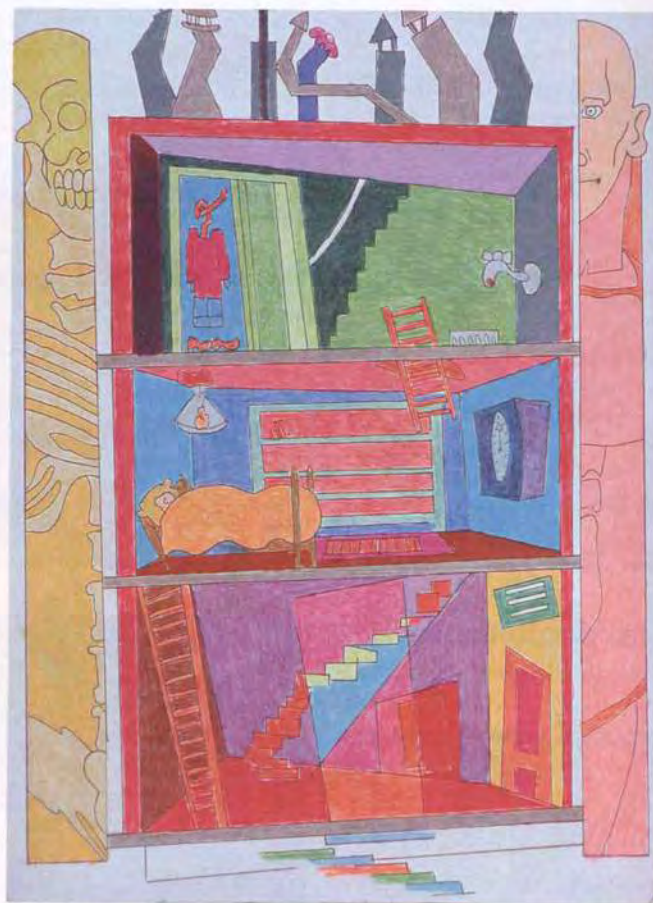
Lorraine Shein
 Buried...et. al.
 18" x 24"
 Acrylic on board

Jeremy Taber
 Doodle Art
 20" x 26"
 Graphite on paper

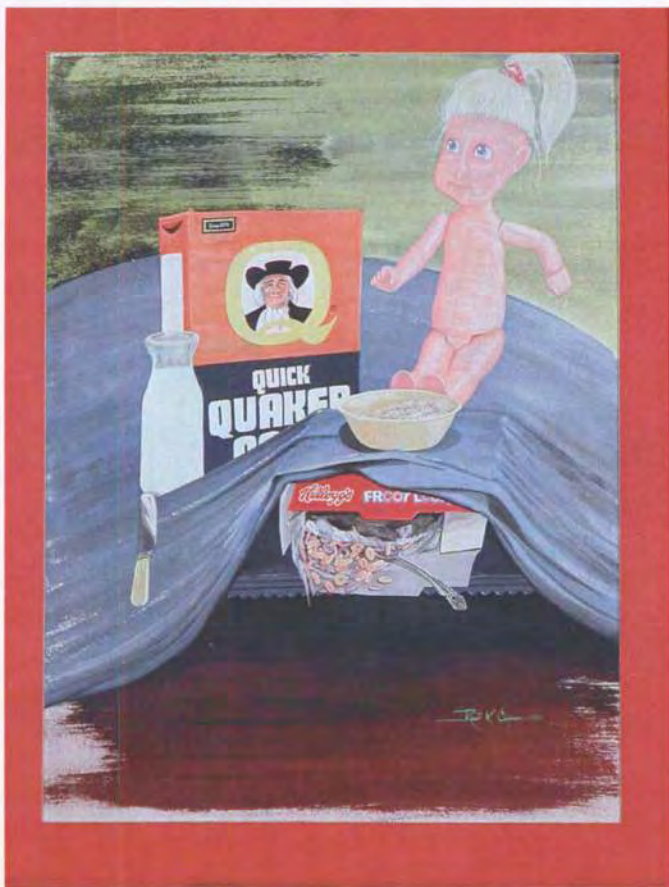




Justin Hill
Stuck in a Movie
Acrylic on canvas



Peter Malone
House of Discontent
19¼" x 14"
Coloured pencil on paper



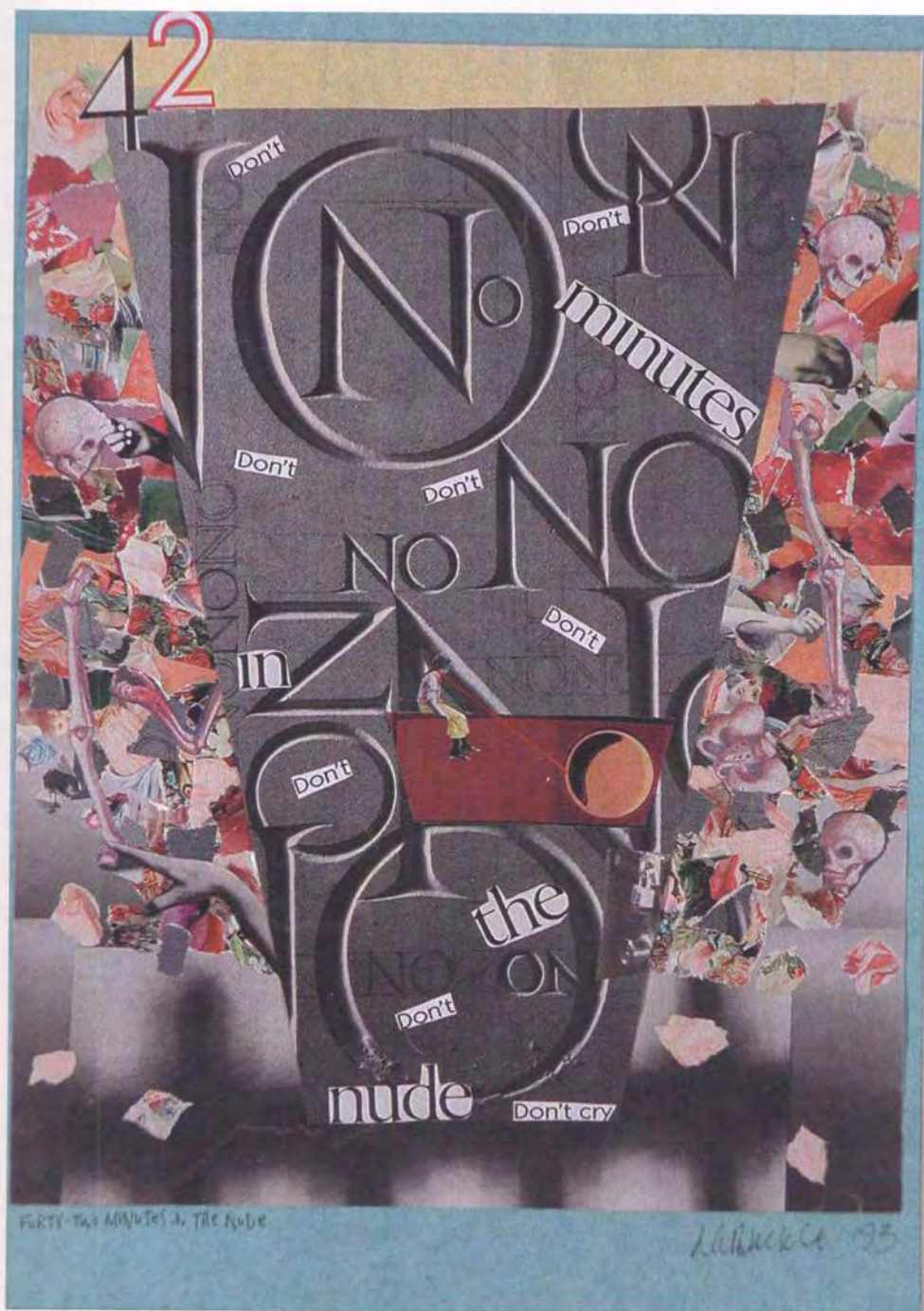
Robert Chapman
Cereal
30" x 24"
Gouache on artboard



Betty Weise
Old Jamaican Woman
24" x 12"
Acrylic on board



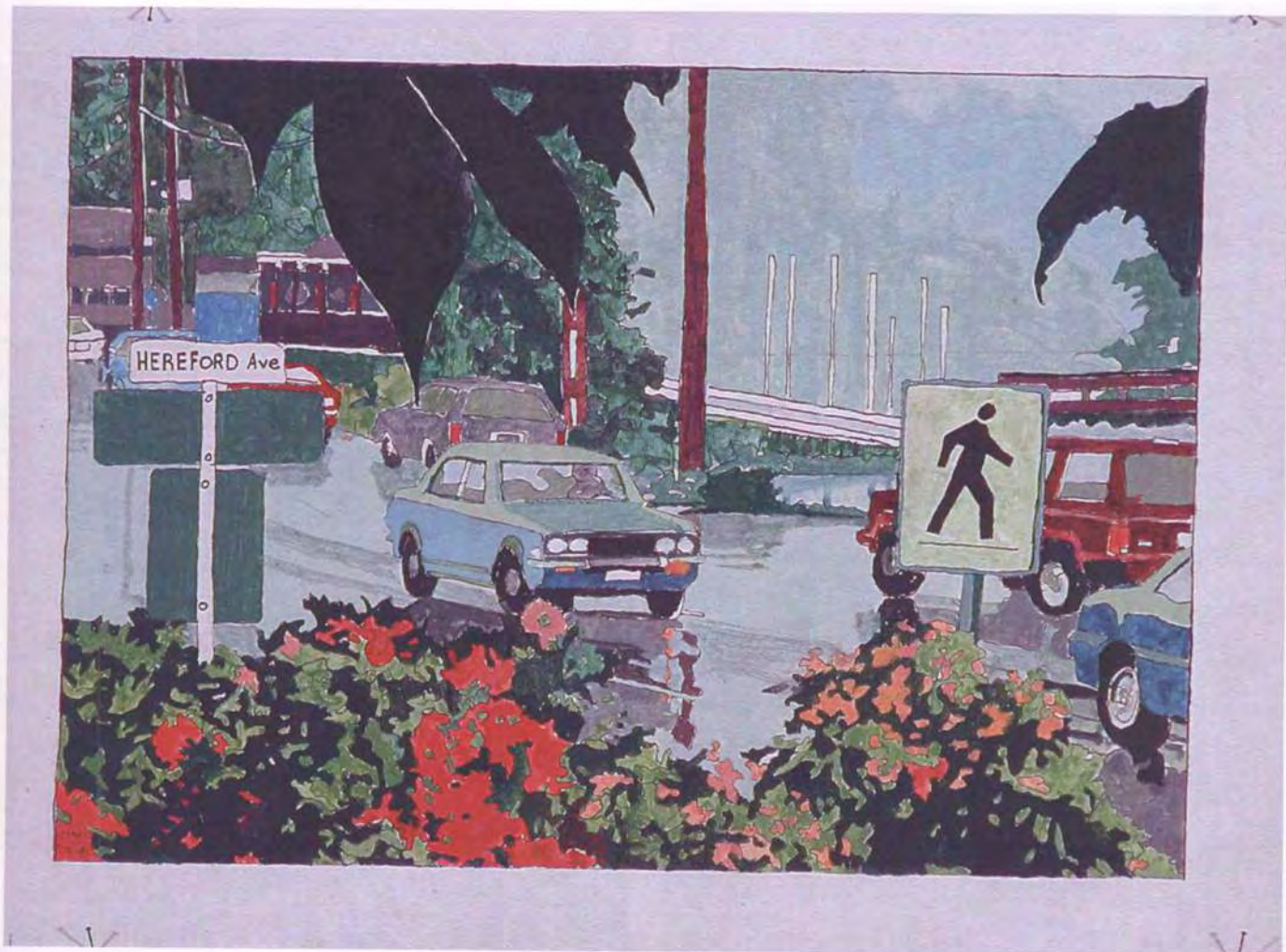
Brad Faulkner
A Prediction In Evolution
14" x 11"
Drybrush & Airbrush



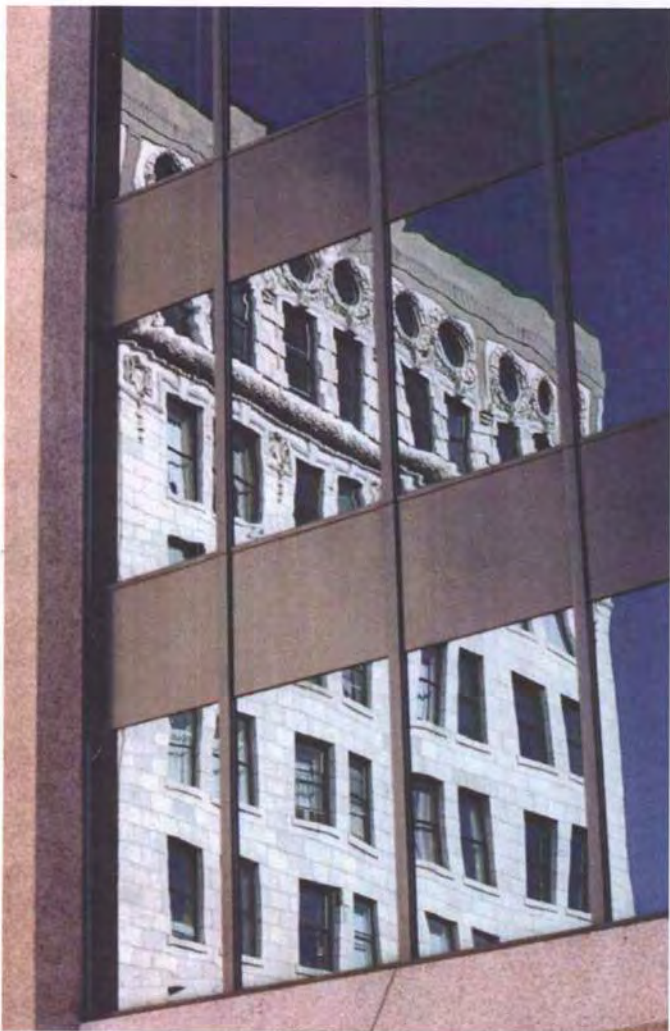
Laurel Arbuckle
42 Minutes in the Nude
11" x 8 1/2"
Collage



Two Dames
Jude Mersereau
14½" x 8"
Acrylic on board



Derek Taeger
Hereford Ave.
11" x 15"
Water soluble oil on paper



Nikon Pals Photography Club
Untitled
11" x 8"
Inkjet Print



George Petrowski
Untitled
12" x 8"
Photography



Nikon Pals Photography Club
Untitled
11" x 8"
Inkjet Print



Nikon Pals Photography Club
Untitled
11" x 8"
Inkjet Print



THE ARTISTS

The Artists whose work is exhibited in this, the first mainstream art exhibition coordinated by the Outside In collaborative, come from all different backgrounds – emotionally, artistically and geographically. The work was chosen by members of the collaborative who have art backgrounds and/or have significant experience (professional and/or personal) within the mental health system. Works were chosen on the basis of levels of skill, modes of presentation, use of material(s) available, and strength of concept and theme.

Although it was accepted that all submissions were from artists who have experienced mental illness, at no time were members of the selection jury aware of an individual artist's diagnosis or mental health history. To our knowledge, the majority of the artists shown have not exhibited their work in a public gallery before, some however, have had the opportunity to show their work in venues coordinated within the mental health community for example at conferences, in local hospitals, at fundraisers, etc.

Artists were asked to submit a brief personal biography including whatever they felt was important for viewers to know about themselves. As you can see on the preceding pages some artists felt it was important to share their experience within the mental health system while others choose to focus only on their life as a practicing artist.

The pieces shown in this exhibition are evidence of the resourcefulness and uniqueness of each artist. Materials used range from the cardboard backing of an artist's pad, newsprint, crayons, pencils, re-used canvas and paint boards, pen and ink, pastel, collage and photographic prints. Some artists have had the benefit of access to free supplies or art programs run out of church basements and hospital wards, while others continue to work independently

As with any art work it is ultimately up to the viewer how a work will be interpreted. Each viewer carries with him or her their own biases, which will determine what they take away with them after viewing a piece

of art. What we hope for all viewers of this exhibition is that it will broaden your experience of seeing art and encourage your support of new and emerging artists as well as encourage others to provide mainstream opportunities to exhibit work of this nature.

Laurel Arbuckle

Laurel Arbuckle is an innately creative individual and is self-taught, not only in art. She is also a published writer, poet and songwriter.

“I’ve been described as intense, passionate and highly sensitive. I am sensitive to a fault but with my art, I can shout my heart and feel no breaking.”

Robert Chapman

Realism is challenging and presents an opportunity for me to appreciate details of real life scenarios.

Received a diploma from Mohawk College in graphic design. Won the Mohawk College Board of Governors first place award in illustration. Pieces can take about 40 hours to do. Artwork has taught me to see while being blind in one eye.

Luis Correia

My works are for sale, should anyone be interested.

Brad Faulkner

Brad is a native of Dunnville. After High school he enrolled into the Graphic Arts Program at Niagara College in which he excelled in Life Drawing, 2 & 3 Dimensional Design, and Illustration.

Because of recording his first album, he has had little time for new completed works, but with every spare moment he sketches. His current interest is in developing Tattoo Designs. His music and his art are very different from each other, but with time he feels they may become closer.

Brad’s influences are varied and diverse, ranging from fantasy, surrealism, romanticism, and various Celtic art forms.

Brad’s thoughts on art are very literal. “It is an act of (for good cause & reasoning) protest and rebellion, against all cultures, institutions, ideologies and societies that support, accept & tolerate any kind of Godless, mindless evil in all walks of life”.

Justin Hill

I am 27 years old, married with 3 children. Although I do not consider myself an artist, I feel I have an artistic mind. Medications seem to take away my creative edge, sometimes. I am hoping to go to college in the fall for either television and broadcasting or advertising.

Steve Lemieux

I taught myself how to paint with watercolours. I have a grade 10 education at Parkside High School in Dundas. I also enjoy writing poems and singing.

Ian MacKenzie

Born December 16, 1960, in Grimsby. Lived 1981-83 Calgary, 83-87, Toronto. Educated 83-87 Ontario College of Art, honours grad: Fine Arts 93-96 Sheridan College, not-so-honours grad, graphic design.

Artistic goals: to scratch out a living.

Artistic statement: "artistic statements" are almost invariably horseshit, just look at the damn picture! If you like it great, if you don't look at another one...

Treated for bipolar mood disorder and A.D.D. (great drugs!). Just like every artist, actor, & musician should be! When you look at it honestly this show could include any artist.

Peter Malone Jr.

Has lived with mental illness for about 12 years. Enjoys doing caricatures, cartoons and pieces of fine art. Has just recently begun creative wood working and wood carving and has found this to be an excellent mode of creativity.

Jude Mersereau

Born in Hamilton, Jude expressed interest in art at the age of 4. She has always excelled in this area, and after a brief unsuccessful college effort and a year long protest as a McDonald's employee she felt the pull of domestic life. Her daughter is now 13 years old, and her husband provides the background 'noise' for her vocal efforts.

Jude became a serious artist around 2000 and has had a half dozen shows in the area. Her goals are to "press on" and be relieved of her family benefits cheque someday.

Trevor Moore

I have returned to painting after a 20 year respite. I originally was a student in the 70's but got mentally ill, went on psychiatric drugs which made an artistic career impossible.

Five years ago I started to paint in acrylic from my own photos, having shows at the HPH hospital, selling many. I have found it difficult to find venues for selling.

I am interested in Hamilton cityscapes, portraits, landscapes, and some conceptual work. I find composition most interesting.

George Petrowski

I am an outpatient, and member of CMHA Camera Club, with which I took this picture. I am also a patient staff monitor and enjoy taking pictures of nature.

Maryse Ratte-Mercier

Born 1963 in Kapuskasing, On. I am a married mother of a 12 year old son. I am an elementary school teacher by trade and enjoyed teaching art to my students. Presently, I live in Welland, ON.

Nikon Pals Photography Club

The Nikon Pals is a Photography Club with a difference. Its members are a diverse group of individuals who have one thing in common... mental illness. The Nikon Pals have proven that mental illness need not be a barrier to artistic impression. Photography has proven to be an excellent avenue for creative expression. The skill level of the members has progressed to amazing levels since our initial meeting in January 1997.

Being part of the club has provided many therapeutic rewards. The members have been able to focus their creative energies, gain

confidence, and socialize. Our members have not only learned the fundamentals of camera use, but more sophisticated photographic and digital composition.

Lorraine Shein

Lorraine Shein, raised in Stoney Creek, Ontario, has known since the eighth grade that she would like to 'become' an artist. "I painted and drew lots of portraits naturally, bringing out the personality and feelings of the subject, without formal training."

Lorraine went on to study portraiture at the Elliot Lake Arts Centre and continued with her education, achieving a B.A. in Art and Art History from McMaster University. Although she completed her degree, she describes the 12 years there as "gruelling", experiencing a major breakdown after being the only student to receive honour grades in the first term studio class. An art professor remarked that "maybe it is a gift" that she is near-sighted—attention to detail is one of Lorraine's strengths in her artwork.

Lorraine has shown in a number of venues since 1981, two of them being Stoney Creek libraries, where her original theory of art called, 'Moodinism', was exclusively demonstrated by the displays. Lorraine's work is unique in that each piece appears to stand on its own foundation due to the method of construction, which is 'brushstrokes automatiques', like the

'50's Expressionists and Beats of the artistic and literary circles, respectively.

Ron Steele

I am a singer, artist, and music composer. I enjoy painting and drawing pictures about the Pentagon. I did this picture about September 11, because of the firefighters who died.

I am 42 years old and my goal is to become famous as a music composer and artist. I was born in Timmins and adopted as a kid because my mother died.

Jeremy Taber

I was born and raised in this steel town. I'm 25 right now and I feel I have accomplished plenty in my somewhat short life. I have played music extensively and mastered every song at one time and now have started again and have found it is coming easy again.

I have also written several poems, they're very dark but nevertheless I'm trying to finish 365 and ¼ of them. And also have finished the first act to my own Shakespearean play.

Some say it is finished, so should I hand it over to the professionals? But I am somehow going to try to make a town brought even more together, with what? A 'rabbit's foot'. "We'll see where it goes".

Derek Taeger

I am 39 years old. I have studied one year of art at the University of Toronto and have taken a handful of art classes at Mohawk College and at the Dundas School of Art. I am, however, mainly self taught.

I began painting in 1994. I have had one of my works printed in a national magazine in the USA. Another painting won second prize at an art show in Toronto.

I have just received an award for volunteering at the Children's Museum in Hamilton and am currently studying Child Psychology in hopes of teaching art to children.

Betty Weise

I was born and raised in Hamilton, moved to Toronto and was married in 1970. I returned to Hamilton in 1986. I have 2 adult children (daughters) and four grandchildren that are an important factor in my life.

I enjoy many types of artistic media, including macrame, pastels, pen & ink to name a few. I look upon each piece I create as a challenge. My main interest is in music which at one time I played and taught classical piano. I enjoy being a volunteer and also enjoy being with my friends.



Ron Steele
September 11th
20" x 26"
Acrylic on paper



Trevor Moore
Cosmic Circus
18" x 24"
Acrylic



THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION
LA FONDATION TRILLIUM DE L'ONTARIO

The Outside In Collaborative gratefully acknowledges the financial support of
The Hamilton Foundation
The Ontario Trillium Foundation
and the in-kind support of
Hamilton Artists Inc.,
Mental Health Rights Coalition of Hamilton,
Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia.



Mental
Health
Rights
Coalition
of Hamilton
102-678 Main
Street East
Hamilton ON
L8M 1K2
905-545-2525



Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia
102-350 King Street East
Hamilton ON L8N 3Y3
(905) 525-2832

The Outside In Collaborative

Curator: Susan Pearson

Jury: Nora Hutchinson, Susan MacRae,
Deborah Sherman, Fiona Wilson

Hanging: John Wilkinson, Fiona Wilson,
Susan Pearson

Photography: Cees Van Gemerden

Outside In Graphic: Fiona Wilson

Catalogue Design: Deborah Sherman

Hamilton Artists Inc.

231 Bay Street North 2nd Floor
Hamilton ON L8R 2R1
phone: 905.529.3355
fax: 905.529.9080
email:
staff@hamiltonartistsinc.on.ca
web: www.hamiltonartistsinc.on.ca

Hours: Tuesday to Friday 12-5 pm,
Saturday 12-4 pm

Christian Giroux, Administrative Director
Nora Hutchinson, Program Coordinator
Judi Burgess, Financial Administrator



LE CONSEIL DES ARTS
DU CANADA
DEPUIS 1957

THE CANADA COUNCIL
FOR THE ARTS
SINCE 1957



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

Inc.

Hamilton Artists Inc. acknowledges the continued support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the City of Hamilton and our members.

Catalogues: \$10.00

\$5.00 for mental health consumers.

Catalogue proceeds will support art programs for mental health consumers.

Printed by Stirling Print-All

ALL CONTENTS COPYRIGHT