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RED DOT
SHOW 2011
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The Red Dot Show is an annual exhibition providing a snapshot of the range of work produced by Red Head artists featured in solo shows during the calendar year.

The Red Dot Show 2011 is the third curated annual exhibition to bring together the work of the ten exhibiting artists of the year. It archives the year and places the work within the context of the gallery and contemporary practices.

The Red Head Gallery, established in 1990 and located in downtown Toronto, is the city's most enduring collectively-run art gallery. It has stood the test of time as an exhibition space and a collective where critically engaged artists present their artwork in a way that they themselves manage.

Over the past two decades more than 100 artists have been a part of The Red Head Gallery, which has produced over 200 exhibitions.

RED DOT SHOW 2011

Vanessa Nicholas

The Red Head Gallery's annual survey exhibition always aligns with the holiday season, which we can certainly all agree is full of both jubilant good cheer and gnawing anxiety. The twinkle lights, window displays, reunions and hors d'oeuvres are magical; but, the looming end of the calendar year reminds us of the passing time and prompts us to make life-changing New Year's resolutions. It thus seems fitting to present The Red Head Gallery with this essay, my version of a double duty stocking stuffer that both celebrates the past year and begs its membership to evaluate the future.

The Red Head Gallery runs on the collective model, which sprung forth from the artist-run centre tradition that first gained its strength in Toronto during the 1970s. The changing nature of art practices, as well as an increasingly politicized art scene, contributed to the widespread shift away from traditional gallery and museum structures at the time. Many of The Red Head Gallery's current neighbours, including YYY, A Space and Gallery 44, were born from this cultural moment. At The Red Head Gallery's inception in 1990, the DIY spirit had taken another upturn as the eighties boom waned. Founding member Sandra Rechico remarked on the occasion of the gallery's tenth anniversary, "Red Head comes out of a moment when things suddenly started shrinking...we were trying to hang on to what we'd gained."¹



Gallery Installation Images (left page, top left to bottom right):

Astronomical Affects, Lynn Christine Kelly, January 2011.

Crosshairs and Checkerboards, Peter Dykhuis, February 2011.

A Cozy Lie, Janet Bellotto, March 2011.

From Scratch, Ram Samocha, April 2011.

Small mechanisms for drowning, Nina Leo, May 2011.

Cotton Fields II (Spirit of Place), Paula Braswell, June 2011.

An Archeology of Time, Teri Donovan, July 2011.

Wish you were here, Sam Mogelonsky, September, 2011.

WE, Jane Martin, October 2011.

Sometimes Rainbows are Black, Dana Holst, November 2011.





The powerful sense of camaraderie, collaboration and survival that emanates from Rechico's words here has always been of consequence to the physical manifestation of The Red Head Gallery. The collective's first home base was on the Artscape floor of the iconic Darling Building on Spadina Avenue. Artscape was still a brand new initiative then, and its pioneering development work would go on to inspire other art-friendly building projects like 401 Richmond, The Red Head Gallery's current address. The 401 Richmond building was saved from sure destruction in the mid nineties by the Zeidler family, who envisioned it as a low-rent hub for the arts sector. The building is now the proverbial last-man-standing; a living relic of Queen Street's bohemian heyday, which reached its pinnacle during the eighties. The Red Head Gallery's longstanding association with progressive urban planners who resist the corporate agenda shows its continuing commitment to the local cultural community.

At present, The Red Head Gallery's reach extends beyond city bounds: Peter Dykhuis' interests in topography and letter writing is surely a reflection of his migrations from London, Ontario to Grand Rapids, Michigan, to Toronto, and finally to Halifax; Dana Holst's girl worlds take shape in Edmonton; Janet Bellotto's multi-disciplinary and often site-specific practice is informed by her constant commutes between Toronto, Venice and Dubai; and Ram Samocha is now making his meditative, performative silverpoint drawings in the UK. Sam Mogelonsky's glowing blue neon sign, "Wish You Were Here" seems to say it all, for though this shift is completely synonymous with the increasingly decentralized art world, it is also a departure from the cosy, grassroots utopias imagined by artists in the seventies.

The Red Head Gallery's booth at this year's Toronto International Art Fair was another sure sign that the gallery is working to step in stride with its professionalized peers. The work produced by the gallery's members this year is certainly worthy of rivaling the stocks of Canada's top commercial galleries: Lynn Kelly's mobiles show an interest in the sky, the environment and the cosmos,



which all link to major national themes including the north, global warming and mythology; Teri Donovan's multi media works are like contemporary Edouard Vuillard paintings, combining abstraction, decoration, imagery and content; Paula Braswell's emotional, immersive installations feed the same tradition that dominated at the Venice Biennale this year thanks to Christoph Schlingensief and Mike Nelson; though quieter, Jane Martin's pencil drawings are so beautiful and devastating that they too are experiential; Nina Leo's more clinical drawings are fascinating objects of curiosity that remind us of Duchamp's Large Glass.

Of course international members and strong works that translate into sales are both sure signs of great success for The Red Head Gallery, although I can't help but wonder about what falls away with progress. The Red Head Gallery's very first exhibition was "young [and] completely chaotic...fun and energetic." There was no curator and "people painted on the walls and on top of other people's paintings." Sales were infrequent and the membership was a "strange microcosm...there were marriages, comedies (plenty of those), split ups, new lovers, lots of delicious gossip, babies born, and of course tragedies."² These recollections are in line with Jean Pierre Caissie's definition of the ideal artist run space, as published in a book on artist-run culture by YYZ in 2008: "[it's] a social club [and] community group [that incorporates] practices...on the margins of the mainstream and the art market."³

We cannot grow backwards, nor would it be fruitful to do so; but we can invigorate the future by looking to the past. As The Red Head Gallery catapults towards its landmark 25th year, I ask this year's exhibiting members: What does The Red Head community mean to you?

1. Carol Laing and Sandra Rechico, "Red Head, Speak," *Redrospective* (Red Head, Toronto, 2000) 12.
2. Ibid. 15.
3. *Labossière*, Robert Ed. Decentre, YYZ Books, Toronto, 2008. 46.



JANET BELLOTTO

'A Cozy Lie' was a wonderful platform to discuss the various stories encountered while travelling with art and art production.



Not Where I Want to Be, porcelain, patina, 4" x 1" x 2", 2011.

Janet Bellotto is an artist from Toronto, who splits her time in Dubai where she teaches at Zayed University. Her work encompasses sculpture, installation, photography, video and performance. Swinging chandeliers, long mysterious hallways, ships, and sound are elements that have shaped Bellotto's work as waves of experience that are fluid and aqueous. Her practice includes curating and writing, and engaging in projects that promote cultural exchange. Exhibits have travelled to cities such as Beijing, Cairo, Istanbul, Mexico City and New York.

www.janetbellotto.com

PAULA BRASWELL

Red Head...an inspiring group to do art with...and a great space/location for the community to experience the results.



Spirit of Place (detail), digital prints on translucent silk, 9" x 15', 2011.

Paula Braswell's site-specific multimedia installations hint at the disconnection between humanity and nature explored in the context of modern technology. Paula holds a Masters of Fine Arts from Florida State University and has exhibited across Canada, the United States, Mexico and Europe. She has received numerous awards and grants. In 1997, her video installation work "River" was selected to represent Canada in an international exhibition sponsored by the Organization of American States (OAS), *Landscapes: An Exhibition of Sculpture* at The Museum of the Americas, Washington, DC.

TERI DONOVAN

Showing at Red Head provided a wonderful opportunity to pursue my own vision and to curate and design my exhibition.



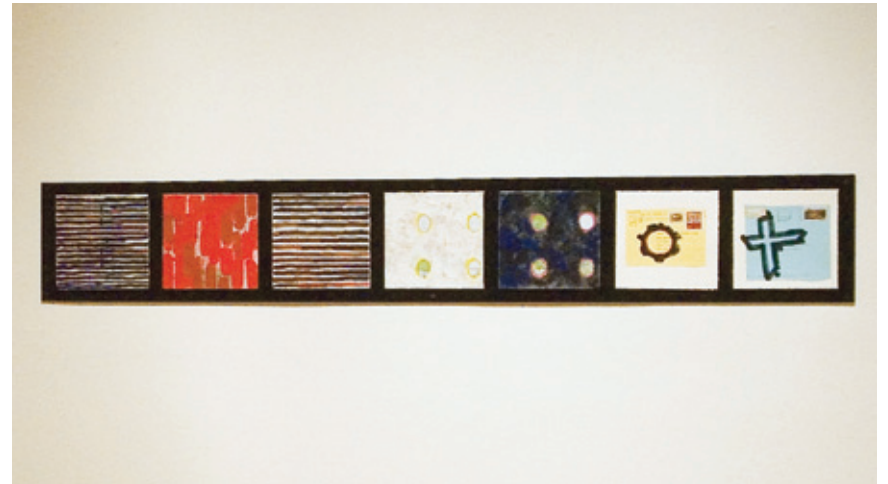
Aphrodite, mixed media on watercolour paper, 33" x 43", 2011.

Teri Donovan is a Canadian painter based in Toronto. Her practice incorporates a variety of drawing and painting media and is concerned with ordinary paradoxes that shape awareness, thoughts, and behaviours. Her work addresses themes related to perception and memory, human relationships, and the impact of time on personal and cultural identity. She has exhibited in Toronto and southern Ontario, and was also featured in *Carte Blanche Vol.2: Painting*, a survey of contemporary painting in Canada, published in 2008.

www.teridonovan.ca

PETER DYKHUIS

This exhibition gave me the opportunity to link together a few years of my work that explored relationships between art and mapping.



Doers and Dreamers (Crosshairs and Scopes) #3, encaustic on paper, commercial map and envelopes on Sintra, 20.3 x 147.3 cm, 2010.

Peter Dykhuis has exhibited in public galleries throughout Canada and the United States as well as in Tokyo, Vienna and Sydney. His new work is featured in a group show organized by TAG Fine Art in London, England, titled *The Art of Mapping*. A former resident of Toronto, Dykhuis now resides in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he is also the Director/Curator of the Dalhousie Art Gallery.

www.dykhuis.ca

DANA HOLST

Ever since I can remember The Red Head Gallery has existed in my mind like a dream. A tasty little dream.



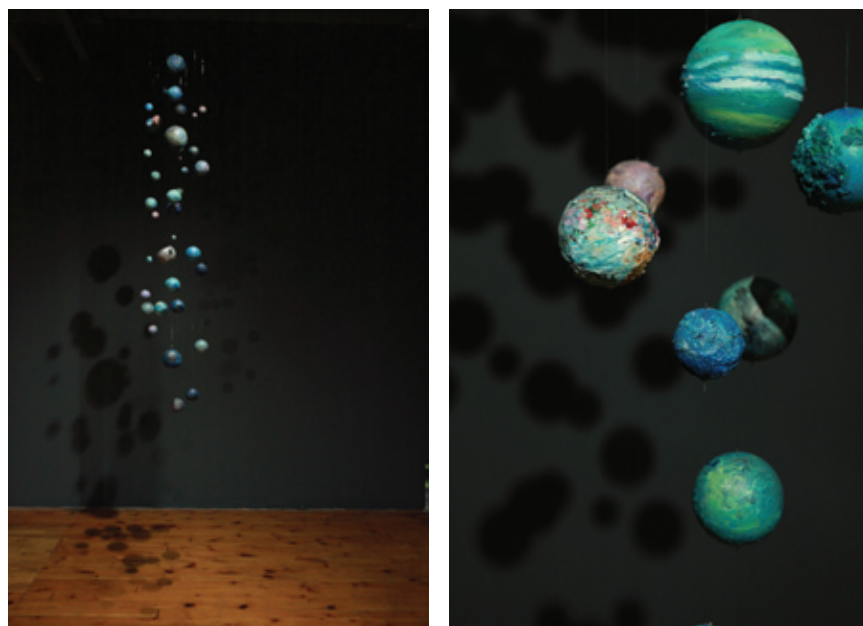
Hush Darling (detail), oil and silk on paper, 84" x 52", 2010 (Photo: Rémi Thériault)

Dana Holst is a mid-career Canadian artist living and working in Edmonton, Alberta. Her paintings and drawings reveal a preoccupation with depicting the female experience and consistently use young girls as pawns in ambiguous situations of suffering. "Hush Darling" is a recent drawing plumbing the depths of depression. Vacant eyeless sockets record moments in time, marking what the silenced/gagged mouth can never say. Holst's work is included in private and public collections across Canada.

www.danaholst.com

LYNN CHRISTINE KELLY

Creative output resounds when afforded the opportunity to present a body of work just the way you want. Freedom is the key.



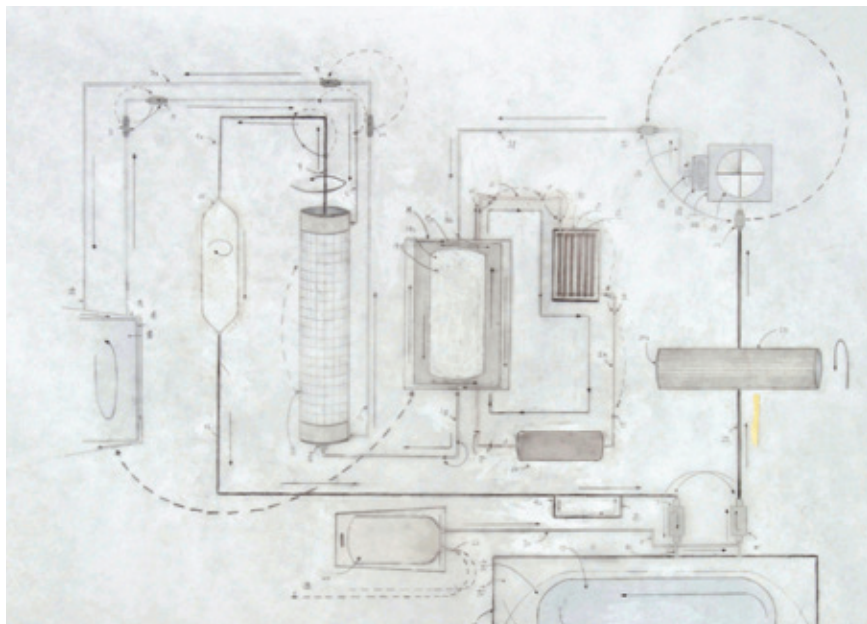
forever and a day, mixed media mobile, 14" diameter, height varies, 2011.

Lynn Christine Kelly is a multi-media artist working in painting, sculpture, and installation. Working in series, Kelly explores the creative process and how nature affects and effects our choices and output. In *Astronomical Affects*, she considers the enduring impact the universe has had on our creativity and looks at the relationship between our search for understanding and the use of imagination. Simultaneously evoking the comets and stars of vast cosmos and the minuscule structures that compose absolutely everything, she challenges the viewer to consider their own responsibilities and question their place in the universe.

www.lynnchristinekelly.com

NINA LEO

Red Head allows artists the freedom to experiment and take risks within an environment that is both serious and supportive.



small mechanisms for drowning #12, mixed media on mylar, 40" x 50", 2011.

Nina Leo is a Canadian interdisciplinary artist working primarily in drawing, sculpture, installation and performance. Her work examines how the contemporary terrain of fragmented, often virtual experience may affect us phenomenologically as experiences become divested of direct multi-sensorial richness. The work specifically explores how this otherwise redesigned intimacy may influence our identity, alter our interactions and shape our socio-political perceptions. Leo holds an MFA in Emerging Practices from the University at Buffalo and currently teaches in the Sculpture/ Installation department at OCAD University.

www.ninaleo.com

JANE MARTIN

I have been in such a protracted period of over-work and under-sleeping that my concerned sisters suggested I quit Red Head. I answered, "How can I? It's my community."



WE: Gold Band, coloured pencil, watercolour, 16" x 20", 2011. ©CARCC

Jane Martin's three exhibitions at The Red Head Gallery make up the *Ewen Trilogy: Something Happened* (2008) 39 drawings (now in the permanent collection of the AGO); *The roses are just moving into Fabulosity* (2010), 18 oil portraits; and *WE* (2011), an exhibition of double portraits of the artist and her husband, Ewen McCuaig. *The Ewen Trilogy* is the record of November 14, 2000 to November 24, 2001, the year and ten days McCuaig lived with an incurable brain tumour.

jmartin@idirect.com

SAM MOGELONSKY

My exhibition at The Red Head Gallery was my first solo show. It was a turning point for me and an experience I will always remember.



Wish you were here, neon and acrylic, 36" x 6", 2011.

Sam Mogelonsky is an emerging Toronto-based artist. She holds a BFAH from Queen's University and an MFA from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design in London, UK. By using found objects, narrative and repetitive process, Mogelonsky creates and plays with the vernacular of travel, expressing a space caught between imagination and reality. By developing her own form of naïve sculptural language, she invites the viewer to experience her unique worlds and nostalgic utopias.

www.sammogelonsky.com

RAM SAMOCHA

Having a deadline for a show at The Red Head Gallery forced me to produce a new body of work.



3D Metalpoint drawings, 2011.

Ram Samocha has always freely experimented with a variety of materials, processes, media and forms of representation. In his latest body of work Samocha is exploring the medium of metalpoint. Using metalpoint slows down the act of drawing - the hectic pace of now is replaced by a slower tempo from another time. But every mark made by the metal is an uncompromising feature on the paper - an almost sculptural presence that can never be removed. In Samocha's words - "There is no way back."

www.samocha.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Vanessa Nicholas, Organizer

Vanessa Nicholas is a freelance writer based in Toronto, where she also works at OCAD University. She completed her MA Art History degree at The Courtauld Institute of Art in 2009, and she has since worked at the Venice Biennale, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery and Canadian Art.

Thank you

Special thanks must be paid to all the people who came together to make this exhibition happen: Vanessa Nicholas for her curatorial skills and organizational savvy, Joan Kauffman for the fabulous opening reception, Jane Martin for her guidance and Sam Mogelonsky for her innovations, design and planning. The Red Head Gallery also extends a special thank you to the continuing support of the Red Dot Circle and the 401 Richmond community.

The Red Dot Show 2011.

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