

HOLE IN ONE

THREE NEW EXHIBITIONS – BLINDSPOT: VISIBLE ART ACTIVITY, EMANUEL LICHA: IN & OUT, GUILLAUME LABRIE: CHAMPION DES POIDS NEUTRES – PUT DIFFERENT SPINS ON THE ACCESSIBILITY OF ART

ISA TOUSIGNANT

In the last couple weeks the Belgo has been subsumed, not by one great black hole, as is sometimes the impression, but rather by many small ones.

In a very odd coincidence, there are three distinct works in three differ-

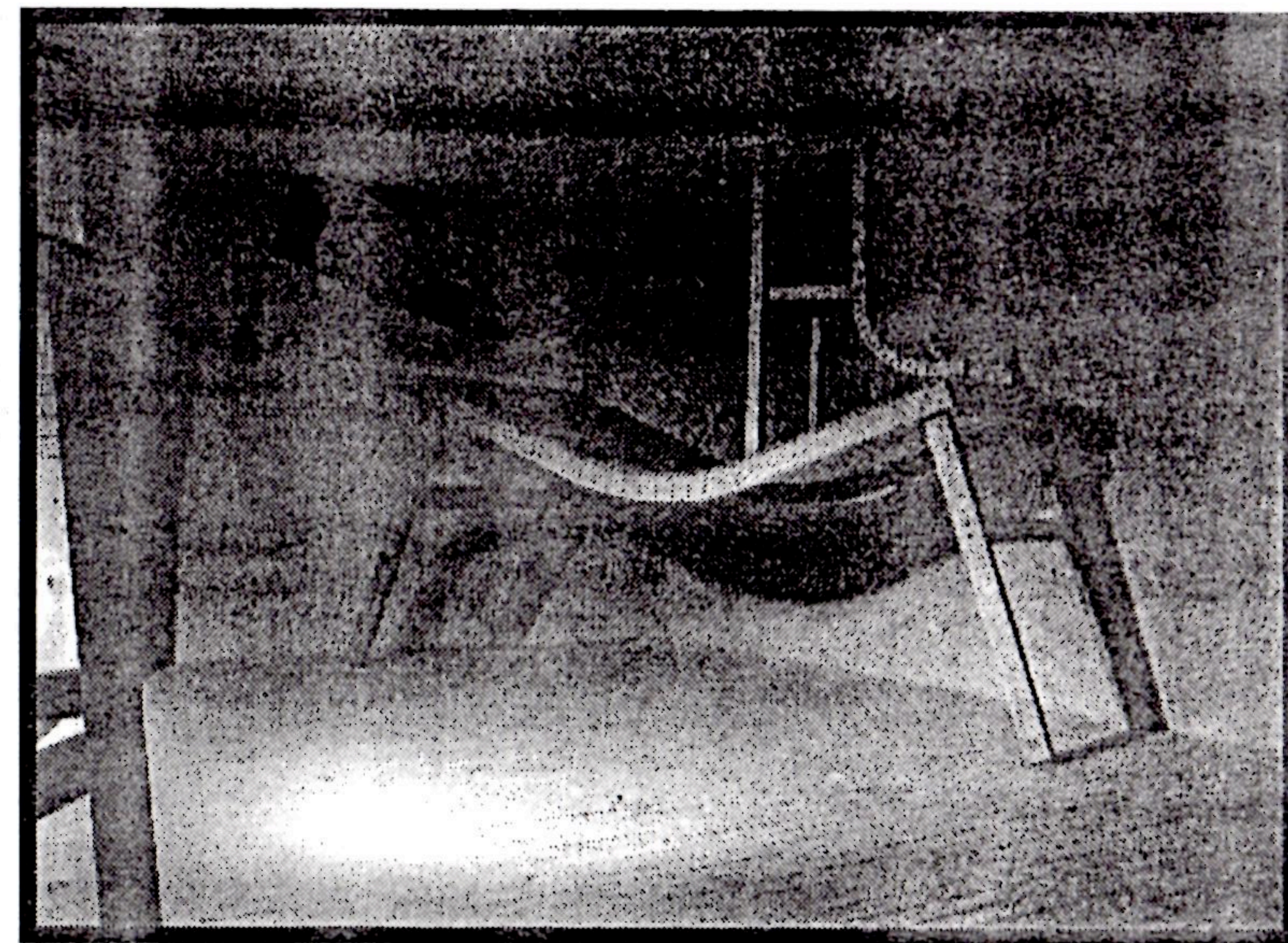
ent galleries at the moment that require the viewer to bend over, squeeze or crawl through an uncommonly small space. It leaves you wondering: Is art not difficult enough to access already?

The first piece I must confess to not having seen, though situate my

body in the particular space allocated to its existence I did indeed do. *Blindspot*, the collaborative piece by John Dummett and Kirsten Forkert currently occupying Optica's back room, is a non-piece.

Faced with a two-foot-high doorway at the end of a corridor, my first impulse was to impatiently get the fuck out of Dodge. Luckily, accompanied by someone of firmer fibre and greater generosity, it was suggested that I peer my head in, at least. I did. Behind the hole, there was the same old Optica back room, all painted in white, peopled however by a half-dozen small red chairs. I felt the compulsion to read the text, obviously an essential component. The purpose of the piece, it explained, was to point to the various responses people might have to spaces devoid of any obvious function, location or duration. The artists, in other words, have created an area of purposelessness, and the art is in our realization of this. Was my annoyance a result of that realization? Perhaps. More likely, though, it came from the fact that on certain days, I feel that if I have to see just one more piece that rests solely on some overanalyzed psycho-social phenomenon and an artist's self-congratulatory wit at pointing it out, I'm going to explode.

The next hole I fell into was at B-312, which held in its cavernous openness a video projection by Emanuel Licha. Trained as a geologist, Licha makes work that is architectural in tendency, treating real-life places and the weight of their differing contexts as sculptural materials. *In & Out*, the piece exhibited behind the rough human-sized



CHAMPION DES POIDS NEUTRES, BY GUILLAUME LABRIE

hole bashed through the wall of B-312's small room, is the video of an audienceless performance he did in a bombed elementary school in Sarajevo in 2001. What is shown to us in this room, projected in a violent staccato rhythm, is a body enveloped by a red velvet tube covering one of the bomb-blasted orifices in the building. The idea of the performance was to reproduce the traumatic entry of a foreign body in a structure, as when a building is hit by a bomb. The red anthropomorphic shape writhes, out of place, emphasizing the space's denatured state.

The effect of the installation exhibited also carries that visceral aggression, but mainly through the chosen projection mode, which is choppy and unpleasant. The sound is loud and stuttered. But the built environment remains a white cube except for the small, busted hole. Conceptually, there is a certain lack of messiness, of chaos.

The third hole is also extremely neat, in a couple senses of the word, and deliberately so. Located in Circa's Gallery II, Guillaume Labrie, self-des-

cribed *Champion des poids neutres*, has created a sort of 7 1/2th floor all his own. Upon entering the exactly five-foot-tall doorway, the viewer is surrounded by a diminutive environment of bendiness, where furniture is regularized but the room just falls short of accommodating it. Dispersed in the space are tables on their sides, chairs upside down, sagging shelves and boxes all made of neutral coloured plywood, there to demonstrate, simply and aesthetically, the physical impact of given spaces. Necessarily manipulated by their very placement in a gallery context, artworks are always subject, physically and qualitatively, to their environment. (-)

BLINDSPOT: VISIBLE ART ACTIVITY
OPTICA, UNTIL MAY 29

EMANUEL LICHA: IN & OUT
GALERIE B-312, UNTIL MAY 22

GUILLAUME LABRIE: CHAMPION DES
POIDS NEUTRES
CIRCA, UNTIL MAY 8

The biggest accessories choice in Quebec.

- Bracelets
- Scarfs
- Necklaces
- Cashmere scarfs
- Earrings
- Rings
- And much more.

Lay Lo Modes

Carrefour Alliance, Simons building,
977, Sainte-Catherine Street West, #108, 514 282-6555

Promenades de la Cathédrale
625, Sainte-Catherine Street West, #1120, 514 499-9103

★★★★★

"A masterpiece."

- Liam Lacey, *The Globe & Mail*

"It's odd, eccentric and unique, but it's also very funny."

- Hour

ISABELLA
DOCCILLINI

(arts)

