



Francine Larivée's work titled *Les Camouflages du neuf* consists of a metal grid of shelves, every other one of which holds a fish bowl containing live moss. COURTESY OF CENTRE D'EXPOSITION CIRCA

VISUAL ARTS

Women who sculpt

EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY WELL-ESTABLISHED MONTREAL ARTISTS
WILL BRING BACK MEMORIES FOR MANY

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SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

To visit a current group show titled *La sculpture et le vent: femmes sculpteuses au Québec* is to take a stroll down memory lane that ends almost in the present.

This worthwhile and informative exhibit includes one work by each of 15 contemporary Montreal artists, all born before 1960 and nearly all having achieved at least some measure of recognition, both here and abroad. Some viewers will remember many of the works from past shows.

One of the most powerful pieces on view is relatively recent and comes complete with its breathless, possibly high-camp title *Inside/Night des ténèbres* (d'après une nouvelle de Tchekhov) - *Inside/Night* (after a story by Chekhov).

The actual work, by Eva Brandl, consists partly of three-dimensional items - velvet drapery cascading down from a hidden structural support, spilling out onto the gallery floor and forming a carpet for some croquet-size wooden balls and small wooden crosses. The drapery also serves as a curtain on one side of a huge, black-and-white photograph of a ghostly table light of the sort often used at a bedside.

The long sheet of paper bearing this striking image, itself taller than the average person, scrolls gracefully down from the easel supporting it; the lampshade in the picture is tattered, suggesting that it was witness to some sort of crime of passion, and the balls and crosses have a kind of symbolic import.

Though they are the main hardware of the work, they allude to an ephemeral realm of dream, while the imagery re-

mains more in the land of actuality and concrete events.

Also referring to the nexus of inner being and external appearances is the work of Liliana Berezowsky titled *When I Say I Love You I Am Looking at My Reflection in Your Eyes*. On its own, this is a statement of psychological truth and truism. But add in the work itself, a real mirror perched upon an elegant fluted, copper-coloured steel column, and the short text gains new meaning.

In this work there is an interesting fusion of literature, albeit at its most minimal, and solid sculpture that is anything but minimalist. The mirror, at once solid material and a fleeting, ever-changing reflection of reality, asserts that the solid metal of the column is but a figment of the hyper-imagination. Again, as with Brandl's work, the power of our perception is put to the test.

Berezowsky plays reality against perception, hard against transient, dualities that are inherent in the very shape and profile of the work. The mirror is in the form of a water drop or a flame, with rounded edges coming to a point at the top. And the column supporting it can be seen as a massive candle.

Adding to the many ironies in this piece is the fact that this candle is cold as the steel from which it is made.

Contrasts of hard and soft, permanent and evanescent are also at the core of Francine Larivée's work titled *Les Camouflages du neuf* - roughly translatable as "camouflaging the new."

This bizarre and poetic work consists of a metal grid of shelves, every other one of which holds a fish bowl containing live moss. Our view of the delicate plants is

slightly blocked by the condensation on the glass, alluding to the layers of paint inherent to more traditional works.

According to a text accompanying the show by Rose-Marie Arbour - she curated the exhibit with Serge Frisette - the selection process was based on materiality, along with other categories including territoriality and identity.

Of course, using these criteria, we could put together a show that includes both the *Mona Lisa* and conceptualist sculptor Carl Andre's minimalist copper floor plates.

The show is informative, both in terms of recent Montreal art history and in what it tells us about the overall status of women artists. Almost by definition, that such an assertively all-woman show was mounted indicates that women, either in truth or by perception, continue to be somewhat overlooked in a local art scene that is residually sexist.

This bias may not be as apparent as it was 20 years ago, when most of the artists in the current show reached full stride, but it's still there, as indicated by various feminist studies and surveys.

The artists in the show are Eva Brandl, Jocelyne Alloucherie, Micheline Beauchemin, Liliana Berezowsky, Yvette Bisson, Monic Brassard (Cozic), Marie-France Brière, Martha Fleming & Lyne Lapointe, Rose-Marie Goulet, Francine Larivée, Lisette Lemieux, Marie-Christiane Mathieu, Barbara Steinman, Françoise Sullivan and Louise Viger.

La sculpture et le vent: femmes sculpteuses au Québec continues at Centre d'exposition CIRCA, 372 Ste. Catherine St. W., Room 444, until July 31. Call (514) 393-8248 or consult www.cam.org/~circa