



LOIS ANDISON'S HEARTBREAKING IS ONE OF THE STRONG CANADIAN WORKS IN READ ALL OVER.



➔ **READ ALL OVER** at Scrap Metal Gallery (11 Dublin, unit E), noon-5 pm Friday and Saturday, or by appointment (reopens January 12). 416-588-2442. [See listing](#).

NOW RATING N N N N N

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ART REVIEWS

Textual appeal

SHOW DOES WONDERS WITH WORDS

BY FRAN SCHECHTER

In a boordale laneway behind a kitchen counter manufacturer, Micah Lexier's jokey illuminated sign marks the entrance to Scrap Metal. Type

Books owner Samara Walbohm and financier Joel Shlesinger have built this "private museum" to display their collection of Canadian and international art and provide an Ydessa Hendeles-style venue for their own and future guest curators' exhibits.

Despite my reservations about such art-world privatization, I have to admit they've put together a solid inaugural show in Read All Over. The big, L-shaped warehouse holds 29 artworks that incorporate words and books. A mix of art owned by the pair and gallery loans, the show includes fascinating international artists not often seen locally.

France's Annette Messenger, a Walbohm/Shlesinger favourite, makes poetic installations from found objects. For Croix-livres, two stacks of wall-mounted paperbacks are interrupted by a "cross" of stuffed black gloves, each finger ending in a sharp coloured pencil. Resembling wiggly tentacles, the fingers create an organic chaos that the orderly piles of print culture can't suppress. In another wall work, Messenger spells out "Ciineemaa" in cartoonish plush toys, the vowel-heavy word drawn out to express the movies' play with time and the childish excitement the medium engenders.

The late John Latham, an eccentric British artist and writer, sought a unified theory of culture, psychology, theology and the physical universe. In his installation, clear plastic triangular stands containing cut-up books are arranged in a mandala- or henge-like ring enclosing a floor strewn with shredded print. No doubt the work is full of arcane symbolism, but you don't need to decode it to appreciate this imposing installation that ambiguously dissipates or concentrates the texts' spilled content into a mystical circle.

Some Canadian standouts are Graham Gillmore's energetic word paintings, whose messages here concern the relationship of mental illness to art-making, endearing obsessive Ken Nicol's geometric typeset arrangements of the words "fuck off" and Lois Andison's play on the word "heartbreaking" in type and a fun motorized Scrabble-tile sculpture.

Walbohm and Shlesinger could have left their collection on the walls of their multiple homes; their curatorial ambitions enrich us all.

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