

# Canadian, eh!

## GALLERY GOING

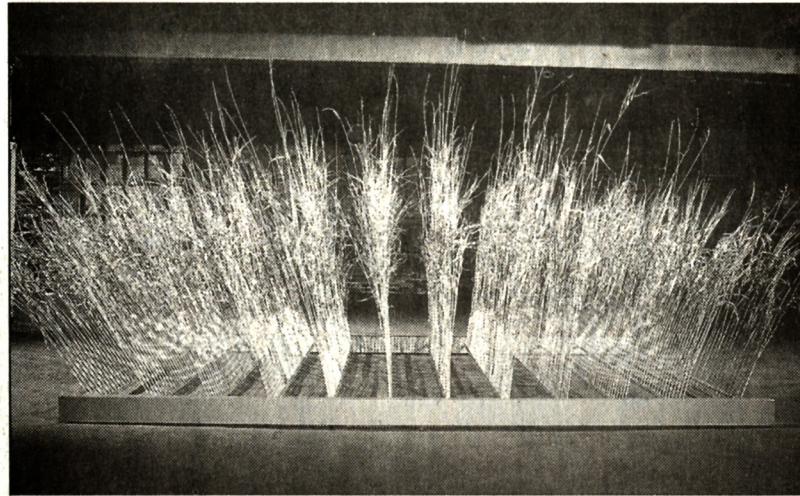
Gillian MacKay

One might legitimately ask, time being at a premium and all, is it really necessary to trek out to a damp, dingy warehouse near Bloor and Lansdowne to see an artist-curated show with the cornball title of **Canadian Shield**? The answer is yes, if you want a bracing hit of good news about the city's art community. Here, flamboyant energy, confident sense of scale and ambitious use of materials help unite a disparate gang of 15 painters, sculptors and installation artists, some affiliated with collectives (**Michael Davey, Tanya Read**), some with dealers (**Sheila Gregory, Reinhard Reitzenstein**) and others who are free-

floating (**Marie de Souza, Jay Wilson**).

**Lois Anderson's** mesmerizing *Camouflage 2* is an aluminum machine "planted" with fragrant grasses that sway forward and back as if swept by the wind. *Slice*, by **Scott Childs**, is a huge, pie-shaped wedge containing layer upon layer of bricks, books, rusty tools and foam insulation, topped by turf and a tiny golfing flag. **Tom Bendtsen's** *Argument #4* is a hive-shaped enclosure built from 11,000 books. Only **Shelley Adler's** six portraits of anxious-looking urban women dreaming of escapes to sparkling lakes and rocky, pine-dotted cliffs speak directly of the shield.

A key source of the feel-good vibes that pervade the show (even in the darkest, smelliest basement corners) is the volunteer labour that made it happen. Art Gallery of Mississauga curator Stuart Reid



*Lois Anderson's Camouflage 2, part of Canadian Shield: feel-good vibes.*

gave curatorial advice, cartoonist Gary Clement designed the poster and everyone helped assemble the wonderful catalogues, each ingeniously held together with elastic and a twig and containing an original **Ed Pien** watercolour. As for the outdoor sign embellished with

Christmas lights from Wal-Mart, it both captures the ebullient mood of the show and lets you know, for sure, you have arrived. *From \$300 to \$12,000. Until Oct. 31. 87 Wade Ave., Toronto. 416-533-3552.*

**Thérèse Bolliger at Cold City**

Weedy tangles of damaged nerve cells, oval-shaped cancers and flower-like viruses bloom in the deadly, underwater garden of *Volatile Body/Volatile Language*. For this 1998 series of ink drawings, the artist drew on ground-breaking computer-generated images that revealed for the first time the oddly beautiful shapes of hepatitis, ebola, mad cow and other viruses. Bolliger arranges her renderings of diseased organisms in large grids along with delicately cross-hatched and striated grey-black ink washes. These watery abstracts evoke an unstable state of consciousness, reinforced by words such as "AMBIGUOUS" and "FLEETING." The estheticization of illness is disturbing but, the artist suggests, potentially healing as well. *From \$300 to \$12,000. Until Oct. 31. 686 Richmond St. W., Toronto. 416-504-6681.*

**Robert Motherwell at Mira Godard**

This handsome selection of prints