



BEST IN SHOW

YOUR GUIDE TO THE CANADIANS GETTING THE BEST REVIEWS ON THE GALLERY-GO-ROUND

BY DEIRDRE HANNA

Visual art has never felt more vibrant. Suddenly, gallery openings are rivalling any A-list social function as places to see and be seen, while even weekday gawkers get dolled up to make the scene.

That's all good news for artists everywhere, and the best news north of the 49th parallel is that this international art explosion comes at a time when Canadians have never felt more relevant to the global art scene. While Canadian curators are making a name as serious players, our artists are catching rave reviews when they show off on their home turf. The timing is perfect for *IMAGES* to check out a hot list of some Canadian artists who are definitely going places.

LOIS ANDISON'S *CAMOUFLAGE 1*, 1998, QUEEN ANNE'S LACE ON A DRESSMAKER'S FORM.

LOIS ANDISON

She isn't trying to steal the show, but when Lois Andison is on a group lineup, her work stands out from the crowd.

It happened with last fall's highly acclaimed *Wildlife: A Field Guide to the Post-Natural*, at Toronto's Museum for Textiles, where her feather-festooned helmets were the big hit in the five-person exhibit *The Globe and Mail* called "the smartest show in town." Visitors to the museum donned the wiggly wonders in order to hear better the audio component of Andison's sound-based installation. The experience fell somewhere between attending an experimental music concert and sitting under a dryer at the salon.

Originally from Smiths Falls, Ont., but now based in Toronto, Andison is accustomed to receiving raves. Her kinetic *Camouflage 2*—a mechanical framework of fragrant grasses that gently sway as if growing in a windy field—rippled its way to best-in-show kudos at the Canadian Shield group show in 1998. Her *Camouflage 3*, which

generated major buzz in a solo show at Toronto's Red Head Gallery last June, shone out as the highlight in *Au-delà de la mode/The Fashion Statement*, a blue-chip outing (heavyweights Betty Goodwin and Jana Sterbak joined the bill) that was the toast of Montreal's art scene in October.

Camouflage 3 consists of a female torso clad in an elegant evening gown, with a weird and suggestive telescoping gizmo that slowly moves up and down from the neck, blowing smoke at the height of its ascent. The work pushes gender-issue buttons, but, says Andison, her work is more about human behaviour and movement. "The hybrid object presents infinite possibilities for exploring organic and technological mechanical relationships."

Whether or not it's about beauty, the bottom line is that Andison's art is beautiful—and other artists are talking about her work with a mix of awe and envy.



LOIS ANDISON'S FEATHER-FESTOONED HELMET FROM *BIRDSCAPES IN RED & BLUE*, 2000.



CAMOUFLAGE 3 FEATURES A TELESCOPING GIZMO THAT BLOWS SMOKE OUT THE TOP.

GENEVIÈVE CADIEUX

In the eight years they've been on display, the giant lips pursed over the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal have become one of the city's most popular landmarks. The illuminated *La Voie Lactée* (The Milky Way) was first installed as part of a major mid-career retrospective by Geneviève Cadieux, and acts as a billboard that smacks of the city's enduring cosmopolitanism.

Forget the Group of Seven. When international art watchers consider CanCon, their first thoughts fly to the kind of large-format photography displayed on light-boxes that has made Cadieux, as well as Vancouverites Jeff Wall and Stan Douglas, contemporary art stars in the global arena. But while the West Coast guys exhibit a certain macho swank in their backlit tableaux, Cadieux explores a more fragile and emotionally complex realm, where—on the surface—form and balance seem more important than narrative. A prime example is her 1993 *Rubis*—a diptych pairing a photo of her mother's back with an enlargement of anomalous, or diseased, red blood cells. By finding beauty in disease, Cadieux

creates a conceptual body of work that has few rivals.

Groundbreaking—and heartbreaking—images like *Rubis* have opened the doors of the world's foremost museums. Cadieux represented Canada in the 1990 Venice Biennale and has shown at major international institutions, including London's Tate Gallery, Tokyo's Sagacho Art Exhibit,



GENEVIÈVE CADIEUX.



SOUFFLE, 1996, AND, *ELLE ET LUI*, 1997, AN INSTALLATION BY GENEVIÈVE CADIEUX AT GALERIE RENÉ BLOUIN, MONTREAL.