

Communiqué

Emily Carr College of Art and Design
THE CHARLES H. SCOTT GALLERY

June 5 - 28, 1987

GRUNT OR ARTSPEAK AT THE CHARLES H. SCOTT GALLERY

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Grunt Or Artspeak, an exhibition featuring a selection of work representing three local alternative galleries, Grunt, Or and Artspeak, will be at the Charles H. Scott Gallery from June 5 through 28, 1987. The opening reception will be from 8-10 pm Friday evening, June 5, and a reading by members of Artspeak/Kootenay School of Writing (K.S.W.) will take place in the Scott Gallery at 3 pm Saturday, June 13.

The guest curators, Glenn Alteen, Ellen Ramsey and Cate Rimmer have included works by sixteen 'young' artists. Representing the Grunt will be: Dav MacNab, Gary Ouimet, Bill Rennie, Garry Ross and Hillary Wood; the Or: Daniel Congdon, Sheila Hall, Catherine Jones and Warren Murfitt; and Artspeak: Lorna Brown, Laura Lamb, Doug Munday, Reid Shier, and Nancy Shaw, Deanna Ferguson and Kathryn MacLeod.

The exhibition will transfer the 'character' of these alternative galleries, situating them in a more central location with a much broader audience than they normally reach.

For the large part, the Artists in Grunt Or Artspeak share a similar academic background having received training from either an art college or university. Their work, however, varies greatly in both subject matter and presentation ranging from video and photo-textual work to assemblage and painting.

The Artspeak/K.S.W. reading of prose and poetry will feature Colin Browne, Jeff Derksen, Dan Farrell, Kathryn MacLeod, Tom Wayman, Calvin Wharton and Gary Whitehead.

Big gallery exposure for 16 artists from the fringes

■ GRUNT OR ARTSPEAK, Charles H. Scott Gallery, to June 28.

By ELIZABETH GODLEY

When Willard Holmes, until recently full-time curator of the gallery at Emily Carr College of Art and Design, accepted a position as interim director of the Vancouver Art Gallery, he foresaw running short of time.

In addition, Holmes didn't relish a role as the city's art Godfather, controlling two important gallery spaces: "If you want a show, you have to see me."

So he called on the directors of three of Vancouver's smallest and most fringe-y galleries — Or, Artspeak and grunt — to give him a hand by organizing a show at the Scott Gallery.

"They are galleries that have a definite connection with the college in the sense that they are usually the first places graduates have a show," Holmes says. Jotting down the names of the galleries, "I thought, 'What a perfect title for a show.'"

That's how the work of these 16 artists, normally seen in out-of-the-way venues ("tucked away next to chicken-eviscerating factories," as Holmes puts it), made the transition to a mainstream gallery on Granville Island, a tourist mecca.

All survived the trip without mishap. Representing grunt are Daav MacNab's and Gary Ouimet's tacky constructions, banged

together from junkyard flotsam and looking even grottier than usual in the Scott's rarified atmosphere. MacNab has outdone himself by adding a steaming pot of bacteria-laden water to one of his creations, but both Ouimet's pieces would be better displayed at eye-level, rather than set on the floor.

Bill Rennie, also of grunt, gives us a pastry-chef confection, oddly titled *Stalinistic randeur* — a pink-and-gold skyscraper that brings to mind fairy tales rather than totalitarian heavy-handedness.

In keeping with tradition, Artspeak artists' offerings are by and large impenetrable. Who can say what Doug Munday is getting at, in his four-panel mixed-media piece, *The Modern Business Hen Has No Time for Family Duties*? If he's drawing a parallel between broiler farms and office buildings, why the Polaroid photos of legs?

A similar sense of puzzlement is generated by *Collaboration*, a photograph-and-words conundrum by Nancy Shaw, Deanna Ferguson and Kathryn MacLeod, although Lorna Brown's tripod-mounted *Dictation* and Reid Sheir's series of 16 penetrating portraits are definitely worth a look.

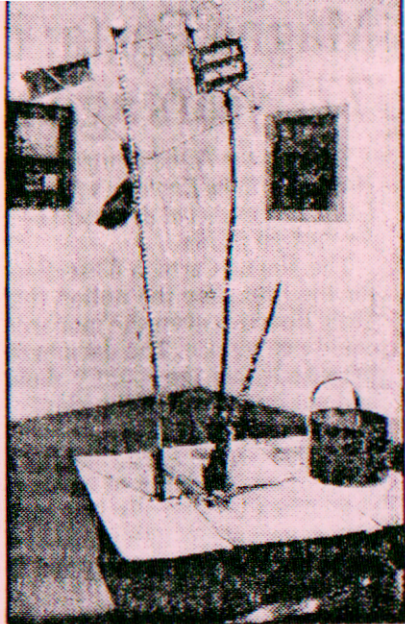
It is the Or's artists who steal this show. Radically political, they still allow us a smile or two.

Daniel Congdon's *Cinema*, an elaborate machine that projects a

still image of a man reading, is a wry dig at the mass media's furious efforts to communicate very little of substance.

Warren Murfitt's oversize rolling pin, a cylinder of grey cement pierced by a steel rod and resting on a pocked concrete rostrum, conjures up the taste of the spongy flannel bread and pastries churned out by big-business bakeries.

Equally powerful is Sheila Hall's large photograph. Titled *Synchronicity*, it depicts a lunar desert out of which two small, almost postcard-pretty images rear up like pyramids from the Egyptian sands.



ONE of MacNab's works: grottier than usual