The Ontario College of Art & Design is Canada’s “university of the imagination,” engaging in education and research and contributing to the fields of art and design, local and global cultural initiatives, and knowledge and invention across a wide range of disciplines.

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Oops! In the spring 2008 issue of Sketch, an Alumni Notes article about Geoffrey Pugen neglected to mention that he is represented by the Angell Gallery in Toronto.

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**WINTE 2009**

The magazine of the Ontario College of Art & Design
In a wide-ranging interview with Sketch, the Chancellor displayed a keen sense of humour and a deep personal relationship to the arts. Portions of the interview are excerpted here.

**Sketch:** How did you come to be Chancellor of OCAD?

**James Bartleman:** At a lunch I attended with members of the OCAD Board of Governors, [President] Sara [Diamond] spoke a great deal about diversity as a component of the university's strategic direction, and she spoke of the proposed Aboriginal Visual Culture program. Then she asked me if I'd consider being Chancellor. I said that I'd be honoured despite the fact [laughs] that without an art and design background, I'm not the most obvious person in the room.

**Sketch:** On the contrary, it seems to me that with your love of books and reading, you're a real champion of the imagination and the power of the imagination to create change.

**James Bartleman:** My belief is that life is really about meeting the basic human needs of food, shelter, sex and so on, and only when these basic needs are satisfied do we move on, as a society, to the psychological. And in the area of psychological needs, you'll probably also find spiritual needs. At a very basic level these have to do with a sense of belonging. They also have to do with aspiration, with having faith or wanting to have faith, which brings us to the big existential questions like "Who am I?" "What is the meaning of life?" [jerk] "Is there a God?"

These questions have consumed people for as long as people have been alive, and from my perspective it's because people are trying to find expression for their sense of wonder at the world. We live in a world surrounded by a kind of veil that we spend our time punching, punching, punching at this veil — trying to penetrate it. But ours is a world of limits and a world that has us preoccupied with meeting our basic needs. So only occasionally do we actually penetrate that veil, and when we do we experience a sense of wonder.

When I talk about experiencing a sense of wonder, I'm referring to the way we can suddenly snap — take a position outside the movement of our lives. Let's say I'm walking home. I'm in the bush and suddenly I see a piece of birch bark that for whatever reason looks wonderful. It may not be beautiful, but perhaps there's a drop of dew on it, or rain, and it's jagged at one end. It's wonderful because I experience it as reality and for that second I'm alive.

**Sketch:** What art does is it exposes us to that wonder all the time — whether or not we're in a position to appreciate it.

**James Bartleman:** I see visual art especially as sitting somewhere between music and literature. Music goes straight to the soul; there's no interpretation. It goes straight in — it's like getting an infusion — and the meaning is direct, emotional, psychological. Writing, on the other hand, filters through the brain. We use our imagination to interpret it, to relate it to our own life experience. It's why I've always loved reading and it's why I promote it.

So, music has the potential for direct impact, while literature requires reflection. It's my belief that art and design function on both levels.

**Sketch:** You're an artist too, right? Tell us about your recent move from writing fiction to writing fiction.

**James Bartleman:** After four books of non-fiction, I've just finished my first novel. It tells the story of a Native youth living on the streets of the big city, the streets of Toronto. Ultimately, it's a book about the existential questions of Native people, issues of adaptation, acculturation, truth and reconciliation.

**Sketch:** Can you talk a little bit about your work with Aboriginal youth?

**James Bartleman:** I run 39 libraries every summer for kids in the Canadian North. I've put 5000 kids in reading clubs that provide them with books every several months, and I've established libraries throughout the Ontario First Nations communities.

What we're seeing blossom in these kids is a kind of literary pride. They're also being exposed to art and design. Last summer, for example, 5 OCAD students participated as camp counsellors and I'm hoping for close to 10 in the coming year.

Books and reading were so important to me growing up, as I'm sure they are to OCAD students. Now they're important to these kids, too.
On October 4, 2008, OCAD celebrated Scotiabank Nuit Blanche with a presentation of the exhibitions “Useless Beauty” and “Design for the Other 90%” alongside a performance of “Ordinary People.”

**OCAD’s WHiTE NiGHT**

The OCAD Student Art Society and Scotiabank Nuit Blanche 2008

When about a hundred people per hour started to arrive outside of OCAD, the stream of traffic then spilled into the lobby, where guests were invited to a visual feast — Toronto’s Cultural Quarter transformed into a preview of Nuit Blanche 2008 and explored the idea of design for the “Other 90%.”

**WHODUNIT? OCAD MYSTERY ART SALE**

“The $75 question” — as the Night Porter once called it — had many people guessing at the seventh annual Whodunit? OCAD Mystery Art Sale, held Saturday, Muse Gallery and Wyrick/Tuck Gallery.

Many started to also congregate, the event’s new presenting sponsor and generous provider of this $15,000 educational award for students. A first, the OCAD exhibition space was a part of the Nuit Blanche press preview and opening, participating artists were presented with their works.

**Behind the Curtain**

**ART**

(see page 7).

**Ordinary People**

The exhibition, which is supported by the National Ballet, invites Nuit Blanche visitors to work on a piece of the National Ballet of Canada’s costume with its “design for the Other 90%” initiative. The National Ballet stipulated specific design criteria, such as great creative and strategic reputations, innovative thinking and a passion for the arts. Selection of the agencies was also likely based on the ability to attract a diverse group of sponsors for the upcoming 10th anniversary of Nuit Blanche.

**NATioNAL BALLET CAMPAIGN**

The National Ballet is the “executorial tool” — a flyer folded into an origami seagull — designed by Sim’s team, which included core members Sam Archibald and, later, students Olivia Chow and Julia Dickinson. “When we got word from the Ballet that they liked our executorial tool, we had to come up with what to put on it,” recalls Sim. “It was a lengthy process of back and forth, one that involved a lot of collaboration and integration of different ideas. I learned so much about how marketing starts and how to manage expectations. Not to mention to get it into the folding of 5000 origami birds. These were distributed in two drops to bars, restaurants and coffee shops throughout the city.

**WHAT ACTUALLY CAUGHT THE EYE OF THE NATIONAL BALLET WAS THE ‘EXECUTORIAL TOOL’” — A FLYER FOLDED INTO AN ORIGAMI SEAGULL — DESIGNED BY SIM’S TEAM, WHICH INCLUDED CORE MEMBERS SAM ARCHIBALD AND, LATER, STUDENTS OLIVIA CHOW AND JULIA DICKINSON. “WHEN WE GOT WORD FROM THE BALLET THAT THEY LIKED OUR EXEUTORIAL TOOL, WE HAD TO COME UP WITH WHAT TO PUT ON IT,” RECALLS SIM. “IT WAS A LENGTHY PROCESS OF BACK AND FORTH, ONE THAT INVOLVED A LOT OF COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION OF DIFFERENT IDEAS. I LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT HOW MARKETING STARTS AND HOW TO MANAGE EXPECTATIONS.” NOT TO MENTION TO GET IT INTO THE FOLDING OF 5000 ORIGAMI BIRDS. THESE WERE DISTRIBUTED IN TWO DROPS TO BARS, RESTAURANTS AND COFFEE SHOPS THROUGHOUT THE CITY.
In late September 2008, French artist ORLAN arrived at OCAD to mark the final instalment of the university’s Nomadic Residents program, a residency supported by Partners in Art and the Consulate General of France in Toronto. During her week-long residency, ORLAN gave a public lecture to a packed audience in the OCAD auditorium, sharing her perspective on her works, from her earliest years selling photos of body parts in a Portuguese market to reworking classic Native American portraits in recent years. She also met with various classes at the university and collaborated with students on Ordinary People, a work created for Scotiabank Nuit Blanche, inviting people to stop at midnight and hold up a sign reading “ART” for 4 minutes and 33 seconds in a commentary on Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s federal election campaign suggestion that “ordinary people” don’t care about art (or, as the Toronto Star reported, “the ‘rich’ artists who gather at galas”). ORLAN’s visit was followed by “Useless Beauty,” an exhibit of works on the artist’s recurring themes of hybridity, gender, race, beauty, utility and fashion. The exhibit, co-curated by OCAD professor Johanna Householder and Gallery Stratford curator Jennifer Rudder, also featured the work of KC Adams, Lois Andison and David Krippendorf.

In a spare, echoey, concrete-floored seminar room, the artist ORLAN is sitting next to me and I am nervous. Sure, I’ve met artists before. Sure, some of them are internationally renowned like ORLAN. But to be frank, none of them have had hornlike protrusions surgically implanted into their foreheads as an art piece — let alone protrusions that are coated with silver glitter gel and that seem to draw my stare no matter how hard I try to maintain my professional composure. Such is the nature of ORLAN’s art — difficult, yet seductive; queasy, yet impressive. Whether selling kisses from behind a nude cut-out at an art fair in the 1970s for The Kiss of the Artist, putting her genitals on public view in the 1980s under the rubric of A Documentary Study: The Head of Medusa, undergoing repeated plastic surgeries in the 1990s for The Reincarnation of Saint ORLAN, or posing as a Native American in the 2000s as part of her Refiguration/Self-Hybridation series, ORLAN has consistently taken a raw, controversy-inviting tack on vital issues such as gender, sexuality, history and ethnicity.

The more we talk however, the more I’m convinced of — and feel relaxed by — the intelligence behind this artist’s much-discussed visage. “I’m a very normal artist when I’m not in the operating room,” she jokes. “I’m always just trying to find the best materials to say what seems important to say in the period in which I’m living.”

When her output is reviewed comprehensively, it’s clear that ORLAN has said a lot about both the ephemeral and the enduring issues of the day. Early in her career, in the 1960s, ORLAN performed extra-slow walks through her hometown of St-Étienne, France, using her body to measure its public spaces. In one work, she measured the dimensions of a public square in ORLAN Bodies by repeatedly lying down on the ground and ticking her body length from end to end with a piece of chalk. This series of works, dubbed MesuRages, was rather prescient, given today’s artistic mania for city-building, architecture and urban intervention — a mania that has manifested itself in myriad ways, from the “starchitect”...
In the last couple of years, ORLAN’s work has taken on a more political edge. From 1971 to 2005, ORLAN took on a new persona — the cell incubator — to explore the issues of cell-rejection difficulties. Still, the performer and her practices have always been a worry for me because there are many other problems we have to solve in art, in life,” she says. In France, the things we [of the 1960s and ’70s feminist movement] fought for are in the process of being shut down.” Politician Saint-Grégoire Royall’s well-documented run for the French presidency last year and the sexism she encountered in the process spring to mind. “Millions of women worldwide are also without rights,” ORLAN continues. “For a while, I said that I was simply against all discrimination; now I say again that I’m a feminist.”

Given the range of ORLAN’s work, “It’s no surprise to find a diversity of opinion in academic, journalistic and popular circles about its meaning. Some say it’s about masochism. Indeed, who else would willingly remain conscious during surgery to make paintings with her own blood (which was part of The Reinforcement of Saint ORLAN even though anesthetics are applied? Others believe it’s more about narcissism — those surgeries gave her the chin of Botticelli’s Venus, after all. And still others say it’s about digital culture and the slipperiness of identity that such culture engenders. (Here, Art-Addiction, which ORLAN developed in the early 1980s and is among the first online journals of contemporary art, seems particularly relevant.)

But when asked what links all of her works, ORLAN’s answer is brief: bodies and boundaries. “It’s very simple,” she explains. “All my life I work with the same concept: the status of the body, with all the social pressures, cultural pressures and political pressures that are put on it. Sometimes it’s with video, sometimes it’s with installation, sometimes it’s with photography, sometimes with sculpture or performance or biotechnology or design. But all the time it’s the question of the body. I also try to break the boundaries between things — between generations, between the sexes, between skin colours and between practices.”

Yet, as encompassing as ORLAN’s practice can be in summary, certain strains do speak in particular to women’s bodies, experiences and politics. ORLAN considers herself “very feminist,” though she has only recently taken up the title due to what she perceives as a recent decline in women’s rights worldwide. “I would like women’s issues not to be a worry for me because there are many other problems we have to solve in art, in life,” she says. “In France, the things we [of the 1960s and ’70s feminist movement] fought for are in the process of being shut down.”

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Political Saint-Grégoire Royall’s well-documented run for the French presidency last year and the sexism she encountered in the process spring to mind. “Millions of women worldwide are also without rights,” ORLAN continues. “For a while, I said that I was simply against all discrimination; now I say again that I’m a feminist.”

Given this, it makes sense that ORLAN’s notorious The Kiss of the Artist — that B-size photo of her nude torso, which functioned as a slot machine and kiss-vending prop and which got her kicked out of a teaching position in the late 1970s — made it into “WACK!: Art and the Feminist Revolution,” the groundbreaking international exhibition of feminist artists of the ’60s and ’70s currently touring North America.

As pleased as she is about the show, ORLAN cautions against taking such curatorial groupings for granted. “Something that a lot of young artists and critics don’t know is that in my generation [of feminist artists] we were totally isolated. We had no information about each other,” she notes. “Everyone says, ‘Oh, [outsourced female European artist] Valie Export knew about you and you knew about Valie Export.’”

But that wasn’t the case, according to ORLAN. “[I] may seem bizarre, but it’s true. In the 1960s and ’70s I was in a little town, St-Etienne, and even if we did lots of performances, we didn’t take photos, we didn’t invite journalists, we didn’t exhibit. There were hardly any magazines on the arts. There was no Internet. We had no bureaus, no residences, no travel grants. It took a long time until the resources came.”

Yet it was such an exciting time, it was [when] we fought for rights for everything — for the right to go to a restaurant alone without being treated as a slut, for the right to abortion and birth control. But people must realize that many influences attributed to us were interpreted in retrospect. “I was working from a rebellious and intuitive place.”

ORLAN’s comment on rebellion prompts a consideration of one of her earliest works: a self-portrait, Tentative de sortir du cadre avec masque, where she is captured emerging from a golden frame: “I don’t want to be trapped in a frame or box,” she says, “so when the work becomes a little stale or what’s expected, I propose questions and try to make a little step to the side.”

It’s not everyone, of course, who would see the permanent addition of ornamental buns to one’s forehead as “a little step to the side.” Far from it, but maybe that’s just another part of ORLAN’s practice: being under-standing of the contingencies that she herself chooses to buck. “I have no judgment of those who use plastic surgery conventionally,” she says. “The pressure is so enormous and each person has to navigate the problems of aging and death as they wish.”

“What I try to do is put other possibilities and other images opposite that. That’s all.”

With admissions such as these, ORLAN’s own presence as active artist — rather than iconic image — comes to the fore. There’s no doubt that her provocative appropriations of science, medicine, religion and Western and global art histories will remain uncomfortable and problematic for many years to come. But in the end, horns all and all, this so-called saint has been a button-pushing blessing to the contemporary art world.
The Cult of Climate Challenge

By Larissa Kostoff and Colette Laliberté

CAPE FAREWELL YOUTH EXPEDITION 2008

According to the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC), the size of the Arctic Ice Cap hit a 2008 low of 4.53 million square kilometers on September 12, that's close to the record low of 4.13 million square kilometers registered last year, and far from the close to 4 million observed each year from 1979, "when the NSIDC began taking satellite images of the ice, to 2000."

“The size of the Arctic Ice Cap hit a 2008 low of 4.53 million square kilometers on September 12, that’s close to the record low of 4.13 million square kilometers registered last year, and far from the close to 4 million observed each year from 1979, "when the NSIDC began taking satellite images of the ice, to 2000."

In an attempt to answer these questions, the biogeography group photographed and, where possible, collected samples of alpine growth. The geomorphology group calculated and entered in their field books the depth of the permafrost, the temperature of soil and air, and our Global Positioning System (GPS) location; and the oceanography group registered air and water temperatures twice daily.

The work quickly became collaborative. Burns showed the geomorphology group how to probe the ground to calculate the permafrost and take soil temperatures. To measure the depth of the permafrost, we used a stainless steel rod called a "goose." This followed by a drawing session. We each drew the tundra growth that we observed in the area into which we had inserted the goose. Intensely. Burns notes that explorers of the Canadian North used to take a sketch artist on each and every journey. Sketching is still a component of each and every journey. Sketching is still a component of each and every journey.

According to Bly, we need to talk about what science knows. Bly is advocating for "a scientific renaissance as a way of galvanizing a population," of saving a "planet in peril," and what's interesting about his argument is where it positions art. The relationship of science to art, he claims, is not discretionary. Art has the capacity to take issues that are fundamentally scientific and activate them in society.

This is also the premise of Cape Farewell, and it's echoed elsewhere, in far less remote places than the Arctic. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) just employed a philosopher-in-residence, and Princeton University opened the Center for Theoretical Science. In a trans-disciplinary world, knowledge gathering also happens between disciplines. But is there a difference, in that seminal space, between looking and seeing? It's a question that came up again and again during the trip for geologist Chris Burns, who found partnering with Laliberté so "intellectually provocative" he has asked her to accompany him and his students on field trips in 2010.

Science fills seats, says Adam Bly, founder and Editor-in-Chief of Sead Media Group, a science media company. The first of three keynote speakers in the 2008-2009 President's Speaker Series at OCAD, Bly delivered the talk "The 21st-Century Scientific Revolution: Shattering Boundaries Between Science, Art, Design and Culture" on November 13, 2008. According to Bly, we need to talk about what science knows. Bly is advocating for "a scientific renaissance as a way of galvanizing a population," of saving a "planet in peril," and what's interesting about his argument is where it positions art. The relationship of science to art, he claims, is not discretionary. Art has the capacity to take issues that are fundamentally scientific and activate them in society.

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In the water.

Cloud, a bird singing, a pebble thrown

moment, and to do so by observing

process of applying pencil to

and versatility of mark-making, or

skies and one of the oceans.

bridge each day to complete two

oceanography and climatology

group, a site to reflect. Students in

became a place to retreat from the

devote 10 minutes a day to their

repetitive scientific collection of

data, the artists invited all students

vanishing moment?

record a trace? How to record a

were seeing would soon be no longer.

Chris Burns remarked, but also to

take it out, upon returning home,

set a partisan issue. Hopefully, as we

do a "line" of rubbings.

Jessica Houston and I would later

turn physical presence, of turning a

"found" work that emerges out of

rock's surface. And I thought of

We walked on grounds touched by

a rock, a fragment of

rubbings we created? They point to

create rubbings in a land once home

of rocks that could not, or should not,

be removed. It's not incongruous to

decide to do a "line" of rubbings.

Colette Laliberté: On our third

landing, I picked crowsberries with the

intention of making jam once back

board. I marveled at the self-

carpeted lichen growing painfully on

the rock's surface. And I thought of

taking home with me a vestige of time

by making rubbings.

To make a rubbing is to lift

something from a place without

actually taking it. In essence, it is

"found" work that emerges out of

the site-specific activity of tracing

a physical presence, of turning a

moment in time into a drawing.

Jessica Houston and I would later

decide to do a "line" of rubbings.

The field drawings that emerged

in our case were of 40,000-year-old

rocks deposited, then shifted, by

the movement of glaciers in the Arctic.

We walked on grounds touched by

few other creatures. We took imprints

of rocks that could not, or should not,

be removed. It's not incongruous to

create rubbings in a land once home

to age-old glaciers; the technique

goes back to 300 B.C. And the rubbings

we created? This point to

what's already there, what has always

been there: a rock, a fragment of

a whole, a vestige of the dynamic

forces of nature and the countless

passage of time. They represent the

impossible task of trying to pin down,

capture and then hold still the

ever-vanishing present, this moment in

THE LINE: AN INTERVENTION

imHervèe - v. 1ntr. interfere; come

between us so as to prevent or modify

the course of events.

If scientific consensus is anything to

go by, climate change should not be a

partisan issue. Hopefully, as we

move forward we'll value the impartial

analysis of scientific evidence and

we'll also realize that the question

has become one of affecting change.

Nobuo laureate Sherwood Rowland has

said: "After all, what's the use of

having developed a science well

enough to make predictions if, in

the end, all we're willing to do is

exist around and wait for them to

come true?"

How, then, do we move from

tracing a physical presence to

intervening in it? How do we move

from drawing a moment in time to

drawing a line, drawing the line that

delinates a moral boundary — the

line that says, and loudly, enough

Colette Laliberté: A couple of
days before arriving in Iqaluit, we

conducted a ritual unifying art and

science, the rational and emotional,

Buckland's premise — that science

draw their own conclusions and

Its artists and scientists, who will

visit www.capefarewell.com/

“join her, that "we'll draw the line

together" — for ourselves and for

future generations. She's looking into a

post-expedition exhibition at

O cad and is eager to discuss the

back-home initiatives of student

voyageurs like George Voronov from

Dublin, Ireland, who is publishing a

book. (For more information, visit

www.capefarewell.com/

expeditions/2008/07/23/)

Cape Farewell — its legacy and

learning — will live on the work of

its student ambassadors and its

artists and scientists, who will

draw their own conclusions and

decide how best to appeal to their

communities, now and in the future.

Buckland's premise — that science

and art, the rational and emotional,

will together make the strongest

appeal, the one that comes from

head and heart — is both powerful

and plausible.

As British Council Canada Director

Martin Rose wrote, in sum, of the

students who participated in the

expedition: "They have made for

themselves opinions on the greatest

issue of our time, and they are going

off into the world, strengthened, to

become leaders and thinkers.

"It has been a stunning,

transferring, illuminating voyage."

Colette Laliberté is an artist and an

associate professor at OCAD, where she

teaches drawing, painting, installation

and site-specific art intervention.

Since returning home she has continued to

create land art in the space left by the

retreating glacier. She is also developing a series of

paintings in preparation for a solo exhibition next year.
What do a film electrician, an intern architect and an advertising agency project manager have in common? They’re all graduate students in OCAD’s newly launched master’s programs at OCAD: the Master of Fine Arts in Critical & Curatorial Practice (MFA in CCP), the Executive Master of Design in Advertising (EMDes) and the Interdisciplinary Master’s in Art, Media and Design (IAMD).

Artists, designers, architects, creative directors, writers and film electricians are among OCAD’s first class of graduate students. Their projects span a range of creative practices and interests, from studying tombs and pyramids to creating compelling advertisements to building monuments from discarded computer parts.

Sarah Beck, an IAMD graduate student, started her creative career studying photojournalism at Ryerson University, with the lofty goal common among undergraduates: to change the world. But she decided that the program might not be quite right for her and instead went to work in film as a “best boy.” If you’re wondering what the term means, it’s an electrician. Beck was one of the very few female best boys in the film industry. While working in the film business, Beck found time to develop her first art project: ÖDE. For ÖDE, she created a company that markets and produces military tanks. Like the designs of popular Swedish furniture-maker IKEA, ÖDE tanks, which have been exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery, are marketed as affordable and easy to assemble (for more information, visit www.shop.ode.com). Beck views ÖDE as a way to encourage consumers to critically examine lifestyle advertising and their own consumption habits.

The Interdisciplinary Master’s program appealed to Beck because she saw it as an opportunity to develop the critical aspects of her art-making practices, as well as hone her technical skills. Her preliminary idea for her graduate work at OCAD is to create a ship in a bottle using non-recyclable objects. In her view, the choice of materials would speak to both the permanence of monuments and the devastating effects people have on the environment. As well, she is excited about the possibility of collaborating with other OCAD graduate students who bring to the program different skill sets and areas of research. Among IAMD students, research interests include design, jazz and media, sculpture, advertising and social context; animation, printmaking and fibre; and architecture, sound and music. While at OCAD, students will create hybrid projects, which often combine digital and analog elements. IAMD is unlike other master’s programs in that successful candidates will graduate with one of three degrees: a Master of Fine Arts, a Master of Design or a Master of Arts. At the beginning of their second year, students will meet with their principal advisor and a thesis committee to determine which degree they will pursue. Their decision will be based on their research project and thesis proposals. IAMD is unique in Canada, not just because most Canadian programs offer only MFA degrees but also because of its interdisciplinary focus.

“The program is designed to challenge students to investigate, research and produce creative works that explore the interactions between art, design, visual theory and cultural studies,” says Professor Vladimir Spinarovic, Director of the IAMD. “The objective is to support students in research that maps out new ways of articulating art and design today. By engaging in research that integrates theoretical inquiry, practice-based visual research, and social research, they’ll develop new interdisciplinary methodologies.”

The MFA in Critical & Curatorial Practice has also attracted students with very diverse research interests. These include curatorial and critical theory, contemporary Canadian art, current tensions in Canadian art criticism, and performance studies. Funerary architecture (such as tombs, pyramids and monuments), mythological literature and the theme of immortality are the research interests of MFA student and former intern architect Deborah Wang. While completing her fourth-year program at OCAD as part of an undergraduate degree in architectural studies at the University of Waterloo, Wang went on a walk that explored psycho-geography — the study of the effects of the geographical environment on people’s emotions and behaviour — and was inspired by the experience. In particular, she was impressed by Venetian designer Carlo Scarpa’s stone staircase in the Brion-Vega Cemetery. Wang describes the Staircase — where stepping on each stair triggers the sound of different musical notes — as a large-scale xylophone.

“envelope” (or “skin”) of a building, which is the architectural term for exterior design. At this time, Wang also began creating fibre installations. Big Knitting, a 4½’-by-14’ piece that she produced with colleague William Elsworthy, was shown at the Gladstone Hotel in Toronto in 2007 as part of Big Fibre. Little Fibre. “Our textile projects are abstracted landscapes, where we explore and expand the act — and craft — of knitting,” says Wang, who is looking forward to adding curator to her list of achievements.

Her first and only choice for graduate school was OCAD because the MFA in CCP allows her to focus on curating. Furthermore, she wanted a program at a university with a special emphasis on art and design. OCAD’s location appealed to her as well, the campus being in downtown Toronto, in close proximity to outstanding art galleries such as the Art Gallery of Ontario.

“One of the most exciting aspects of the Critical & Curatorial Practice program is the partnership with the AGO, our next-door neighbour,” says Professor Rosemary Donigan, Director of the MFA in CCP. An outcome of this collaboration is Inside the AGO, a course that is team-taught by senior gallery staff. Among the faculty members is Kelly McKirley, Director of Education and Public Programs at the AGO, as
As part of the MFA in CCP program, OCAD students have the unique opportunity to curate a diversity of projects at the AGO, including exhibitions, symposia, online ventures, performances and other interventions into the gallery spaces.

Partnerships are also an integral part of the Executive Master of Design in Advertising, which has leading industry professionals as professors and guest lecturers. For instance, Andy Macaulay, President of Zig, a Toronto-based creative agency, delivered an illuminating lecture about the case histories of Zig clients.

The opportunity to meet top Canadian artists is part of what drew account director Caleb Goodman to the program. “You have the opportunity to really get inside the minds of these people and to ask them questions,” Goodman says. “This gives us a great perspective because we hear different points of view that we can compare and contrast to develop our own ways of thinking.”

According to EMDes Director Robert Saxon, the program is unique in providing advertising education because it allows working students to keep their jobs. And while most master’s programs admit students right out of undergrad, EMDes students must have at least four years’ experience working in the field. The EMDes program has also attracted marketing directors, creative writers, researchers, designers, and agency owners from across Canada and the United States and Lebanon because it fosters close working relationships among people in different disciplines. “This mirrors the trend in progressive agencies,” says Saxon. “The goal is to produce the next generation of industry leaders by bringing together top professionals to work in teams. Through cross-pollination, they become more multi-dimensional thinkers.”

Goodman agrees. “Working so closely with people from different disciplines generates a really rich dialogue. It’s thought-provoking and it forces you to think from a different point of view.”

Goodman, who holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Bishop’s University in Sherbrooke, Quebec, has worked for the last eight years as a group account director at Taxi, an advertising agency with an impressive client roster that includes Canadian Tire, Coca-Cola, Molson Canada, Telus and WestJet. As a team manager, Goodman develops communication strategies, generates creative briefs and determines general account strategy. He’d like to run his own agency one day, he says, and sees the EMDes program as an important step in achieving that goal.

The enthusiasm Goodman brings to his studies at OCAD, not to mention his already impressive professional profile, makes him a great role model for next generation of industry leaders. “This mirrors the diversity of what we are looking for in the next generation of industry leaders,” says Saxon. “It’s thought-provoking and it forces you to think from a different point of view.”

Goodman attributes his interest in advertising to his parents. “I remember as a kid watching my dad Contractor Babcock’s groundbreaking Perseverance, in which a bronze beaver sleeps deeply on a cushion silkscreened with an 18th-century map of Canadian fur-trade routes. Contrast this with alumna (’04) Anneke van Bommel’s Bear Bubble brooch, an intricate silver pin that juxtaposes a beaver motif with bear tracks to evoke animal identity. The brooch is among many pieces in the exhibition that demonstrate the way indigenous flora and fauna commemorate a sense of place, making ideal subject matter for souvenirs.

Nature is chic these days — or so claims a New York Times article that Gotlieb uses to show us that by no means has this is just “a Canadian thing.” “Our connection to the land and natural environment is increasing in popularity as issues of sustainability become widespread concerns, and artists and designers are no different. Gotlieb also shows us that the back-to-nature aesthetic is something that has emerged ‘partly as a reaction to cookie-cutter design and globalisation — industrial design is now seen as a symbol of creativity.’

The Canadian cabin style is a great example. From alumna (’03) Rob Southcott’s impossible-to-miss anti-hero chairs, pictured right (they were in the moose room), to alumna (’04) Tristan Zimmermann’s plasticidermy collection (no animals were killed for these trophies), the referencing of indigenous materials and imagery is fun — and funny. Of course it’s natural to wonder at the difference between a real spirit of nationalism and an identity of kitsch, but for the purposes of this exhibition it doesn’t matter.

Aimed animals, beavers, Canada geese, evergreen maple leaves, trilliums — how loaded are they with meaning.

Saxon says, “The goal is to produce the next generation of industry leaders by bringing together top professionals to work in teams. Through cross-pollination, they become more multi-dimensional thinkers.”

Michael Owen, Vice-President, Research & Graduate Studies, agrees. “Our graduate students will definitely be mentors for our undergraduate students. Overall, the quality of students is one of the most exciting aspects of launching our first three graduate programs.”

Owen is helping to develop what will amount to 10 graduate-degree programs by 2011, OCAD will launch at least two new programs in 2009, subject to approval by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies: a Master of Arts in Contemporary Art History and a Master of Design in Strategic Foresight.

BEAVER TALES: CANADIAN ART AND DESIGN

Antlered animals. Beavers. Canada geese. Evergreen maple leaves. Trilliums. Chosen for their ability to inspire and endure, these six examples of indigenous Canadian flora and fauna provided the organizing framework for the exhibition “Beaver Tales: Canadian Art and Design,” which ran until December 6, 2008, at the University of Toronto Art Centre. Guest co-curators Rachel Gotlieb and Martha Kalleher brought together more than a hundred objects for this unique multi-disciplinary showcase of the fine and decorative arts. Each emblem had a dedicated room: there was a moose room, a room for Canada geese, and so on — and in each case, visitors were made aware of how loaded with meaning these symbols are, how utterly Canadian.

Part of that is to do with the way these symbols have endured. There’s no question this was an archives-inspired exhibit. Kalleher’s expertise lies in 20th-century pieces, which require extensive archival research, while Gotlieb’s field has been Canadian design since 1940. “The works in this exhibition played a significant role in how the nation imagined itself so many years ago,” explains Kalleher. Ads Gotlieb, “It was extremely important that Martha [Kalleher] and I show emerging artists and designers with the established ones. We were able to illustrate the powerful influence of Canadian identity on artists and makers from the 19th century right through to the 21st century.”

Canadians of the late 19th century, the Canadians of Confederation, first looked for ways to define themselves (with one stab at definition being the creation of their own emblematic imagery inspired by indigenous flora and fauna). Then, in the early 20th century, they looked for ways to define their art. Nowhere is this effort more apparent than in the nationalist aesthetic established by the Group of Seven, represented in this exhibition by, among other members, former OCAD vice-principal Arthur Lismer. An oil sketch by Lismer, A September Gale, Georgian Bay (done for the famous painting of the same name), is quite possibly one of the Group’s most iconic images.

In her catalogue essay, Gotlieb also engages us in an examination of Canadian identity through nature, albeit a more playful one. She tells us that politics, commerce and culture were still the driving force behind the artistic expression of Canadian symbols in the latter half of the 20th century, as they had been since Confederation. But there is a difference, and that’s the distance between police and the effort to establish, culturally speaking, between ourselves and our colonial heritage.

“When we have chosen a national look, we will have found a national identity,” writes Ken Lefolli in his book The Canadian Look: A Century of Fashion, 1900–2000. “Flora and fauna, according to Gotlieb, still express that identity, even through the way we think about our flora and fauna has changed.”

Gotlieb uses as an example the beaver, which used to be admired for its ability to build dams. “As a reaction to cookie-cutter design and globalisation — industrial design is now seen as a symbol of creativity,”

Taylor’s story is a reminder that the back-to-nature aesthetic is something that has emerged “partly as a reaction to cookie-cutter design and globalization — industrial design is now seen as a symbol of creativity.”

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after graduating from OCAD in 2007. Dynes was hired to assist with the Bauhaus exhibition at the AGO. She saw this little school nestled behind the gallery and I wandered in.”

It’s clear in talking to Astman that she’s a great lover of the story. Much of her photographic work is presented progressively, in series, and much of it has a sense of narrative. Think of her enormously seductive Dancing with Che [2002], in which revolutionary icon Che Guevara becomes a sort of dance partner by virtue of being the decal image on the dancing artist’s T-shirt. Astman furthered this notion of storytelling in a recent work, adding to it the act of documenting, when three years of her own reading material became The Newspaper Series, which toured at Toronto’s Corkin Gallery in 2007. Astman is also known for her public art. “Some artists make a whole career out of public art, yet they keep doing the same thing over and over,” she says. “I teach. I earn a good living selling my art. Public art I do because I get to try something completely new.”

The Murano, a condominium development at Bay and Hayden streets in Toronto, is the site of her latest public project. Using new digital technology from DuPont, Astman discovered a means of embedding colour digital photographic imagery right into the glass of the development’s second- and third-storey windows, in effect “wrapping” an image all the way around the building. This project, scheduled to launch in early 2009, encompasses 217 windows in the block-long building. Astman also embarked recently on a curatorial project at the AGO. Together with Georgiana Uhlyarik (Assistant Curator, Canadian Art), she worked on one of the newly transformed gallery’s opening exhibitions. For this project, Astman was hired to select works from the ’60s and ’70s that supported her research — works that came from the AGO’s extensive collection.

Uhlyarik, who uses the words “compelling, thoughtful, intelligent and generous” to describe Astman, has this to say about the process: “Last spring, we invited a number of people associated with Coach House Books in the ’60s and ’70s to remember the era, and to consider the most important and influential event or activity or idea for them from that period. Barbara [Astman] put forth an incredibly thoughtful exhibit proposal. In it, she spoke of her desire to look at the influence of American expatriates who moved to Canada and stayed on to participate very actively in art, culture and society. She also expressed an interest in examining the roots of the emerging feminist practice — its effect on her own practice and that of her contemporaries.” The resulting section of the exhibition, Joyce Wieland and the Emergence of Feminist Practice, features Wieland along with Lisa Steele, Suzy Lake and Barbara Astman. It opened in mid-November 2008, coinciding with the reopening of the AGO.

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Barbara Astman is a professor in the Faculty of Art at OCAD and is represented by the Corkin Gallery in Toronto.

Dynes worked as an actor for 10 years before realizing that, hypothetically speaking, if she were to win the lottery she’d go straight to art school. On the heels of that epiphany she actually went to art school, to OCAD. Then she graduated and got a job working with actors.

On Astman’s recommendation, Dynes was hired to assist with the production of The Time Traveler’s Wife, the much-awarded film version of the beloved 2003 novel by Audrey Niffenegger. One of those iconic once-in-a-generation love stories, the plot centres on a man, afflicted with a genetic disorder that causes him to time-travel intermittently, and his artist wife, who makes paper sculptures and has to cope with her husband’s frequent absences and dangerous experiences. The movie, scheduled for release on Christmas Day 2008, stars Rachel McAdams (The Notebook) and Eric Bana (The Husk).

Commissioned for her paper-making skills, Dynes says she did “a bit of everything.” She’d be asked: “Can you coach the actress?” “Can you be on-set?” “What would we find in a printmaking/papermaking studio?” She even ended up making some art. Says Dynes, “At one point, they had me collage with tea bags and coffee filters. I was dyeing everything on a clothing rack in my apartment and they saw it and said, ‘We need that. We need that in the film.’”

Dynes found the work especially rewarding for the way it brought together two disciplines: visual art and acting. “I realized I knew right away what she needed,” says Dynes, referring to McAdams. She and McAdams actually spent one whole day learning printmaking/papermaking techniques at OCAD. On the morning of her “workshop,” the movie actress opted to cycle to 100 McCaul Street but forget her bike lock, and she and Dynes had to sneak her bike past security. Later, McAdams would ask that Dynes be on set for each and every scene involving art.

The collaborative nature of the work was appealing; it became part of a process of discovery for Dynes, another epiphany. “I realized that a part of me loves to be in the service of something,” she says. “I really enjoy being that support.” It’s a sensibility she’ll no doubt bring to her current work/study involving relics, a Japanese healing-touch technique that also had an influence on her as a student at OCAD. Interestingly, Dynes was a medal winner in her thesis year for a beautiful, ephemeral project that explored “the relationship between body and memory.” Not exactly time-travelling, but close.

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A Caledon Sketchbook

"That Phyllis Brett Young attended the Ontario College of Art (OCA) during the 1930s not only accounts for some details in descriptions of the city, but also provides clues about the artistic context in which readers might situate the novel’s heroine.”

— From the introduction to the 2008 edition of *Psyche*.

Rarley these days are reputations lost and found, particularly those of best-selling authors. Books go out of print, but there’s almost always something left behind. It’s the book-as-artifact argument and it doesn’t even begin to touch the great archival energy of today’s search engines.

So what happened to the work and reputation of OCA alumna Phyllis Brett Young (1914–1996)? Although the Canadian author published six books that made their way into numerous languages and editions in Canada, the United States and Europe, she defied our best attempts to remember her and to archive her tremendous contribution.

She was lost to us in so many ways. But now, she’s found — and what a discovery.

Once an international best-seller, Young’s The Torontonians was, along with Psyche, one of the writer’s two novels republished this year by McGill-Queen’s University Press. Writes Toronto Star reporter San Grewal of The Torontonians: “It’s difficult to decide what is more astonishing — the book’s utter disappearance, along with the author, from the library map, or its acute examination of subjects still central to the changes currently redefining Toronto some 50 years later.”

The novel was originally published to much acclaim in 1960, with Psyche released one year earlier — the same year that Hugh MacLennan’s The Watch That Ends the Night and Mordechai Richler’s The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz were published, authors with whom Young was once compared.

Editors Nathalie Cooke and Suzanne Morton are, respectively, Associate Dean of Arts and Professor of History at McGill University. It was Morton who came across The Torontonians through a friend who’d found it by chance in a used-books store in Nova Scotia. Morton immediately identified its cultural significance and would later write, in the revived book’s introduction, of the former “literary sensation” as a forerunner to J. K. Rowling for the way Young appealed to a popular audience by “pushing the boundaries of expectation.”

A Caledon Sketchbook (Porcupine’s Quill, 2008) provides an apt record of these musings, both in sketch and in caption, and will likely serve as a resource to students of art and nature in years to come. Writes Nevitt in the preface, “A field journal is the first repository for many of the creative ideas that are essential to the spirit of any completed work.”

His hope is that his own field journal will help slow people down, allowing them to “respond to the seasons and reflect on the landscape,” perhaps even participate in it by reading, sketching or writing about it. Says Nevitt: “Art is often about going to nature first. It isn’t until later that we start dealing with interpretation.”

The Torontonians has been adopted by reading lists in Canadian-history courses at Queen’s University and the University of New Brunswick and is now prescribed reading in a Canadian-fiction course at the University of Toronto. Roy Ward, College Sales Coordinator at McGill-Queen’s University Press, says that, academically speaking, this kind of academic traffic is both product and purveyor of the buzz that keeps a book alive.

Psyche, in this incarnation, is still too new for course lists. Although it doesn’t name Toronto explicitly, the personality of Orange Park (especially as a locus of creative activity) is hard to miss. Says Young’s daughter, Valerie Argue, who in this case is quick to refute the notion — or at least the impossibility — of autobiography. “There’s no question: Art is extremely important to the development of Psyche’s character.”

**ALUMNI NOTES**

**NEVITT HOPES SKETCHBOOK WILL INSPIRE**

“A Caledon Sketchbook insists that drawing has little to do with style and aesthetics. Drawing is, in its essence, a means to the end of understanding aesthetics. Drawing has little to do with style and reputation.”

— Tom Smart, Executive Director & CEO, McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

**McGILL-QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY PRESS REVIVES WORK OF ICONIC ’60s AUTHOR**

That Phyllis Brett Young attended OCAD between 1965 and 2002 — drawing and foundation studies at Nevitt — who taught anatomy, life sketching or writing about it. Says Smart, “Art is often about going to nature first. It isn’t until later that we start dealing with interpretation.”

In the very early stage of his career, Richard B. Nevitt (’62) was, as he puts it, “taken to the vaults and put in closest proximity to the many wonders of the landscape of the Caledon Hills north of Toronto.”

The location of the launch is significant for other reasons. It’s where Nevitt — who taught anatomy, life drawing and foundation studies at OCAD between 1965 and 2002 — still teaches and lives. “For the past 30 years, I’ve recorded...my feelings and thoughts as they relate to the landscape of the Caledon Hills.”

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**Footnotes**

1. “There’s no question: Art is extremely important to the development of Psyche’s character.”

2. “Art is often about going to nature first. It isn’t until later that we start dealing with interpretation.”

**Order**

The artist’s visual eye must be trained to marshal chaos into a plausible design, and for many (myself included) the artist’s visual eye must be trained to marshal chaos into a plausible design, and for many (myself included) the artist’s visual eye must be trained to marshal chaos into a plausible design, and for many (myself included)
“Surprise and delight — that’s what we’re aiming for. It’s at the core of everything we do.”

Susan L. K. Gorbet is describing the essence of Gorbet Design Inc., the Toronto-based company she co-founded with Matt Gorbet in 2001. The Gorbets are one of those couples with so much collective talent that it’s awe-inspiring. Not only are they both instructors in the Faculty of Design at OCAD, they also teach intensive courses as part of the TELUS Interactive Art and Entertainment Program at the Canadian Film Centre’s Media Lab. And they run a successful design company.

From obelisks that glow to aluminum shafts pulsating with light, together Susan and Matt Gorbet make visually dynamic interactive sculptures. Their creative process bridges the fields of art and design; they use design methodology to create sculptural work that’s known for its clean lines and organic forms. In conversation they move between the two fields, referring to themselves as artists on the one hand, designers on the other. Neither planned to be an artist. Susan began her career studying computer science and psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. From the outset, her focus was on the relationship between people and design. With her finger on the pulse of media innovations in the early days of 3-D design for the Web and interactive television, she moved to Silicon Valley to work as a computer programmer and interaction designer. Notes Susan, “I’ve always worked in areas that are inventing the rules rather than applying them.”

Meanwhile, Matt’s interest since the beginning of his career has been in combining art and technology. “When I came out of high school, there wasn’t a place to combine those interests,” he says, “so I decided to apply to four different art schools and to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), rolling the dice to see what would happen.”

As luck, or fate, would have it, Matt was accepted at MIT, and he went on to do his master’s at the university’s Media Lab, where he researched human/computer interaction. Upon graduation, he worked at PARC (Palo Alto Research Center) with a highly creative team. The couple first met in San Francisco in 1995, when they were working on a project at Silicon Graphics, Inc. Two years later, they ran into each other at a conference in Atlanta and started dating.

Both highly creative, Matt and Susan thrive on their work and their relationship to such a degree that they have seamlessly combined their personal and professional partnerships. They also tend to finish each other’s sentences. “We found we were always talking about the projects we were working on...” says Susan, to which Matt adds... “so we decided that in order to spend more time together, we wanted to work together.”

In 2001, the couple moved from San Francisco to Toronto and started Gorbet Design. Because they see design as a conversation with the viewer, the Gorbets create each piece with multiple layers. As viewers discover a sculpture, they respond to the immediate visual impact. Then they enjoy the delight of coming across something unexpected, followed by the discovery that they can interact with it. “We don’t have a visual aesthetic that’s our calling card,” Matt says. Susan continues, “Instead, our aesthetic is about interaction.”

Together, they see people as both their audience and their medium. That’s where Susan’s psychology degree comes into play. “As an artist, you’re relying on people to act in a certain way,” she explains. “Much like oil painters need to understand the properties of oil paint, interactive designers need to understand the properties of their medium, which is people.”

People are central to Threshold Memory and Heartbeat, which were designed for Toronto’s Drake Hotel and launched at its official opening on Valentine’s Day in 2004. Threshold Memory, which consists of eight vertically stacked neon numbers, keeps a running count of people moving between the lobby and lounge. Every time someone passes, a sensor registers the person’s presence and the number increases by one. At the current rate, the counting will continue for 300 years. As of October 21, 2008, the total registered was 1,665,088. Heartbeat, a series of six custom ambient soundsanorers installed in the walls and ceilings, measures the sound levels in different areas of the hotel. The gauges displaying these sound levels are located in the geographic centre of the Drake. People can watch the needle of the gauge that reads You Are Here move as it registers their sonic presence.

Another piece that invites viewer interaction is the 20-foot-high obelisk at the Royal Ontario Museum. It was designed for the reopening of the ROM in 2008, as a means of recognizing donors to the Renaissance ROM campaign, which saw the addition of the Daniel Libeskind-designed Michael Lee-Chin Crystal. Donors’ names are permanently engraved into the obelisk, which is made from Corian, a reconstituted stone that’s also translucent. Touching a name illuminates it, with the light coming from inside the stone, and as your hand moves over the obelisk, it creates a path of light.

“The obelisk acts as a bridge between the old building and the new, a bridge between the past and the present, which influenced the form and the materials we chose,” explains Matt. The classic obelisk form, the materials and the names carved in stone speak to the old building. The contemporary lines, smooth surfaces, as well as the angle at the top of the stone, all echo the angles and lines of the new building. So does its placement: at the building’s architectural border between old and new.

Solar Collector, which launched on the 2008 summer solstice, also bridges two environments: the industrial area where it’s located and the natural world. Designed with Rob Gorbet, Matt’s brother, for the Waterloo Regional Operations Centre in Cambridge, Ontario, the piece consists of 12 large-scale aluminum shafts fitted with solar panels. The shafts visually represent the movement of the sun through the sky, with the tallest shaft perpendicular to the sun at winter solstice and the flattest shaft perpendicular to the sun at summer solstice.

The idea is that people can interact with the natural world via the Internet by going online to set the speed and direction of light patterns in the panels. A custom electronic “brain” located in each shaft is responsible for the timing of an individual lamp, with the lamp’s schedule dependent on a database of patterns created on the actual site. (To view the patterns in real time, log onto www.solarcollector.ca.)

For more information on Gorbet Design, visit www.gorbetdesign.ca.

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Laureen McLennan is a Maritime-born writer and academic. Her work has been published in The Antigonish Review, Broken Pencil, Fluildust, Tattle Tale and Third Floor Lounge: An Anthology from the Bar build Centre for the Arts Writing Studio, 2004.
Own an Orangina Original

Congratulations to Erica Chia, winner of this year’s Orangina Originals at OCAD student competition. Thanks to her lively work entitled Orange Meets Gina, Chia has earned a $15,000 educational award and becomes Canada’s first-ever Orangina artist.

Be one of the select few to own a signed, limited edition print of Orange Meets Gina, on sale for $75 at www.ocad.com/whodunit beginning December 5, 2008. All proceeds benefit the OCAD foundation.