



Rebecca Belmore  
*White Thread*, 2003  
ink jet print  
160 x 127 cm  
(Pari Nadimi Gallery)

Galeria Moro from Venezuela also harboured a jewel in its small booth, a series of portraits by Adonay Duque. Strikingly expressive, painted in rich reds and ochres, with an unusual sensitivity, these faces spoke of a distant culture, and a pathos that can only be found in a Latin soul. Positioned at the entrance to Argentina's Gradiya Galeria de Arte, tall monolithic columns made of rose Portuguese marble by Pablo Atchugarry showed a different side of contemporary Latin art. Smooth, abstract, tactile they shot upward, glistening in the spotlight like alien sentinels. Argentina was also represented by Alejandro Boim's portraits of loners and clowns at Galerie Orange.

Almost lost in all this kaleidoscopic diversity were the magnificent works of Canada's northern people represented by Fehely Fine Arts and featuring the talent of such great carvers as Piseolak Ashoona, Kenojuk Ashevak and Toonoo Sharky. These are artists of the highest calibre. On display were complex transformation masks carved with breathtaking precision and a spatial imagination found in no other modern sculpture, and mythical figures in abstracted forms. They seemed entirely apart from the rest of the colourful display, speaking in their own unique visual vocabulary, softly yet distinctly. Their quiet elegance offered a nice closure to the fair. A la prochaine!

Dorota Kozinska

## ED ZELENAK

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Ed Zelenak presented three of his latest sculptures and the *Divining Rods* series of wall pieces at Christopher Cutts gallery in Toronto. Sited in the centre of the gallery space, *Channel Pass* comprises four and a half tons of steel brick, shaped into two curving walls. The basic ogival, essentially feminine shape of these two curving walls is offset by the weighty, stolid nature and outward appearance of the steel they are made of. Indeed these "walls" have a defensive or protective quality while the opening in the centre of the piece is smooth, light sensitive. This inner basin catches and bounces light off its interior walls. The directional nature of the two pointed ends of the sculpture, its placement within a white cube gallery space, recalls the early days of minimalism, and Brian O'Doherty's essay *Inside the White Cube*, originally published in *Artforum* that defined the minimalist moment.

*Channel Pass* is one of Zelenak's larger "ground bound" 9000 pound stationary sculptures. It could be a boat or vehicle embarked on a journey, but its interior form and mass make it more intuitive, a metaphor for an inner journey as the titling of all the works in the show do. As with many of Zelenak's works, sculptures can be markers that visually direct or define our sense of space making them a classic and physical kind of sculpture. I say classical because in a screen bred world of DVD, internet and video, the 3-dimensional is less current in arts dialogues in mainstream museology than the fleeting ephemeral electronic or digital image.

Zelenak's *Still Life With Divining Rod* is a 2 1/2 ton square sculpture, literally a table with a concave bowl in its centre. The monochrome nature of the steel table, with a



*Channel Pass*, Steel, 2003

branch/twig shape that both obstructs and protects the bowl space inside suggests a search, perhaps the artist's, to find a meaning. The source — water — and the meaning — are quite literal, and direct us towards the natural and physical, not the temporal world. The bowl could be a metaphor, or the actual container that gives and sustains life. There is a tension in Zelenak's sculptures between an austere mass-volume minimalist emphasis on scaling down, reducing elements, and a more intuitive, feminine sense that unseen forces guide us in maintaining a balance in life. The divining rod is a device that directs one towards an invisible source, is an unusual and potent one. Other forms reference the container or vessel, an archaic emblem that carries water or reserve material.

The 16 small wall mounted plywood pieces have poured tin sections. The tin filled areas, like the "inner bowls" in the larger works, are areas of containment, that compliment stylized and simplified landscapes. Child-like, these wall placed landscapes are metaphors for a natural world, inscribed on gallery walls. The panels rephrase the temporal and spatial preoccupations dealt with in a more abstract manner in the "ground bound" sculptures *Table* and *Channel Pass*. The wall pieces with their hieratic and symbolic markers cut from tin, its painted clouds, its land and sky equations, is entirely intentional. The fact they are arranged in a sequence and play off the weighty steel sculptures animates, builds a sense of variation on the show's theme. This work has to do with life, and the vessel or bowl shapes we see, are symbols for a sense of direction, like markers but on a grand scale in the case of *Channel Pass*. This "vehicle" should move on water, and it directs us outside the parameters of this gallery space. This redirection towards an inner self, or universal dimensionality, is like the inner vision presented in *Still Life With Divining Rod*. Nature plays a seminal role, and the journey is a metaphor for our life journey. It is an uneasy equation, never resolved, only intimated and intuited. As this show evidences, Ed Zelenak continues to evolve with an accute sense of sculpture's physical and tactile essences.

John K. Grande

## WOMAN AS GODDESS: ROBERT MARKLE & JOYCE WIELAND

Nov. 29, 2003 - Feb. 29, 2004  
Art Gallery of Ontario  
317 Dundas St. W  
Website: [www.ago.net](http://www.ago.net)



Joyce Wieland (1930-1998)  
*Artist on Fire*, 1983  
Oil on canvas  
107.2 x 130.0 cm  
Collection of the Robert McLaughlin  
Gallery, Oshawa, purchase, 1984  
© 2003 National Gallery of Canada,  
Gift of the Estate of Joyce Wieland

In those protean days of feminist liberation — the 1960s — guys could be macho and chicks could be sensual. Two Ontario artists one male and one female were part of that process. Curator Anna Hudson had the ability to recognize that these two very different artists "were not opposites." and that each contributed to "an interesting kind of chemistry."

Robert Markle figured as the ultimate life painter, capturing Yonge St. strippers, combining neon and acrylic on wood, , working with charcoal, tempera and inks on large scale paper capturing the sexy side of life. Joyce Wieland was already renowned for her nationalist Canadian stance on art (as the stuffed beaver from her personal collection or the famed *Reason over Passion* quilt in the National Gallery of Canada collection testify). In the days before Nancy Friday and Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*, Joyce Wieland was already integrating traditional female arts — like stitching, quilting — into contemporary art discourse. While books like *Our Bodies, Our Selves* marked a movement towards women reclaiming their own bodies, Wieland, as a woman of her time, wove an admirable narrative on male stereotypes of women in Art History. Her paintings like *Untitled (murderous angel)* (1981-1984), more abstract *Redgasm* (1960), *Artist On Fire* (1983) or hilarious *Untitled*