

Proposals from Halifax:

an Exhibition of

Selected Typescripts,

National Gallery of Canada

Flyers, Posters,

Catalogues, Books,

Mailers, and Postcards

Library and Archives

of a Conceptual Nature

Produced from 1969 to

1999 by Affiliates of the

6 September - 29 December 2000

Nova Scotia College of

Art and Design (NSCAD)

Books, flyers, and mailers served among the conceptualist's documentary devices. Ephemeral and egalitarian in character, they were a deliberate attempt to decentralize the production and reception of art as well as to destabilize the myth of authority in the art world. Documentary material was produced in large runs using commercial printing methods. Books were often simply typed and either photocopied or printed offset, then folded and stapled. Photographs were usually black and white, of "snapshot" quality, and were reproduced with minimal or no caption text. The contents typically consisted of straight recordings of an event or a listing of information [3, 7, 29]. In spite of the conceptual artist's ideal of circumventing the world of collectors, such documentation has come to be the sole record of the artist's actions or ideas, and is now valued, exhibited, and sold to avid collectors. The end product was primarily a record of the concept.

The College invited visiting artists and gave them the opportunity to document and disseminate their work. In some cases, these artists engaged students as assistants in their projects. In David Askevold's Projects Class artists were asked to submit a project for his students to complete [4]. NSCAD founded a press to publish artists' writings and books [23, 28]. The Library was naturally supportive of information exchange among conceptual artists and came to see itself as an extension of the studio [12, 22] and even as a venue for exhibitions [41]. The school's Anna Leonowens Gallery created its Mezzanine Gallery as a space in which to "move ideas about and exchange information." The Gallery's mailing list was used to distribute mailers, artists' books, and photographs [15, 20]. Kennedy saw the remoteness of Halifax not as a liability but as an opportunity to publicize the activities of the school. Largely through the dissemination of its documents, NSCAD established an international reputation in a matter of a few years as one of the most forward-thinking art schools in North America.

As more NSCAD graduates chose to remain in Halifax and make it their home, their presence began to influence the city's artist-run centres. Marina Stewart, the director of Eye Level Gallery from 1977 to 1981, was a strong and unwavering believer in using the Gallery's mailing list to make art activities in Halifax known to the North American art community. She encouraged artists and provided them with the opportunity to design their own flyers, invitations, and exhibition pamphlets in conjunction with their exhibitions at Eye Level [19, 27]. Much of this material, ephemeral in nature, is now considered to be art in its own right.

The 1980s and '90s saw the rise of a politically oriented art that used gender, sexuality, and race to question traditional modes of representation [33–36, 39, 42]. Second-generation conceptual artists differed from their predecessors. Going beyond the self-referential tendency in the art of the preceding generation, their critique now encompassed a broader constituency. However, both generations share a common legacy of focusing on ideas, privileging experience, and interrogating the political and social contexts in which an art work is conceived.

Checklist

The materials in this exhibition are drawn from the Library and from the Art Metropole Collection, gift of Jay Smith, Toronto, 1999.

1. Gerald Ferguson. *Provincial Illustration, Nova Scotia, 1970*. Dalhousie Art Gallery, 1970.
2. James Lee Byars / Rex Lau / *Events Week at the Anna Leonowens Gallery / 1–3 April 1969*.
3. Richards Jarden. *Traffic Jam*. 1970.
4. Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. *Projects Class, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Fall 1969*.
5. Lucy Lippard. "Toward a Dematerialized or Non Object Art." Typescript of a presentation given at NSCAD, 29 November 1969.
6. Richards Jarden. *Active and Passive States*. 1970.
7. Ian Murray. *Twenty Waves in a Row*. Straw Books, 1971.
8. Lawrence Weiner. *Flowed*. Lithography Workshop, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, [1971].
9. *Art & Project / Bulletins 1–65 / February 19–March 5, 1973 / Nova Scotia College of Art and Design*.
10. Gerald Ferguson. *The Standard Corpus of Present Day English Language Usage Arranged by Word Length and Alphabetized Within Word Length*. Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1970.
11. John Baldessari / *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art / April 1–10, 1971 / Nova Scotia College of Art and Design*.
12. Eleanor Antin / *Library Science / Nova Scotia College of Art and Design / February 1–9, 1972*.
13. Robin Peck / *Recent Sculpture / July 10–17, 1972 / Nova Scotia College of Art and Design*.
14. Dede Bazyk, Laurel Beckman, Ricki Blau . . . / *Videoworks from the California Institute of the Arts / January 8 & 9, 1972 / Nova Scotia College of Art and Design*.
15. Timothy Zuck / *Mezzanine Gallery / February 13–21, [1971]*.
16. David Sewell / *Untitled Performance / NSCAD / Halifax / August 16, 1971 / 3:00–3:15 P.M.*
17. Douglas Huebler / *November 21–December 5, 1973 / Anna Leonowens Gallery*.
18. Doug Waterman / *July 22–26, 1974 / Anna Leonowens Gallery*.
19. Michael Fernandes. [*Shoe Book*]. Eye Level Gallery, 1979.
20. Art & Language [group]. *Blurting in A&L: an index of blurts and their concatenation (the Handbook) constitutes a problematic; that is, you can't (at least not without deliberation) ignore possible pathways without losing embeddedness (idiolects); deliberation (here, the issue of going-on becomes a self-conscious construction for the reader) admits a broader reflection of a context of our/your/other activities: namely, the structure of our/your language/culture and (the prospect of) revisability of our/your language/culture*. The Mezzanine, Nova Scotia College of Art, and Art & Language Press, New York, 1973.
21. Karl Beveridge / *Window Installation / Black Paint on Glass (Interior-Exterior) / Each Window 85' x 79' / January 20–February 28, 1975 / Anna Leonowens Gallery*.
22. Garry Neill Kennedy. *Dedications*. 2nd ed. Lithography Workshop, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1973.
23. Michael Snow. *Cover to Cover*. Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and New York University Press, 1975.
24. Barbara England. *My Art Belongs to Daddy*. 1976.

25. Barbara England. *Original Sin*. 1976.
26. Garry Neill Kennedy. *Revealing Locating*. Eye Level Gallery, 1979.
27. Krzysztof Wodiczko. *Projection*. Eye Level Gallery, 1979.
28. Gerhard Richter. *128 Details From a Picture (Halifax 1978)*. The Nova Scotia Pamphlets, no. 2. Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1980.
29. Brad Brace. ISBN 0-9690745-0-6. 1981.
30. John Murchie. *Opening. Open. Closed*. Eye Level Gallery, 1980.
31. Gerald Ferguson. *Paintings / Over the years the copper on the exterior of Halifax City Hall has oxidized to a bright green. The wood trim is now painted in a colour that matches the oxidized copper*. Eye Level Gallery, 1980.
32. Madelaine Palko. *The Untold Story*. 1980.
33. Vera Lemecha. *They Just Think That*. 1982.
34. Michael Fernandes / *Recent Mistakes / Eye Level Gallery / March 6–24, [1984]*.
35. Bruce Barber / *Vital Speeches / Eye Level Gallery / February 9–27, 1982*.
36. Alan Harris. *Never Before, So Much for So Few*. 1981.
37. *The Lawrence Weiner Poster Archive of the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design, 1965–1983 / Anna Leonowens Gallery / November 30–December 10, 1983*.
38. Micah Lexier / *"Mr. Caldwell" / November 30 to December 17, 1988 / Eye Level Gallery*.
39. Micah Lexier / *"Two Together" / December 3 to 21, 1985 / Eye Level Gallery*.
40. Lawrence Weiner. *Posters / November 1965–April 1986*. Nova Scotia Series, vol. 17. Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design and Art Metropole, Toronto, 1986.
41. Cliff Eyland / *Retouched Reproductions / Anna Leonowens Gallery / May 20–May 24, 1997*.
42. Garry Neill Kennedy. *An American History Painting / the Complete List of Pittsburgh Paints Historic Color Series*. [1988].
43. Joe McKay. *One Week in October*. 1992.
44. Garry Neill Kennedy at OO / *Installation Drawings by Angela Boyer, Rosemary Johnson, Sonia Bridge . . . February 7–19, 1994*.
45. Stephen Clayton Ellwood. *Summer Program (1996) / The Nova Scotia College of Art & Design / Fine Art / Art History / Design / Craft*. 1996.
46. Stephen Clayton Ellwood. *An example (No. 1) of the minimal effort it takes to author a work or creation of a fictional narrative of a strangers [sic] life by recontextualizing unedited information acquired (without looking for it) as a gift, found by Antonia B. Lolordo then grouped with other things found in the basement of her apartment; a house located at 2685 Fuller Terrace in Halifax, Nova Scotia; then given to Stephen Ellwood on his 22nd Birthday, on October 23, 1995*.
47. Stephen Clayton Ellwood. *Untitled [Dogs]*. 1995.
48. Gwendolyn Winchester / *\ 'sän - 'frwä \ n [F sang-froid lit. cold blood] / self-possession or an imperturbable state esp. under strain / Anna Leonowens Gallery, 01.06.98–01.10.98*.
49. Alex Morrison. *Every House I've Ever Lived in Drawn from Memory*. 1998.
50. Alex Morrison. *Sparagmos*. 1998.
51. Gerald Ferguson. *1,000,000 Grapes*. Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, 1998.

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After Garry Neill Kennedy's appointment in 1967 as president of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), the school quickly changed its approach to art production. Kennedy used the current international movement of conceptual art to guide his vision in transforming the College. To conceptual artists the idea for a work of art was more important than the making of the object. Apart from the new faculty Kennedy hired – mostly young Americans associated with conceptual art – there was also a steady influx of visiting conceptual and performance artists, mainly from New York. The art critic and activist Lucy Lippard, in her 1969 lecture to students at NSCAD, spoke of liberating the idea and of decentralizing and "dispersing information about art and information that is art" [5]. She favoured an art of action and of idea [16, 18]. The media of language, actions, situations, and behaviour freed the work of art from being physically bound to one place.

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