

also about how hard we women work at keeping ourselves down. At one point in the installation she says, "The struggle is to hold myself submissive to a process of diminishment. The other day I caught my mirror image in a casual side glance and say to my surprise a person older than I feel." Since the older a woman gets the less valuable she is supposed to be, the implication is that in order to cope with the dissonance between subjective feelings and objective appearances, a woman must learn to suppress her own natural *joie de vivre*.

The way in which Donna Bothen's *Delta of Venus Underwear Quilt* was made turned out to be as important as the final product. It was a re-enactment of the old time quilting bees with a modern, sometimes erotic, twist. It also demonstrated the way in which, through the sharing of hard work and high laughter, women's culture has traditionally been transmitted and women's solidarity reinforced. These days, with women often isolated in the suburban nuclear family, much of this has been lost. At any of three separate times women were asked to take their underwear to Gallery 940 and help sew it onto a large triangular piece of cloth. They were also invited to make statements about their particular item. Since underwear is so personal, many of the statements were quite touching. One woman donated a black G-string which had once belonged to a friend who "owned a lot of G-strings and came to a tragic end." Another woman, inspired by an old pair of under-pants decorated with ladybugs, rewrote an old nursery rhyme. In the traditional version, the ladybug- and the hundreds of thousands of little girls who over time have recited it- is warned to stay at home lest something tragic occur. In the updated version, the ladybug and all little girls who might hear it, are encouraged to be bold and adventurous:

Ladybug, Ladybug  
Fly through the night  
Your house is secure  
And your kids are all right

Spread your wings  
And sparkle with delight  
Ladybug, Ladybug  
Exult in your flight

For the past few month Shona Rossel has been traveling across Canada filming and photographing women  
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that this made her sound silly and pretentious, she nevertheless leaves us with the impression that what makes her uncomfortable about the term is the recognized "maleness" of the label "artist." She bemoans her fate- she has been hanging around with "male artists and their girlfriends" for too long. She likes the girlfriends best- even though she knows she's not supposed to. Philosophically, she goes on to ponder the stupidity of falling for the quasi-feminist pick-up lines favoured by male artists. It would merely spoil her one-liners and their deadpan, Atwood-like delivery to repeat them here. Suffice to say that a good time was had by all- except for the few male artists who may have come for new material.

Finally there were three super-8 films by Midi Onodera: *Ville- Quelle Ville*, *The Dead Zone* and *Made in Japan*. Superb poetry-in-motion, the first was by far the most effective, although *The Dead Zone* would have rivalled *Ville- Quelle Ville*, I suspect, had the room been dark enough to catch the subtle, Rimmer-like changes in light which mirrored the lyricism of the words. They were films about the alienation of the city, the elements of pop culture that alienate us all, and by extension, the feeling of being a stranger amongst strangers, in your own city. Onodera puts together words and images in combinations that challenge us, as women, to rethink our feelings of belonging in a world that was not built with us in mind. Her voyage is strictly personal- growing up in Chinatown, lusting after a trip to Japan, settling for the images of Japan given to us by television, music, and other people's stories. It is a document of awakening, of noticing her city, stealing images to force upon our notice so that we, too, can understand her challenge. Onodera never generalizes but succeeds, as few do, in speaking to someone deep inside each of us. Surely this is what women's art, and breaking the silence, is all about.

I can only regret that Phyllis Waugh's video *Escape* was shown at the Six Days of Resistance and not saved for the Fem Fest evening. It is one of the most successful and original dream pieces I have ever seen, in a medium which is well-suited to working through the chaotic half-truths of dream images. Using diary format, Waugh links childhood expectations, marriage, and eventual freedom by using the bride in the beautiful white dress, which turns out to be so confining for the main character that she is obliged to chop her way out of its diaphanous folds. An exceptional work, it should have taken its place beside the rest in this evening of fun-filled challenge to the patriarchy. •

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