

# FOLIO

## Mendel Art Gallery

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**FLATLANDERS:**  
SASKATCHEWAN ARTISTS ON THE HORIZON

**ANNIE  
POOTOOGOOK**



# Fall Exhibitions

## FLATLANDERS ARTIST SALON

On Saturday, September 27 at 2pm, join the artists for conversation around themes in the exhibition. Refreshments will be served. More details to be announced. Visit [www.mendel.ca](http://www.mendel.ca) for more information.

## FLATLANDERS: SASKATCHEWAN ARTISTS ON THE HORIZON

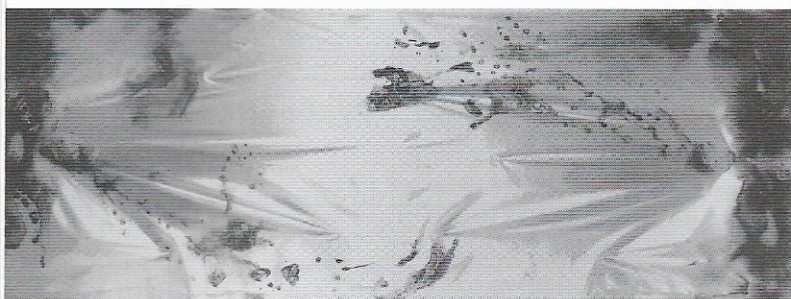
SEPTEMBER 19, 2008–JANUARY 4, 2009

Opening Reception: Friday, September 26 at 8pm

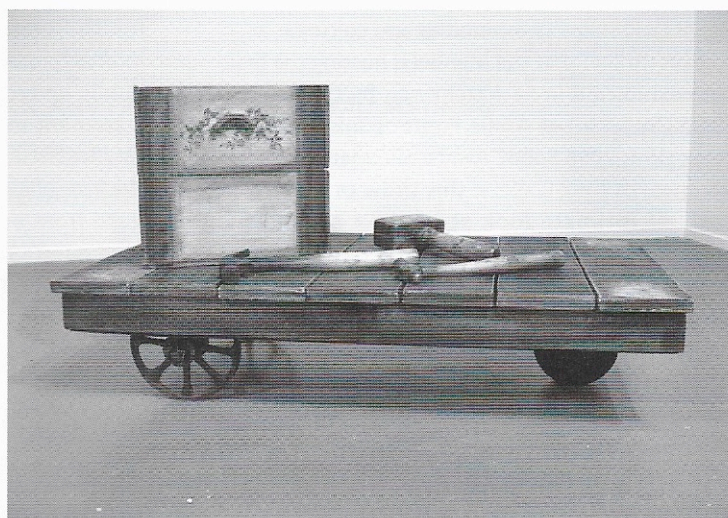
Artist Salon: Saturday, September 27 at 2pm

*Flatlanders* is an exciting survey of some of the stunning and provocative contemporary art produced by emerging Saskatchewan artists in the last few years. The title indicates a recurring theme in the work of prairie artists: that of the vast space that literally surrounds us. The representation of space and the light that delineates it, embodied in the traditions of scenic landscape painting and subliminally in abstraction, is often considered to be the dominant subject of the art

In many ways, the artists in *Flatlanders* draw upon recognized prairie traditions while moving beyond them. Both **Marc Courtemanche** and **Clint Neufeld** take cues from “regional pop,” merging the funk tradition in Saskatchewan of Joe Fafard and Victor Cicansky with NSCAD conceptualism to make ceramic “artefacts” rooted in the *mise-en-scène* of an imaginary workshop. Courtemanche’s *trompe l’oeil* hammers and sawhorses and Neufeld’s cast flathead engines and



(above) Jacob Semko.  
(right) Marc Courtemanche.  
Images courtesy of the artists.



of the Canadian west. However, space can also be regarded metaphorically as that which is limitless or that which imposes limits, so the conceptual and curatorial parameters of the exhibition consider not only our relationship to physical place, but also to the social spaces of memory, anxiety, history, spirituality, technology, ecology, and identity.

The works of 18 emerging artists are spotlighted in *Flatlanders*. For the purposes of this exhibition, we have defined “emerging” as artists with two to ten years of professional experience. Together, the works utilize a wide array of media and forms, including ceramics, video, printmaking, photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, and installation. While reflecting the concerns of prairie artists with space, light, and memory, all of the artists in this exhibition can be seen to be influenced by larger global issues of economy, technology, and art making. No longer isolated or in search of a way to identify themselves with the concept of a “center,” these artists can be seen as moving between concepts of a fixed place and identity to consider a global situation that is fluid and permeable.

grader blades recreate mythic workshops rooted in the working and rural life of this province.

The ambitious waterless lithography of **Jacob Semko** quotes from a tradition of Alberta printmaking and abstract art, while adding a contemporary, biographical twist to a Modernist background. **Joi Arcand**’s art emerges from the legacy in Saskatoon of photography and performance, with her large-scale conceptual photographs based on her family farm, that explore the construction of identity and memory.

The expressive, dreamlike landscape paintings of **Nancy Lowry** recall the legendary history of Emma Lake, while moving towards a more expressive individualism, while the impressionistic, super-flat abstractions of **Kiyoko Kato** speak both to the history of Modernism in Saskatchewan as well as to concepts such as mapmaking and the province’s signature image as an endless field.

Flatlanders is sponsored by  
AREVA Resources Canada Inc.



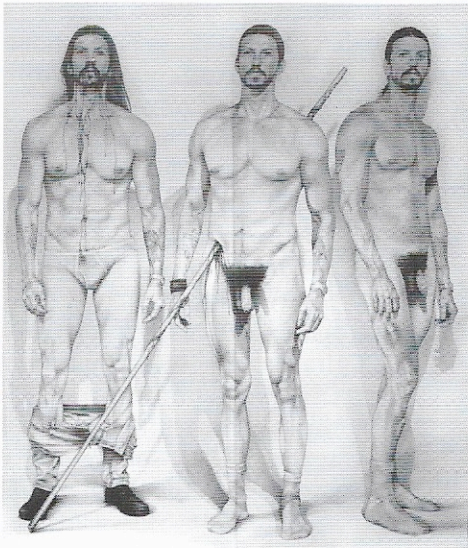
Mendel exhibitions are supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, and the Museums Assistance Program, Department of Canadian Heritage.



# Fall Exhibitions

**Yuka Yamaguchi**, who makes sweetly disturbing, fantastical drawings, and **Amalie Atkins**, a whimsical, poetic filmmaker, share an aesthetic with Pop Surrealism and with a Mod Gothic sensibility that came to prominence earlier this decade in Winnipeg in the work of noteworthy artists such as Marcel Dzama, the Royal Art Lodge, Shary Boyle, and Daniel Barrow.

A dedication to materials and interest in the various ways that humans and cultures “construct” nature can be seen in the collaborative sculptures of **Sean Whalley** and the late **John Henry Fine Day**, which incorporate wood, rawhide, and leather. A similar fascination can be seen in the “reconstituted” natural forms, such as branches, seeds, pods, and small animals of sculptor and animator **Stacia Verigin**. **Seema Goel**, likewise, explores the boundaries between natural and “man-made,” leisure and labour,



domestic and wild, in playful, interactive installations and sculptures.

**Michelle Lavallee** explores the social space of Canadian history and representations of colonialism in the West in her thoughtful mixed media installation where neutral objects like books and blankets take on a more charged significance. Poet and filmmaker **Gabriel Yahyahkeekoot** speaks to the anger, frustration, and hopelessness of many young Aboriginal men, as well as to the search for spiritual guidance and strength, in his compelling and surreal film, *Mayasitiw*. The historical construction of gender identity from the time of the Renaissance to today preoccupies **Zachari Logan**, whose finely rendered self-portraits speak of both erotic beauty and to a history of violence in art based on the work of Baroque master Caravaggio.

Several of the artists in *Flatlanders* directly challenge the future of ideas and events in our province and

nation, including **Wally Dion**, whose shields and helmets constructed of motherboards confront the political and social identities of Aboriginal communities. **Chris Gardiner's** apparently minimalist “painting/objects” evoke an occult theory and implied alchemy; magic talismans that are intended to heal and protect communities and individuals from real-world troubles and strife. **Lee Henderson** explores a mutable world of technology and Buddhism where problematic and shifting values of the East and the capitalist West can be seen to merge in way that is both serene and somehow menacing.

*Flatlanders* is both a celebration of art in our province today, and a glimpse into our future. “Never



look down to test the ground before taking your next step,” said the Swedish writer and diplomat Dag Hammarsköld, “Only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find the right road.”

*Flatlanders* is curated by Jen Budney, Associate Curator and Dan Ring, Acting Head Curator. The exhibition is generously sponsored by AREVA Resources Canada Inc. A full colour catalogue featuring essays by the curators and images of the works in the exhibition will be released in the fall of 2008.

(left) Zachari Logan.  
(above) Lee Henderson.  
Images courtesy of the artists.