

**ALLAN**

Né à Charlottetown, Île du Prince-Édouard, en 1944, Allan Harding Mackay demeure et travaille présentement à Toronto. Il est aussi organisateur-conservateur de plusieurs expositions dans des galeries publiques et des musées à travers le Canada. Il participe à plusieurs expositions de groupe en Europe et au Canada.

Expositions solo:

1982

Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, Alberta; livres d'artiste et enregistrements sonores.

1984

Galerie Engelhaus, Langnau, Suisse, oeuvres sur papier; Galerie Kreutz, Nidau, Suisse.

1985

«Mountain my eyes, and other densities», installation, Mercer Union, Toronto.

«Beispiel / Example», installation, Eye Level Gallery, Halifax.

1986

«Variations on Holders», Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff, Alberta;

«Five families», Confederation Centre of Arts, Charlottetown, Île du Prince-Édouard;

«Variations on Holders», University of British Columbia Art Gallery, Vancouver.

1986-1987

Grünwald Gallery, Toronto.

Oeuvre exposée:

«Betwixt & between the dream of the sleeping giantness», 1986

triptyque/huile et pastel sur papier

a) 150 × 135 cm

b) 150 × 409 cm

c) 150 × 135 cm



# SCRIPTA MANENT

## INTRODUCTION

*To René, To whom I owe my self-portraits  
and especially their authenticity. My and  
our teacher, lover of art, whose devotion  
and sincerity touched me deeply.  
Verba volant, scripta manent.*

Who has not heard, at one time or another in his life, these words of wisdom? Who has not listened to the voice of prudence stating that the spoken word is fleeting whereas the written word endures?

The exhibition mounted under the theme *Scripta manent* invites the spectator to observe the viewpoints of twenty-four Canadian and one Chinese artists. It proposes an unusual approach, somewhat like a crossword puzzle, which combines writing and visual expression. It deals with a current theme, since words and images are omnipresent and inescapable: advertising posters, newspapers, street names, business advertisements - indeed everything in our daily lives - confirms the inseparable relationship between words and images.

Written or spoken, words refer to ideas, which we conceive in our imagination. Thus, language gives substance to our thoughts. And, conversely, thoughts cannot be expressed without words or symbols. Written, and therefore seen by their shapes and colours, words are read. Spoken, listened to and heard, words become speech. And when words provide us with a concrete and tangible notion of the world, we achieve an awareness of being. Through a universe filled with words, from the time we are born, we must face a complex language, which we deal with in stages. We learn to recognize before naming: seeing, hearing and touching all precede speaking.

Perceiving is touching with the eye just as a blind man explores with his hands. Perception (*percipere*: to grasp through the senses) thus goes beyond sight. Consequently, perception creates a relationship with the object perceived, whereas vision establishes a contact with the object seen. As a personal and therefore subjective experience, perception is not easily transmitted or shared. How better, then, than by actually exhibiting his perception can an artist hope to express and share his point of view?



## FOREWARD

As part of its continuing series of contemporary and thematic exhibitions, the Lavalin Art Gallery is proud to present *Scripta manent*. This exhibition is made up of works by several Canadian artists and one Chinese painter, all containing some writing - letters, words and sentences - as a distinctive element. Such texts may provide an answer to the oft-asked question "What does this painting mean?"

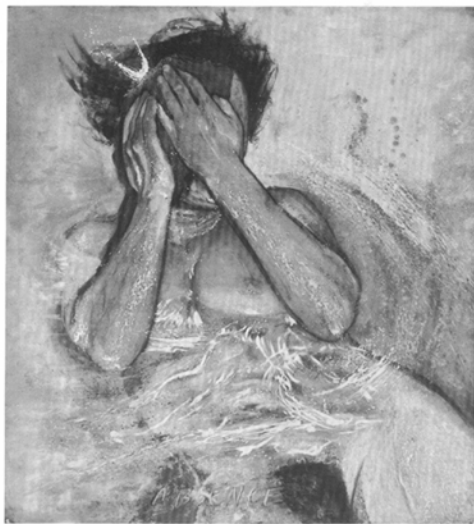
The presence of the written word in contemporary art holds considerable interest for us, particularly since in Canada we express ourselves in two languages, which add substance and variety to our cultural life.

In the pivotal field of communications Lavalin's specialists strive to increase its degree of precision and effectiveness. Something surely can be learned from visual artists who combine the use of the written word with more customary art forms.

Céline Mayrand, the curator of the Lavalin Art Gallery, suggested the concept of the exhibition and played a major role in its realization. Other Lavalin departments and divisions, notably the Arts Encouragement and Graphic Art departments, also made considerable contributions. I would also like sincerely to thank the artists and galleries involved for helping us prepare *Scripta manent*.

We hope visitors will derive enrichment, esthetic pleasure and intellectual enjoyment from *Scripta manent*. This would be ample reward for our efforts in bringing this exhibition to them.

Bernard Larmarre



HARDING MACKAY Allan

*Betwixt & between  
the dream of the  
sleeping giantess,*  
1986

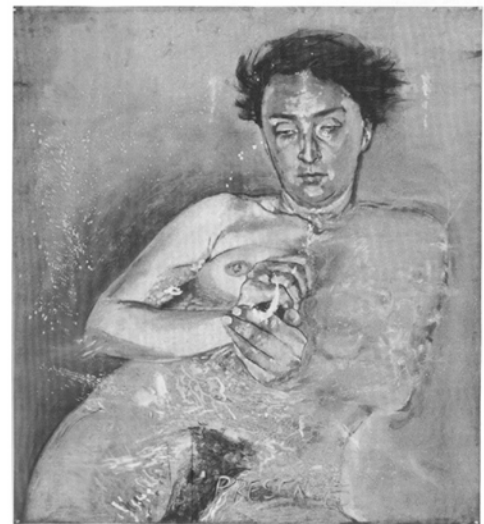
Triptych .

Oil and pastel on paper

a) 150 x 135 cm

b) 150 x 409 cm

c) 150 x 135 cm



Moreover, writing is unquestionably present in art - albeit unobtrusively. In the works exhibited, a deeper meaning is achieved through the use of the written word, which progresses from the title of the work to the artist's signature; from the motif of letters to complex vocabulary; from graffiti to the manifesto: from sentence to text; from the didactic to the poetic; then from page to book to collection to the library or museum - where writings are preciously guarded but also exhibited for us to see.

Furthermore, the words in all languages are never separate from signs. In fact, words are created from a set of signs which, placed in a certain order, give them meaning. In fact, if the twenty-five artists participating in *Scripta manent* have included words in their creations it is to give meaning to the signs they have used.

Each art form has its own language, and the artist chooses the language that best suits his mode of expression. Moreover, the languages chosen have much more scope than is apparent. Photography, for example, may be compared to the language of the deaf and dumb. Sculpture can be read by the blind. Painting is the mode of silence. Grouped together, visual forms and written languages complement one another and give rise to all kinds of paradoxical statements.

This theme is inherent in almost all the works included in *Scripta manent*. Each of the artists integrates text in various ways. For example, the graffiti in *Greffons* by Christian Dion, is a mode of expression in itself. Words are the extension of a pencil stroke and become the essence of the drawing in *Sleep awake* by Don Jean-Louis, and *This one's yours* by Clint Atkinson. When the words are engraved, they evoke another sense - that of touch - as in Martha Townsend's *Silence*.

Often the words allude to the gesture of writing - to silent words like the memories we keep in a personal diary, in Serge Tousignant's *Carnet de voyage*, *A fragile human presence* by Shelagh Keeley, and *I could'n't see the forest* by Janet Cardiff. **The title leads us into an inner world in *Betwixt & between the dream of giantness* by Allan Harding Mackay,** encourages reverie in *I dream you are away dreaming of me* by Barbara Astman, *Rodrigo's free fall* by Eugenio Tellez, and *For Joe who had a wish* by Patricia Kushner, and creates illusions in Claude Lamarche's *Illusion critique*.

In addition, the titles encourage us to explore the works and the places, as in *A museum of a man* by Vid Ingelevics, and *Une galerie de portraits* by Jacques Des Rochers. Sometimes they suggest a kind of reading as in *Les Mots* by Denis Lessard, *Oasis* by Michel Guilbeault and *La bibliothèque* by Marc-André Roy. They tell us to listen in *Trois personnages a l'écoute d'une nature morte* by Richard Max Tremblay, *Anagramme // - souvenir de Pina Bausch* by André Martin, and to look beyond the image in *Apollinaires* by Oliver Girling, *It's later than you think* by Gary Olson and *Out of hands* by Bruce Parsons. Word objects abound, as in *Tâche* by Richard Barbeau, *Art* by Roger Bliss Wood. *The Six dangerous chessmen* by Wen-Da Gu play the game. All these works evoke the theme *Scripta manent*.

Each artist is proclaiming his own personal truth. However, whether these words perch or take flight, whether the writing remains or disappears, their memory will stay with us. The works of art in *Scripta manent* embrace this contradiction, which can only be resolved in the spectator's mind. Thus, a book has been made available for the spectator to sign or express his point of view when faced with *Scripta manent*, *verba volant*.