

THE LOOK OF LOVE THE ART OF AFFECTION

*How do Canadian artists depict devotion and adoration?
Here's a showcase of eleven works*



Kent Monkman, *Icon for a New Empire* (detail), 2007



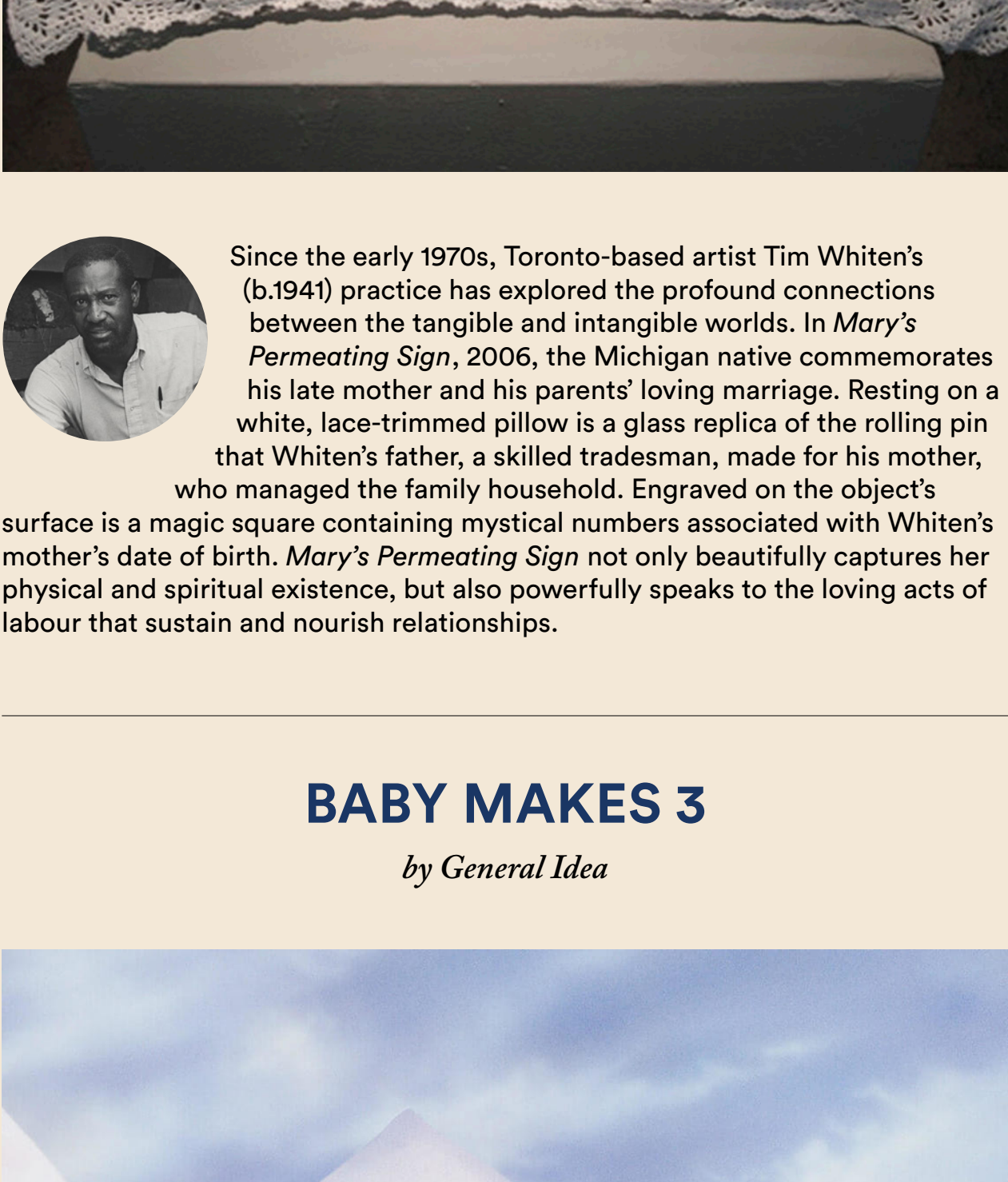
With Valentine's Day approaching, we are taking a look at love. From the excitement of attraction and the bittersweet ache of separation to the quiet strength of long-term pairings and the gentle grace of memories of past relationships, love marks us and shapes who we are. Canadian artists know love in all its odd forms: passionate, confident, committed, tested, shared, lost, remembered, and enduring. In their works, we see an endless variety of experiences and emotions articulated in painting, photography, sculpture, and performance. With wishes to you and your loved ones for a happy long weekend, we hope you enjoy this selection.

Sara Angel

Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

LUNGE

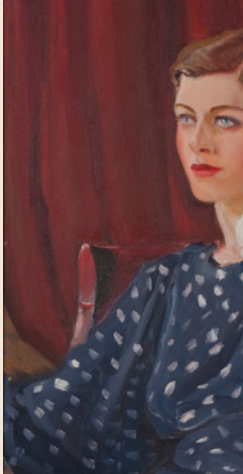
by Adad Hannab



Lunge, 2010, by Vancouver-based artist **Adad Hannab** (b.1971) shows a woman in a diner booth climbing over the table to embrace her lover. The close-up view leaves out the woman's face as well as the object of her affection, prompting us to imagine the missing elements of the narrative. Although the action appears spontaneous, this image is in fact part of a series of *tableaux vivants* ("living pictures") and photographic details entitled *Traces* that Hannab presented at Nuit Blanche Toronto. Selecting the city's oldest jazz bar, the Rex, as the setting of his series, Hannab shot over twenty videos of *tableaux vivants* that imagine possible moments in the bar's storied history.

MARY'S PERMEATING SIGN

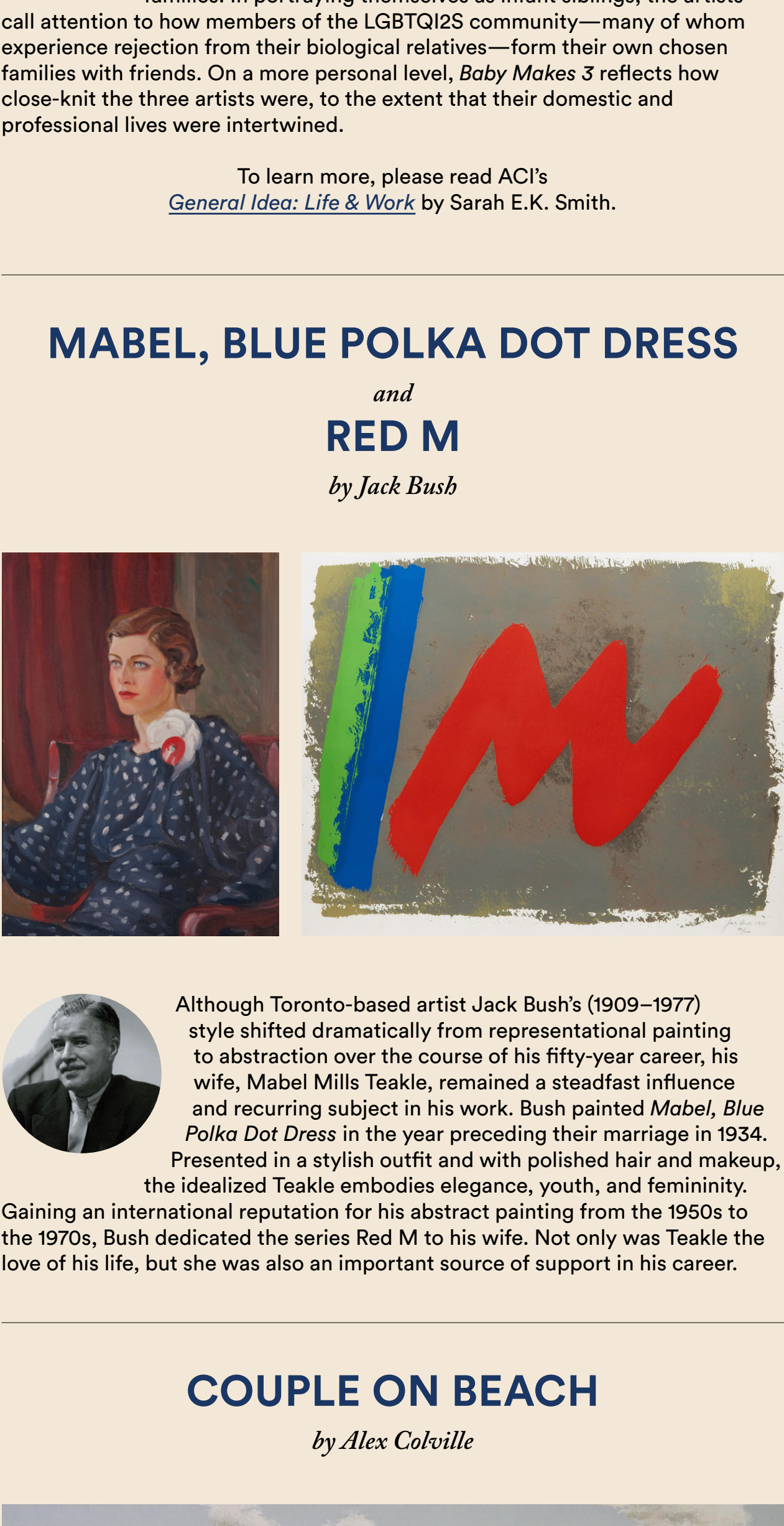
by Tim Whiten



Since the early 1970s, Toronto-based artist Tim Whiten's (b.1941) practice has explored the profound connections between the tangible and intangible worlds. In *Mary's Permeating Sign*, 2006, the Michigan native commemorates his late mother and his parents' loving marriage. Engraved on a white, lace-trimmed pillow is a glass replica of the rolling pin that Whiten's father, a skilled tradesman, made for his mother, who managed the family household. Engraved on the object's surface is a magic square containing mystical numbers associated with Whiten's mother's date of birth. *Mary's Permeating Sign* not only beautifully captures her physical and spiritual existence, but also powerfully speaks to the loving acts of labour that sustain and nourish relationships.

BABY MAKES 3

by General Idea



Baby Makes 3, 1984/89, humorously portrays the Toronto-based artist collective General Idea (active 1969–1994) as infants in bed together, their cherubic, smiling faces emanating innocence and contentment. Established by three gay men—A.A. Bronson (b.1946), Jorge Zontal (1944–1994), and Felix Partz (1945–1994)—General Idea challenged traditional notions of gender, sexuality, and nuclear families. In portraying themselves as infant siblings, the artists call attention to how members of the LGBTQ2S community—many of whom experience rejection from their biological relatives—form their own chosen families with friends. On a more personal level, *Baby Makes 3* reflects how close-knit the three artists were, to the extent that their domestic and professional lives were intertwined.

To learn more, please read ACI's

[General Idea: Life & Work](#) by Sarah E.K. Smith.

MABEL, BLUE POLKA DOT DRESS

and

RED M

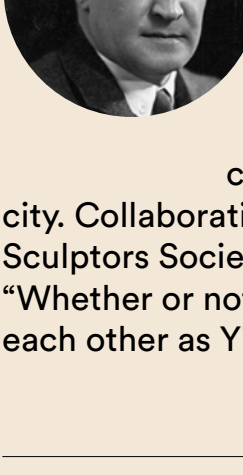
by Jack Bush



Although Toronto-based artist Jack Bush's (1909–1977) style shifted dramatically from representational painting to abstraction over the course of his fifty-year career, his wife, Mabel Mills Teakle, remained a steadfast influence and recurring subject in his work. Bush painted *Mabel, Blue Polka Dot Dress* in the year preceding their marriage in 1934. Presented in a stylish outfit and with polished hair and makeup, the idealized Teakle embodies elegance, youth, and femininity. Gaining an international reputation for his abstract painting from the 1950s to the 1970s, Bush dedicated the series *Red M* to his wife. Not only was Teakle the love of his life, but she was also an important source of support in his career.

COUPLE ON BEACH

by Alex Colville



Couple on Beach, 1957, represents famed Nova Scotia artist Alex Colville (1920–2013) with his wife, Rhoda, whom he was married to for over seventy years. After meeting at Mount Allison University, they were initially just friends: as Rhoda later recalled, "I really didn't think he was any 'great shakes,'" as they say. It took us a long time to get to know each other," but then one night, "Alex took my hand...That was quite a thrill. Can you imagine that?" Rhoda posed regally for Colville, and the excitement of attraction and the sustaining strength of deep affection are ever present in many of his paintings, which often invite viewers to think about relationships between couples.

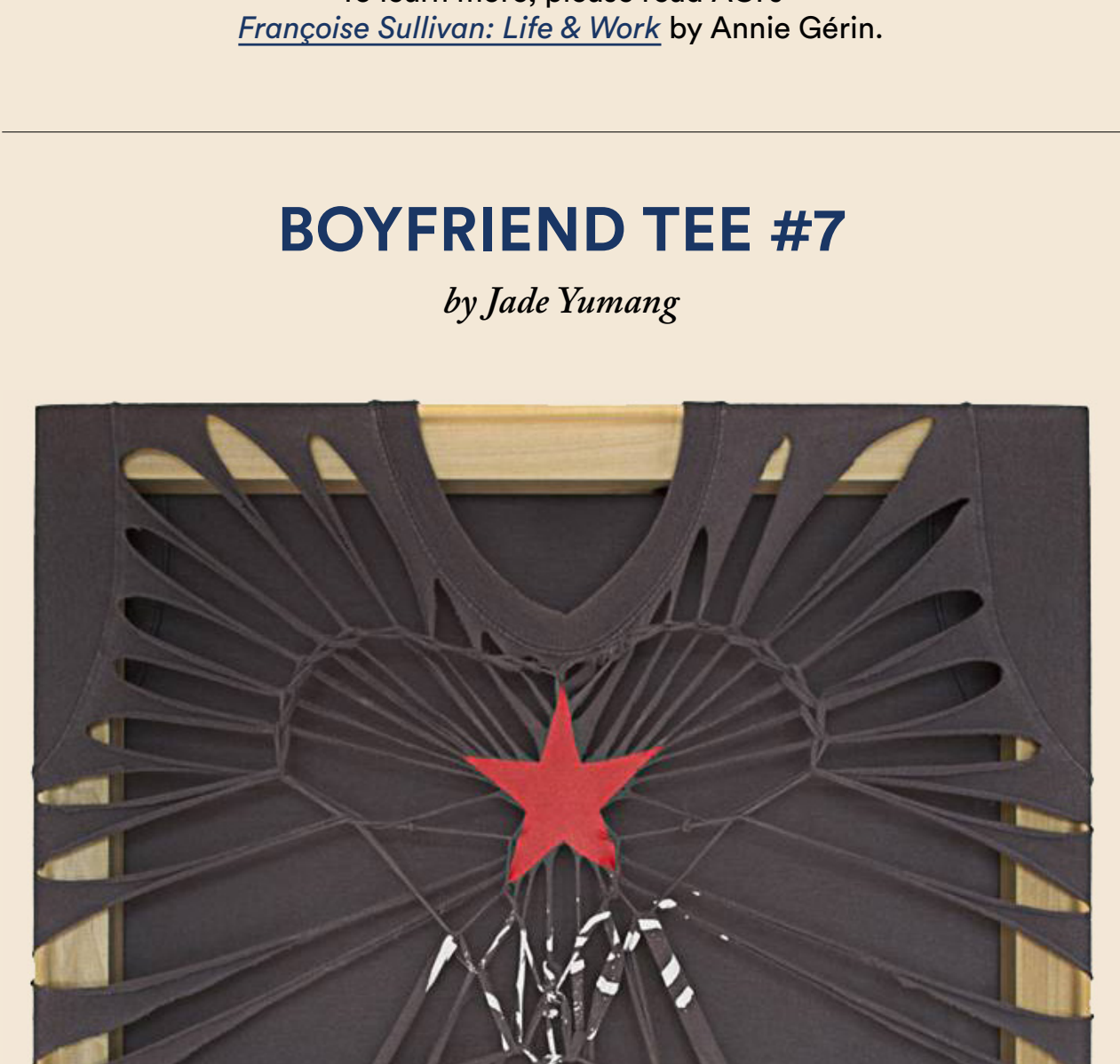
To learn more, please read ACI's

[Alex Colville: Life & Work](#) by Ray Cronin.

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MISS FRANCES LORING AND MISS FLORENCE WYLE

by Robert Flaherty



This breathtaking cyanotype by documentary filmmaker and photographer Robert J. Flaherty (1884–1951) depicts Frances Loring (1887–1968) and Florence Wyle (1881–1968), two of Canada's best-known sculptors in the first half of the twentieth century. Maintaining a personal and professional relationship that spanned over six decades, the American-born artists met in 1905 and moved to Toronto in 1913. Flaherty captured this portrait of the pair shortly after their arrival to the Sculptors Society of Canada. In *And Beauty Answers*, Elspeth Cameron writes: "Whether or not [they] were lovers ... they were soulmates, as complementary to each other as Yin and Yang."

HOMAGE TO PATERSON

by Françoise Sullivan



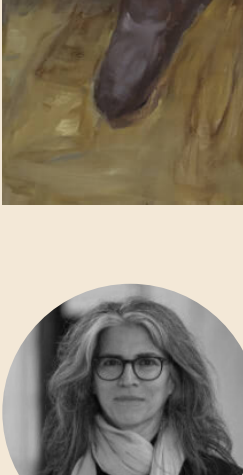
Immersing the viewer in rich hues of red and orange, this monumental diptych is Montreal-based painter, dancer, and performance artist Françoise Sullivan's (b.1923) tribute to her late former husband, the painter Paterson Even (1925–2002). The pair met in the spring of 1949 at a talk in Montreal and experienced an instant connection. By the fall of that year they were married and remained together until 1966. *Homage to Paterson*, 2003, belongs to a series of monochromes entitled *Hommages (Hommages)* that Sullivan produced between 2002 and 2003 in honour of friends who had inspired her and passed away. She dedicated this luminous masterpiece to Even "because he was the greatest of all painters."

To learn more, please read ACI's

[Françoise Sullivan: Life & Work](#) by Annie Gérin.

BOYFRIEND TEE #7

by Jade Yumang



This sculpture is part of the Vancouver-raised, Chicago-based artist **Jade Yumang**'s (b.1981) series *Boyfriend Tee*, 2015–16, in which cotton jersey T-shirts are stretched over two-by-two-foot wooden stretchers and then sliced and knotted into different configurations and intricate patterns. The shirts are old ones that Yumang's partner, who was then living in Vancouver, would send him during the four years he spent studying at the Parsons School of Design in New York. In *Boyfriend Tee #7*, 2016, the central motif is a heart that is being pulled in different directions. For Yumang, whose sculptures, installations, and performances explore the concept of queer form, the works in the series are love letters between him and his partner, expressing the strength of their bond in spite of their physical separation.

ABBY AND SNOW

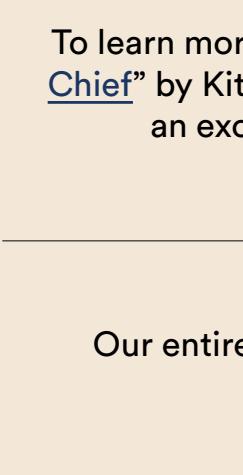
by Janet Werner



In this painting by Montreal-based painter Janet Werner (b.1959), a young, self-assured woman in a carefully styled outfit stands in the foreground, directing her penetrating gaze at the viewer. Behind her is a seated man with a toned physique and—unexpectedly—the head of a leering snowman. The image is reminiscent of a fashion advertisement, but Werner's humorous and uncanny interventions disrupt the conventional focus of commercial advertising on male desire and women's objectification, instead emphasizing the power of the female gaze. Inspired by images from fashion, cinema, and popular culture, Werner's fictional portraits imbue anonymous figures with complex personalities and desires.

ICON FOR A NEW EMPIRE

by Kent Monkman



In Toronto-based Cree artist Kent Monkman's (b.1965) *Icon for a New Empire*, 2007, a white male sculptor engages in a passionate kiss with a heroic Indigenous warrior, a carved figure that has miraculously come to life. Monkman's work was inspired by two iconic creations: Jean-Léon Gérôme's (1824–1904) painting *Pygmalion and Galatea*, 1890, and James Earle Fraser's (1876–1953) bronze *The End of the Trail*, 1915. In Gérôme's canvases, the goddess Aphrodite fulfills Pygmalion's wish to have a wife as beautiful as the sculpture he has created by bringing it to life. Fraser's polarizing sculpture, visible in the background of Monkman's painting, presents a defeated Indigenous warrior slumped over on his weary horse. *Icon for a New Empire* thus boldly subverts the dominant heteronormative and colonial narratives represented in these historical works.

To learn more about Monkman's practice, read the essay "Introducing Miss Chief" by Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery Executive Director Shirley Madill, an excerpt from ACI's landmark book [Revision and Resistance](#).

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PAST NEWSLETTERS

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Image Credits: [1, 12] Kent Monkman, *Icon for a New Empire*, 2007, acrylic on canvas, 274.32 x 213.36 cm. Courtesy of the artist. [2] Adad Hannab, *Lunge*, 2010, colour photograph, edition of 7, 64 x 126 cm. Courtesy of the artist. [3] Tim Whiten, *Mary's Permeating Sign*, 2006, cast, sandblasted glass, pillow. Collection of the Art Gallery of Hamilton. Courtesy of the artist and Olga Korper Gallery. Photo credit: Aaron Guravich. [4] General Idea, *Baby Makes 3*, 1984/89, chromogenic print (Ektachrome), 76.3 x 63.1 cm, edition of three plus one artist's proof, signed and numbered. Various collections. [5] Jack Bush, *Mabel, Blue Polka Dot Dress*, 1933, oil on canvas, 175 x 129 cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of Algoma. [6] Jack Bush, *Red M*, 1971, colour silkscreen, edition of 100, 55.9 x 71.1 cm. Courtesy of Cowley Abbott. [7] Alex Colville, *Couple on Beach*, 1957, casein tempera on Masonite, 73.4 x 95.4 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, purchased 1959 (no. 7744). © National Gallery of Canada. Photo credit: National Gallery of Canada. [8] Robert J. Flaherty, *Miss Frances Loring and Miss Florence Wyle*, 1914, cyanotype, 16.8 x 15.7 cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Gift of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 1987, from the Estates of Frances Loring and Florence Wyle (2977). [9] Françoise Sullivan, *Homage to Paterson* (Hommage à Paterson), 2003, acrylic on canvas (diptych), 348 x 574 cm. Collection of the artist. [10] Jade Yumang, *Boyfriend Tee #7*, 2016, cotton jersey T-shirt, wooden stretcher, 60.9 x 60.9 cm. [11] Janet Werner, *Abby and Snow*, 2014, oil on canvas, 170 x 139.6 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Bradley Erskine.