

The f-stops here

Buttery black eyes and pools of oil

by KEITH MARCHAND

Photography is unique as a form of artistic expression. It captures and confirms in ways that no other art form can; it is both artistic expression and testimonial. Photography can be powerful and brutally honest (it was, after all, the photographs of that motel room and those beauty pageant contestants that got me chased out of Georgia) as well as a useful, historical chronicle (once, a favourable photo finish at the dog races kept food on

Art

Emmanuelle Léonard and Paul Litherland photographs are at Galerie Clark, 1591 Clark, 2nd floor. March 20-April 13

my table for a couple of weeks).

Opening tonight at Galerie Clark is an exhibition featuring two Montreal-based photographers, Emmanuelle Léonard and Paul Litherland.

Upon entering the first room of the gallery, one is confronted with a striking installation in the middle of the floor. Using bricks to form a low wall, Litherland has penned in a photograph of an enormous eye of vibrant colour and considerable detail. Placed around the brow line of

the eye are eight lovingly carved buildings—each representing a well-known Montreal architectural landmark (the detailing is so good that it is fairly simple to identify each structure). One quickly realizes that these vivid yellow sculptures are made of solid butter. Litherland's piece is about the relationship between items and ideas

that do not traditionally go together. The bricks surrounding the work speak of a solidity that the architecture should possess but does not. Traditional materials are thrown together with non-traditional, the serious with the playful. Litherland mentioned that the piece also plays upon the phrase "l'oeil au beurre noir," which translated, means black eye. The architecture of power is imposed on the human form and on our vision.

In the adjoining room, we find the work of Emmanuelle Léonard, whose attention is also on the architecture of the urban landscape. However, it might be more apt to call her focus sub-architectural. Léonard captures the parking garage, the furnace room, the air ducts and water pipes rather than exterior embellishment or the more

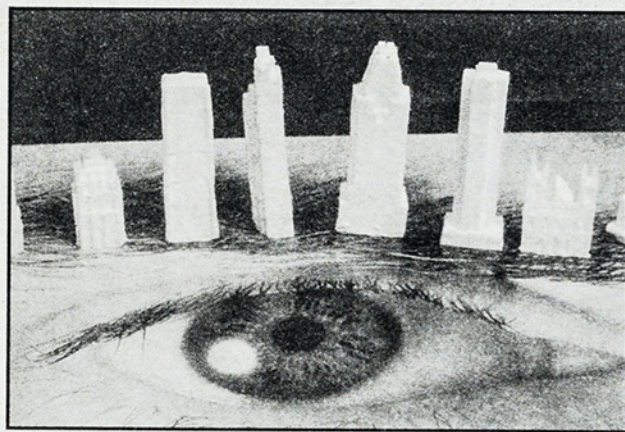


Photo by Litherland Buttereyeball

public of spaces. She photographs the integral architecture of everyday life that no one ever really looks at. Her work is a deliberate and careful cataloguing of what could be seen as the mundane—the patterns formed by everyday things like water marks, pools of oil, lighting fixtures, light and shadow. These spaces are always captured when they are absolutely empty and this creates a lonely, ominous, yet strangely powerful atmosphere in the pieces. Léonard's works vary from the systematic study of the progression of decay to close-up looks at the delicate, filigree patterns formed by the endless miles of wire and piping found beneath our cities. She finds unexpectedly compelling compositions in rooms, spaces and details that we do not normally even see. ✕