

vantage points, she leaves the viewer mildly but pleasantly disoriented. The works call up a range of associations—from Dutch still life to photorealist paintings—but these prints look as fresh as any photographs being made today.

—Ann Landi

'Faking Death'

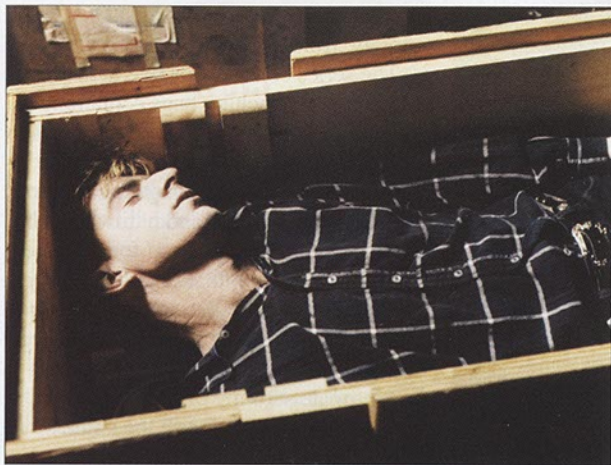
Jack Shainman

The gothic and the grotesque pervaded "Faking Death: Canadian Art Photography and the Canadian Imagination." The exhibition was based on a book by Penny Cousineau-Levine, professor of art history and theory at the University of Ottawa, that attempts to identify and define a Canadian photographic idiom. Featuring graveyards, bodies in coffins, and ominous forest scenes, these dark photographs melded gruesome and erotic elements for an unsettling yet delicious effect.

Pieces like Jeff Wall's large-scale *The Holocaust Memorial in the Jewish Cemetery* (1987), a cold landscape with wisps of dark smoke on the horizon, set a vaguely ominous tone, while others, like Raymonde April's 1995 *The Arrival Extras (Scar)*, a black-and-white picture of a dog's belly, its skin puckered by still-raw sutures, were frankly disturbing. Mark Leslie's nine-part *Dying with Aids/Living with Aids* (1991–92) was the most heartbreaking piece in the exhibition; a handwritten text detailing his bouts with chronic diarrhea hung alongside a black-and-white photo titled "My Calvin Klein Ad," showing the artist lolling on a beach in a diaper.

The most successful works tempered their grotesqueness with a mordant sense of humor. In *Dead #1*, from Paul Litherland's 1993 series "Souvenirs," a pale young man in a plaid shirt, eyes closed, is laid out in a plain wood coffin, his neck bent unnaturally to one side as if stiffened in rigor mortis. But something about his expression hints that he is still very much alive.

In her thoughtful book, Cousineau-Levine suggests that this obsession with death (which the author links with notions of "here" and "elsewhere") reflects a Canadian search for self and national expression. But perhaps the elements evident in these photographs— isolation, de-



Paul Litherland, *Dead #1* (from the "Souvenirs" series), 1993, C-print, 33" x 43". Jack Shainman.

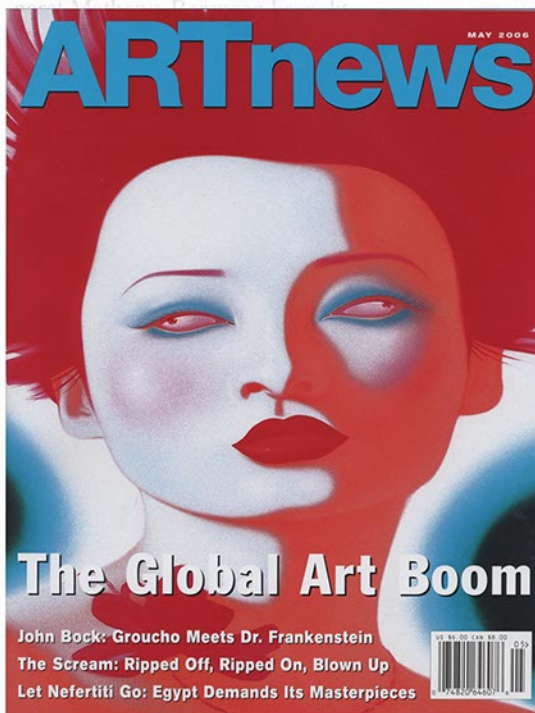
tachment, a connection to the outdoors— can be more directly attributed to the country's famously long winters and sparse population. —Rachel Somerstein

'Threads of Memory'

Dorsky

In this wide-ranging and thoroughly engaging show, independent curator Mar-

taught her to sew. I aspects of embroidery Elaine Reichek's s verses from Shakespeare and *Troilus and Cressida* once served as guide moral behavior; he Reichek stitched li from a pair of out female characters



Elaine Reichek, *Sampler (Troilus and Cressida)*, from the series "As She Likes It," 2001, embroidery on linen, 26 7/8" x 18 1/2". Dorsky.

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