

Book Getaways & Special Offers **3<sup>RD</sup> NIGHT 1<sup>ST</sup> HALF PRICE**  
at participating hotels



27°C

Variably cloudy

**Montréal**

- [Detailed Forecast](#)

- [Start Home Delivery](#)
- [Subscriber Services](#)
- [Digital Edition](#)
- [Mobile Products](#)
- [G-store](#)

- [canada.com network](#)

**Newspapers**

- [National Post](#)
- [Victoria Times Colonist](#)
- [The Province \(Vancouver\)](#)
- [Vancouver Sun](#)
- [Edmonton Journal](#)
- [Calgary Herald](#)
- [Regina Leader-Post](#)
- [Saskatoon StarPhoenix](#)

- [Windsor Star](#)
- [Ottawa Citizen](#)
- [The Gazette \(Montreal\)](#)
- [DOSE](#)
- [Postmedia Community Publishing](#)
- [Nanaimo Daily News](#)

- [Log in](#)
- [Register](#)

**Montreal Gazette**



27°C

Variably cloudy

**Montréal**

- [Detailed Forecast](#)

- Quick Links: [Shopping](#), [Obituaries](#), [Horoscopes](#)

- Search montrealgazette.c
- [Search](#)

- [YellowPages](#)
- [Find a business or person on:](#)

- [Home](#)
- [News](#)
  - [Montreal](#)
  - [West Island](#)
  - [National](#)
  - [World](#)
  - [Weather](#)
  - [Daily Commuter](#)
  - [Saturday Extra](#)
  - [Oddities](#)
  - [Today's Paper](#)
- [Opinion](#)
  - [Aislin](#)
  - [Blogs](#)
  - [Editorials](#)
  - [Columnists](#)
  - [Op-Ed](#)
  - [Letters](#)
- [Business](#)
  - [Money](#)
  - [Markets on FP](#)
  - [Your Business](#)
  - [Business Observer](#)
  - [Open House](#)
  - [Technocite](#)
  - [Aerospace](#)
  - [Legal Matters](#)
  - [Mortgages](#)
- [Sports](#)
  - [Canadiens/Hockey](#)
  - [Alouettes/Football](#)
  - [Impact/Soccer](#)
  - [Baseball](#)
  - [Basketball](#)
  - [Golf](#)
  - [Auto Racing](#)
  - [Tennis](#)
  - [Hockey Inside/Out](#)
  - [MMA](#)
- [Arts](#)
  - [Festival Central](#)
  - [Movie Guide](#)
  - [Television](#)
  - [TV Listings](#)
  - [Music](#)
  - [Books](#)
  - [Celebrity](#)
  - [Theatre](#)
- [Life](#)
  - [Fashion & Beauty](#)
  - [Food & Wine](#)
  - [Parenting](#)
  - [Relationships](#)
  - [Green Life](#)
  - [Diversions - Comics & Games](#)
  - [Pets](#)
  - [Mike Holmes](#)
- [Health](#)
  - [Women](#)
  - [Men](#)
  - [Family & Child](#)
  - [Sexual Health](#)
  - [Diet Fitness](#)
- [Technology](#)
  - [Personal Tech](#)
  - [Gaming](#)
  - [Tech-Biz](#)
  - [Internet](#)
  - [Environment](#)
  - [Space](#)
  - [Science](#)
  - [Best of YouTube](#)
- [Travel](#)
  - [Trip Ideas](#)
  - [Tools & Tips](#)
  - [Destination Guides](#)
  - [Travel Shots](#)
- [Jobs](#)
  - [Home](#)
  - [Search Jobs](#)
  - [Resources](#)
  - [Post Jobs](#)
  - [Jobseekers](#)
  - [Employer Login](#)
  - [Top Employers](#)
- [Cars](#)
  - [New](#)
  - [Used](#)

- [Pre-Owned Weekly Specials](#)
- [Sell](#)
- [Research & Compare](#)
- [News & Events](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Features](#)
- [Luxury Cars](#)
- [Homes](#)
  - [For Sale/Rent](#)
  - [Real Estate Advice](#)
  - [Renovating](#)
  - [Decorating](#)
  - [Gardening](#)
  - [Vacation Homes](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
  - [Obituaries](#)
  - [Announcements](#)
  - [Vehicles](#)
  - [Real Estate](#)
  - [Rentals](#)
  - [Jobs](#)
  - [Pets](#)
  - [For Sale](#)
  - [Shopping](#)
  - [Place an Ad](#)
  - [FlyerCity](#)

Don't miss:

- [Student strike](#)
- [Corruption in Quebec](#)
- [Golf Guide 2012](#)
- [Map: Bike accidents](#)
- [Urban Expressions](#)
- [Contracts database](#)
- [Interactives](#)
- [Shelter](#)

»

## Art: Clear on the concept

### Exhibition explores the very idea of art

By John Pohl, Gazette visual arts critic February 10, 2012

Uhfrp p hgg
<b>Tweet</b> 2
<b>Share</b> 0



## Robert Walker is in every image of his 1975 series *Is Politics Art?*, alongside other art-world figures. It's exhibited in *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980*.

Photograph by: Paul Smith

MONTREAL - Conceptual art was born in the 1960s and 1970s, when individual expression and the object – the painting on the wall – became less important than exploring the idea of art itself, especially with new technologies like the video camera.

“If art was an idea, it was unnecessary to make objects,” said Barbara Fischer, co-curator of *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980*, an exhibition at Concordia's Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery.

In Montreal, Bill Vazan drew lines and angles that invisibly connected one building with another. Artist-run centres sprang up in cities across North America to make, show and discuss this new conceptual art, which had no market.

“It was inconceivable that there would be a market for the art we did,” said René Blouin, an early member of the Montreal artist-run centre *Véhicule* and now the owner of a gallery that bears his name.

Nevertheless, Vazan and many others transformed the art world from one of paintings and sculptures to one based on concepts and ideas investigated by artists. In the early period of conceptual art, language, the body and place were major areas of investigation.

*Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980* documents how artists in this country shared ideas through artist-run centres like *Véhicule*, and what those ideas were. The exhibition, which covers Montreal and three Ontario cities (Toronto, Guelph and London), continues to Feb. 25. It will be followed, starting March 16, by a show devoted to Halifax, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver.

The focus on language “dematerialized” art, Fischer said. Greg Curnoe – who Fischer said was Canada's first conceptual artist – took a dry, laconic inventory of his surroundings, with no poetic meanderings or self-reflection. Each word stood out and could be examined for meaning and use.

Montreal's situation was unique in that the conceptual art scene played out on a linguistic battleground. *Actions That Speak*, a book published in conjunction with the exhibition and containing essays by

co-curator Michèle Thériault, Sean Mills and others, describes how conceptual art developed against a tumultuous French-English background.

Nevertheless, *Véhicule* often treated language “as a vector for pure information rather than for cultural self-affirmation,” Thériault and Vincent Bonin write in the catalogue. Many *Véhicule* members, like Vazan and Suzy Lake, were anglophones, but such francophone artists as Françoise Sullivan, Raymond Gervais, Serge Tousignant and Rober Racine were drawn to a dematerialized approach to artmaking that offered the possibility of crossing media and disciplines, while also participating in the modernization of Quebec culture, Thériault and Bonin write.

A key player was Normand Thériault, a former *La Presse* art critic who published magazines, taught at UQAM (where he worked side by side with his students on publishing projects) and mounted exhibitions like *Quebec 75* (which is the subject of a film on display in *Traffic*). Thériault also wrote a report for the Canada Council for the Arts that advocated funding artist-run centres and collectives.

“Artist-run centres were labs, the best places to discover what's coming, a real solid validation centre for sifting out the best art,” Blouin said.

“Little by little, I became the organizer” at *Véhicule*, he said. Blouin said he went to the Canada Council to request funding for a magazine. Instead, he was offered a job, and redirected the funding request to Chantal Pontbriand, who, with France Morin, used the money to start *Parachute*. The bilingual magazine soon became an indispensable platform for critical discourse on international contemporary art, Michèle Thériault and Bonin write.

At the Canada Council, he said, Blouin worked with Claude Gosselin to establish funding programs for performance art, sound art and curators' research. Many Montreal groups, including *Oboro* and *Tangente*, took advantage of these programs, he said.

With beauty not a concern in conceptual art at the time, *Traffic* is more of a museum show of archival documents. Still, it captures many currently well-known artists, including Michael Snow, in their formative years. The free newsprint catalogue evokes a publication of the time and, with the gallery's website, offers much insight.

**Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980** continues until Feb. 25 at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, 1400 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W. (Concordia's library building). For more information, visit [ellengallery.concordia.ca](http://ellengallery.concordia.ca).

I first saw David Lafrance's drawings on paper about eight years ago. There was a freshness about them that bravely approached the childlike. His style continues to be naive, but in a quieter, deeper, painterly way.

Lafrance uses what he calls the “authentic and honest vibration” of folk art. His paintings are structured in ways used by untrained artists: objects, whose meaning is not pinned down, float in front of a flat landscape.

*Club de fête*, an exhibition of Lafrance's recent paintings at the McClure Gallery, refers in its title to the desperate pursuit of happiness in today's society, he said in an interview. Jewellery and monster houses are two recurring motifs he uses to denote extravagance and a fragility born of cheapness.

Still, his new paintings express hopefulness, he said. They see humanity as a culture united and enriched by its different ethnicities.

**David Lafrance: Club de fête** continues until Feb. 25 at the McClure Gallery, 350 Victoria Ave. in Westmount. For more information, visit [www.visualartscentre.ca/mcclure-gallery](http://www.visualartscentre.ca/mcclure-gallery).

[john.o.pohl@gmail.com](mailto:john.o.pohl@gmail.com)

© Copyright (c) The Montreal Gazette

- [E-mail this Article](#)
- [Print this Article](#)
- [Share this Article](#)



Location refreshed

### Story Tools

- [E-mail this Article](#)
- [Print this Article](#)

Font:

- \*
- \*
- \*
- \*
- \*
- \*

Image:

- \*
- \*
- \*
- \*
- \*

### Related Stories from Around the Web

- [Brushed with scandal](#)  
Calgary Herald  
Sunday, May 13, 2012
- [Regina artist continues to hone his cartooning skills](#)  
Regina Leader-Post, Canada  
Thursday, May 10, 2012
- [Former Art Gallery of Calgary CEO charged with fraud](#)  
Edmonton Journal, Canada  
Thursday, May 10, 2012

[Previous](#)  
[Next](#)



**Robert Walker is in every image of his 1975 series *Is Politics Art?*, alongside other art-world figures. It's exhibited in *Traffic: Conceptual Art in Canada 1965-1980*.**

**Photograph by: Paul Smith**



- [E-mail this Gallery](#)
- [Print this Gallery](#)
- [Share this Gallery](#)

[Photo Galleries »](#)



**[Travel Photo of the Day](#)**

Great travel photos from around the world

- [more »](#)



**[Top 10 iconic modern house tours...](#)**

Anyone with money can build a big pile of a house, ...

- [more »](#)

- [Top 10 wedding anniversary destinations](#)
- [Top 10 reasons to visit Britain \(in addition to the Olympics\)](#)
- [Top 10 sunrises around the world](#)



## [Photo Gallery: The beauty of Ireland...](#)

The Emerald Isle has something for every visitor.

- [more »](#)



## [Photo Gallery: Expo 2012 opens...](#)

Four years and \$10 million later, Expo 2012 is set...

- [more »](#)

[More Travel Photo Galleries »](#)

What Do You Think? <a href="#">Login</a> or <a href="#">Register</a>	
<b>Already a member?</b> To comment, please <a href="#">Login</a> .	<b>New to the site?</b> To leave a comment, you need to <a href="#">Register</a> .
Questions? - Visit our <a href="#">FAQ</a>	

Welcome Google User


Here are more Montreal Gazette topics related to your search for *"gazette traffic conceptual art in canada 1965-1980"*

- [Lynne Cohen's photographs: poetry from strange places](#)
- [Clear on the concept](#)
- [Art: Clear on the concept](#)



### Resources

- [Ways to a better you!](#)
- [Looking for Wheels?](#)
- [Plan Your Next Getaway](#)

 Destination Guides

- [Asia](#)
- [Australia and the South Pacific](#)
- [Canada](#)  
[see Overview »](#)
- [Caribbean and the Atlantic](#)

- [Central and South America](#)
- [Europe](#)
- [Mexico](#)  
[see Overview »](#)
- [Middle East and Africa](#)
- [USA](#)  
[see Overview »](#)


[Browse All Destinations »](#)

From our advertisers

## K HUH## VWD\##

Search a featured directory of Hotels & Resorts.

Province or State:

 Destination Guides

- [Asia](#)
- [Australia and the South Pacific](#)
- [Canada](#)  
[see Overview »](#)
- [Caribbean and the Atlantic](#)
- [Central and South America](#)
- [Europe](#)
- [Mexico](#)  
[see Overview »](#)
- [Middle East and Africa](#)
- [USA](#)  
[see Overview »](#)

[Browse All Destinations »](#)

### Featured Travel Guide Destinations

## [Enjoy the tastes, smells and sights of Italy](#)



Italy is one of the great travel destinations in Europe.

- [Frommer's Guide to Italy](#)
- [Frommer's Guide to Rome](#)
- [Frommer's Guide to Tuscany and Umbria](#)

### Most Popular News

- [Most Read](#)
- [E-mailed](#)
- [Commented](#)
- [Montreal Impact signs Italian striker Marco Di Vaio](#)
- [Impact adds Di Vaio as first designated player](#)
- [Astral CEO won't be paid a premium](#)
- [Percussive protests mark illegal Thursday night marches in multiple Montreal neighbourhoods, pots-a-clanging](#)
- [Police round up 518 protesters in one night \(with video\)](#)



- [Quebec's societal debate more than a decade old: McGill prof](#)

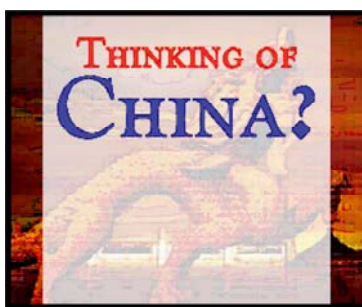
[more »](#)

- [Queue de Cheval breakup has been civil, former Essaris Group partner says](#)
- [Police round up 518 protesters in one night \(with video\)](#)
- [Target confirms more Quebec locations](#)
- [Man charged in Montreal métro smoke-bomb attack is freed on bail](#)
- [Percussive protests mark illegal Thursday night marches in multiple Montreal neighbourhoods, pots-a-clanging](#)
- [Student protests: Quebec will pick up part of Montreal's 'extraordinary' tab](#)

[more »](#)

- [Illegal demo under way, pots-a-clanging](#)
- [Arrests to date exceed 2,500 in Quebec protests over tuition hikes](#)
- [Night demo declared illegal immediately](#)
- [Quebec's societal debate more than a decade old: McGill prof](#)
- [Quebec government, student groups preparing for talks on tuition dispute](#)
- [Student groups file court challenge of Bill 78](#)

Sponsored By



### [Ads by Google](#)

#### [Abstract Photo Exhibition](#)

Alexei Rebrov at Engine Gallery.

Colours you won't forget!

[arebrov.com](#)

[Galerie Walter Klinkhoff](#)

Canadian art auction alternative.

Maximize value, minimize risk.

[klinkhoff.com](#)

[We tell your stories](#)

Theoria Cultural Thinkers

Cultural Education and Marketing

[www.culturalthinkers.ca](#)

Inside The Gazette



### [Video](#)

- [Opinion](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Life](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Technology](#)

### [Wayne](#)

### [Travel](#)

### [Most](#)

### [Stay cool](#)

[Home News](#)

- [Travel](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Cars](#)
- [Homes](#)
- [Classifieds](#)

#### • Don't Miss

- [Student strike](#)
- [Corruption in Quebec](#)
- [Golf Guide 2012](#)
- [Map: Bike accidents](#)
- [Urban Expressions](#)
- [Contracts database](#)
- [Interactives](#)
- [Shelter](#)

»

#### • Most Popular

- [Montreal Impact signs Italian striker Marco Di Vaio](#)
- [Impact adds Di Vaio as first designated player](#)
- [Astral CEO won't be paid a premium](#)

»

#### • Formats

- [Sitemap / RSS](#)
- [Contests](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Photo Galleries](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Mobile](#)
- [Widget](#)
- [iPad App](#)

#### • The Gazette

- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Work for Us](#)
- [Advertise with Us](#)
- [Subscribe to the Print Edition](#)
- [Green Gazette](#)
- [The Gazette in the Community](#)
- [G-store](#)

#### • Tools

- [Search montrealgazette.c](#)  
[Search](#)

- [Search for a Job](#)
- [Buy/Sell a Car](#)
- [Real Estate Listings](#)
- [SwarmJam Sweet Deals](#)

- [Place a Classified Ad](#)
- [E-mail Alerts](#)
- [Flyercity.ca](#)

- [canada.com Logo](#)
- [About canada.com](#)
- [Privacy Statement](#)
- [Terms](#)
- [Copyright & Permissions](#)

© 2010 - 2012 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.