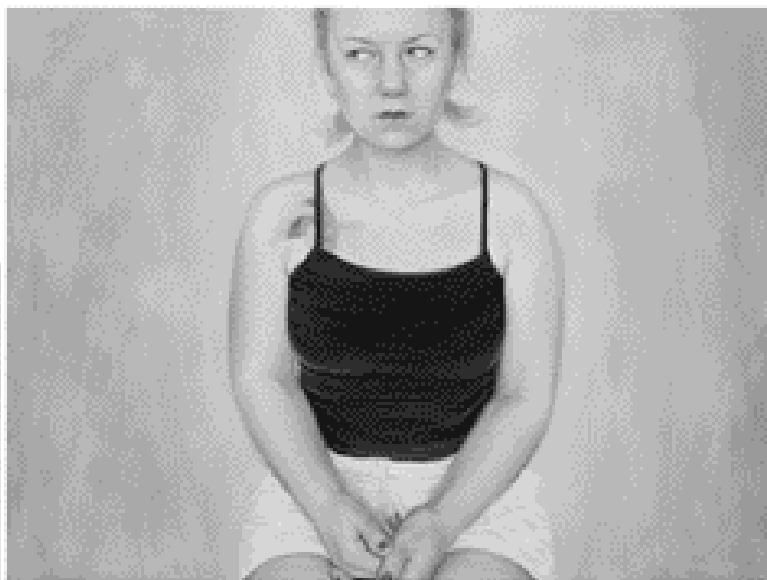
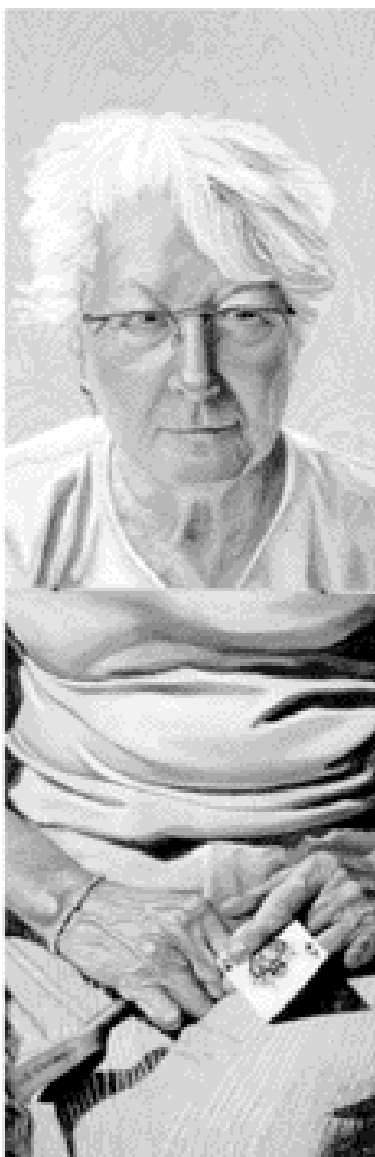


Warren G. Flowers Gallery

faces and transitions



Paul Utheland



faces and transitions

sefi Amir • ilga Liemanis • shelley reeves • kristi ropeleski



Sefi Amir
left: *Nicki*, 2002
right: *Gary*, 2002
38 x 38 cm

Kristi Ropeleski
Flying V, II, 2004
91 x 122 cm
oil on canvas



bodies without organs...

The tragedy reaches a higher level when Narcissus, at the moment when his tears disturb the pool, realizes not only that the loved image is his own, but furthermore that it can disappear — as if he had thought that, for want of touching, he could nevertheless be satisfied with contemplation alone (“let me keep looking at you always”), which has henceforth also become impossible.
Julia Kristeva

Giuseppe Di Leo pointed out the similarity in the approaches of Sefi Amir, Ilga Leimanis, Shelley Reeves and Kristi Ropeleski when he first suggested that they be invited to exhibit together. There is realism in Nochlin’s sense of a truthful, objective and impartial representation of the real world. There is also the predominance of meticulous rendering, especially in the portrait, which predominates a sparse if not empty background.

Why does one choose this manner of representation in a world saturated with the photomechanical? It could be that their work reminds us that we all possess the physical container of human perception. The mind itself works more like the body without organs (BwO) — desire without external reference as seen manifest in drug users, masochists, schizophrenics and lovers. (Deleuze and Guattari) These purveyors of an unattainable *jouissance* also happen to be the primary players in the narratives that these artists create.

Ilga Leimanis work, *Lovers and Other Strangers* is about memory and the implied ‘distance between’. The work comes from images sent at her request in correspondence with friends and acquaintances. Double portraits are painted from these pictures. They are mediated through her relationship with the subjects and a subtle inverted authorship occurs. The diptychs are made with an intention of expressing the passage of experience that may have occurred between the pictures.

Shelley Reeves uses the diptych to explore the duality of humanness. She wishes to express the mind-body paradox by symbolically painting her understanding of notions of inner-outer, public-private and self-other. For her subjects, again friends and acquaintances, the ‘other’ is sublimated into personally significant objects from which Reeves constructs her record of their physical passing through time.

For Reeves and Leimanis, the BwO resides in the subtle intercourse of memory. *Jouissance* is generated from the nostalgia of time consumed and relationships lived.

Kristi Ropeleski and Sefi Amir have a more intimate relationship with these priests of insatiable desire. A photograph is taken and quickly, before it disappears, is re-recorded through paint as if this medium was somehow more permanent.

In a hastier moment of life, one might visit strange places to meet characters from novels that had not yet been written. Naive, we might have assumed that a washroom was a washroom and that drug addicts were always somewhere else. Sefi Amir finds her inspiration in these darker corners of experience.

Amir's *Night at the Skala* and *Two by two* use portraiture to show the Body without Organs as human experience. The paintings are crafted like jewels, which will remain, as a trace of lives dedicated to the simultaneously disastrous and banal consequences of desire. Her recent work titled, *Never needed nobody*, places the artist as an observer of *jouissance*. As Narcissus, she must be both an outsider and a participant. The mind's eye is subjective by definition.

Kristi Ropeleski paints feverishly as a good painter very well should. She is in a hurry to record lives that seem to be passing quicktime. Naked, they are the BwO described with paint. Is this self-portraiture? Probably not, since painting requires discipline that is absent in the pursuit of desire. *Blood Harmony* and *Look at me when I'm talking to you* are works from a maturing observer. Ropeleski participates through living, no more, no less.

The Body without Organs is disruptive and transgressing of organised social systems. Nakedness sheds the uniforms that place us within our respective contexts. There can be no end to portraiture since it responds to the desire to be perceived from the exterior of our mind's eye.

Deleuze and Guattari. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus*.
 Kristeva, Julia. (1999) "Narcisse: la nouvelle démence." *Histoires d'amour*.

Ilga Leimanis
Dallas, 2002-2003
 diptych, 180 x 140 cm each panel
 oil on canvas



Kristi Ropeleski
Seabiscuit, 2004
 91 x 122 cm
 oil on canvas

Shelley Reeves
Diane, 2003
 62 x 160 cm
 oil on board



Lotus Studio



Paul L'Herbier

Ilga Leimanis
Riga II, 2001-2003
 diptych, 183 x 183 cm each panel
 oil on canvas

sefi amir

B.F.A. Concordia University, Montreal
 D.E.C., Fine Arts, Dawson College

Selected exhibitions

Two by Two (2005) The New Gallery, Calgary
Leave It To Drever (2005) Douglas Udell Gallery, Edmonton
A Night at the Skala (2004) Bar Skala, Montreal
Deux par Deux (2003) L'Oeil de Poisson, Quebec City
Regard à Gauche (2003) Galerie Articule, Montreal
Trop grand pour rester petit (2002) Leonard and Bina Ellen Gallery, Montreal
Quotidien(ne) (2000), Dawson College.

ilga leimanis

M.A., B.F.A. Concordia University, Montreal
 A.A.D., Academy of Latvia, Riga
 D.E.C. Fine Arts, Dawson College

Selected exhibitions

Lovers and Other Strangers (2003), Bourget Gallery, Montreal
Celi (1999), Gallery modeMaksla, Riga
La figuration en art contemporain de la Collection Loto-Québec, (2004, touring exhibition)
Les Femmeuses (2000, 2002), Longueuil
Soutine dienos 2000, Vilnius City Hall, Vilnius

kristi ropeleski

B.F.A., Concordia University, Montreal
 D.E.C., Fine Arts, Dawson College

Selected exhibitions

Look at Me When I'm Talking to You (2004), Artguise, Ottawa
Paintings by Kristi Ropeleski (2004), FLY, Montreal
Blood Harmony (2003), Zeke's Gallery, Montreal
The 3rd Annual Jessica Festica (2004), Barfly, Montreal
Visions Collectives (2004), McClure Gallery, Montreal

shelley reeves

M.A. ès arts, UQAM, Montreal
 B.F.A., Concordia University, Montreal
 D.V.A., Alberta College of Art, Calgary

Selected exhibitions

Family Portraits (2003), Gallery Vanderleelie, Edmonton
Binary Portraits (2002), Galerie Luz, Montreal
Cenesthésie (1998), Galerie UQAM, Montreal
Figure Humain (1999), Musée du Château Dufresne, Montreal
Biennale du dessin, de l'estampe et du papier du Québec (1999)
Frankenstein (1997), Karen Golden Fine Art, New York, NY
Laboratorio (1997), Dawson College



Lotus Studio

Shelley Reeves
François, 2003
 62 x 160 cm
 oil on board

Cover:
 Shelley Reeves (front left)
The Scottish Widow: Portrait of Ruth, 2000
 2 panels, 60 x 40 cm each
 oil on board

Kristi Ropeleski (front top)
 cover: *Panic in blue*, 2004
 91 x 122 cm
 oil on canvas

Sefi Amir (front bottom)
 cover: *Tony and Chloe*, 2002
 245 x 130 cm
 acrylic on arches paper

Ilga Leimanis (front centre)
 cover: *Jersey City II*, 2001
 diptych, 143 x 114.5 cm each panel
 oil on canvas

Acknowledgements

Organised and curated by **Giuseppe Di Leo**
 for the Warren G. Flowers Gallery

Thank you to all the people who generously
 contributed to the event:

The invited artists:

Sefi Amir, Ilga Leimanis, Shelley Reeves, Kristi Ropeleski

and

The Velan Foundation
 Julianna Joos, Chairperson, Fine Arts Department
 The Office of the Director General

February 23 to March 12, 2005

Warren G. Flowers Gallery
 4001, de Maisonneuve
 Montreal, Quebec
 H3Z 3G4
 ISBN 1 55016 546 1
 Dépôt légal - 1^{er} trimestre 2005

Catalogue and introduction: Andres Manniste



Sefi Amir
 Four panels from *Never needed nobody*,
 work in progress, 2005
 51 x 51 cm each