

Volume 27 Number 1 \$5.50

ART MEDIA POLITICS

# FUSE

MAGAZINE

The Dunlop  
Art Gallery Closes:  
Why you should care



Adrienne Lai on the resurfacing of  
minimalism in Vancouver

Florencia Berenstein on why floating  
to Australia is a bad idea

A cooking lesson from Yam Lau

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# editorial



If this issue is a little delayed, the blame can be laid on the board of the Regina Public Library that announced on November 26th that they intend to close the Dunlop Art Gallery and severely cut other library services that they offer to the public. When the press release reached our office, we were well on the way to finalising the content of the issue, almost ready to go to design.

Initial reaction to this news was a lament for the loss of a vital exhibition and research space, a unique experiment on how best to foster a sustained conversation on visual culture with the wider public — an experiment that, by all counts, was succeeding. It was apparent to us that it was necessary to change our course and gather, as soon as we could, the material that became the feature articles of this issue.

In the process of gathering this material, however, it became apparent that the closure of the gallery foreshadowed something. Among those we spoke with there is a sense of foreboding, a sense that all is not well — and that it might just be getting worse.

Maybe the announcement was amplified by other recent events, such as the closing of the Nova Scotia Arts Council (see issue 25:3).

Maybe the floating rumours that the Canada Council is undertaking a series of ‘consultations’ with visual artists across the country are making us worry. These rumours suggest that the Council is looking at revamping current individual artist grants with the aim of fostering “market sustainability.” Isn’t one of the basic tenets of the Canada Council support of non-commercial practices?

On the other hand, maybe the doom and gloom is merely a bit of pathos, amplified by our own precarious financial situation — we’ve seen a loss of more than twenty percent of our own government funding in the last two years. There are, however, some signs of hope — the current negotiations between CARFAC and the National Gallery (see the Short Fuse in this issue) among them. Maybe it is not as bad as it seems.

Whatever the case, we tracked down the right people, put together a feature section that gives context to the decisions made by the Regina Public Library board, that looks at the original motivations behind the establishment of the Dunlop, and that begins to outline what we have lost. And one more issue goes to press ....

— the editorial committee

*Alas, a last minute message. This time, as we approached the final moments of getting the revamped issue together, moments after calling the printer to arrange press time and just as we turn our attention towards our March fundraising event, another press release reaches us. The draft of the 2004 municipal budget for the City of Ottawa indicates a \$4.6 million dollar cut to cultural affairs. The calculators are still at work, but this represents a drop in per capita cultural funding from \$3.89 to a mere 57¢.*

*In Ottawa this year, they don’t even want to buy an artist a cup of coffee.*