

Success no small feat for finalists

Hard work and research cited by two competitors for RBC award



JOHN POHL

Any young people hoping to make a career in the art world need look no farther for role models than Montreal's two competitors for the RBC Canadian Painting Competition's top three prizes.

For Ianick Raymond and Julie Trudel, the secret to success is to devote much of their painting time to research and discovery, working long and hard to learn how colours and forms interact, how slight adjustments in either affect the whole, and so on. They focus on one theme and can discuss what they are doing in relation to the artists who have gone before them. And they work hard—very hard.

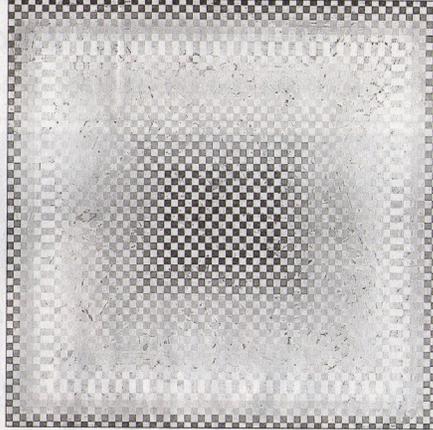
Raymond and Trudel will find out Tuesday if one of them is this year's best young painter in Canada, as determined by a jury of nine artists, curators and gallery owners. Fifteen artists, including another Quebecer, Amy Schissel of Gatineau, are vying for a first prize of \$25,000 and two honourable mentions of \$15,000 each.

Trudel is studying colour in a highly controlled way but hoping her methods will result in chance associations of shape and colour that will surprise her with painting that "has never been seen before."

In her current CMYK series, she pours acrylic-based silk-screen ink, which is translucent, drop by drop onto plywood panels. "What if the paint is more liquid, more transparent, if it drops like this, or that?" she said of her experiments.

The CMYK series presents her colour experiments as oval patterns on small pieces of plywood. Her paintings are most interesting when hung on the wall as a group. The RBC competition, however, is limited to one painting per artist. So Trudel's 14-inch-square paintings are up against much bigger paintings, including Raymond's 60-inch squares.

Raymond paints only in grey tones, in order, he said, to concentrate on the structure of the painting and the materials being used. He is also exploring the



ALAIN LEFORT

Ianick Raymond paints only in grey, as in *Décomposition (2)*, 2011. He says it helps him concentrate on the structure of his work.

tension between figuration and abstraction: Abstraction is primary now, but he "will probably come back to figuration," he said. The squares of the grid that give his painting its structure could become "pixels of (visual) information, but I don't want to do this now because there are many areas of abstraction to explore first."

He'd better rush his research—he admits that "figures are starting to be born" in his abstract painting.

Raymond and Trudel were among five artists chosen by a three-member Eastern Canada jury that included François LeTourneau, a curator at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, and Donald Browne, owner of the gallery in the Belgo building that bears his name.

Browne said the competition is not about artistic prowess or conceptual ideas, but about choosing the best painting in a room of 15.

RBC is trying to create a star system in Canada, he said. Art collectors want to know they are buying the work of the best artists.

Shari Hatt's exhibition at Browne's gallery plays on the dynamic between artist and art critic with a video of two actors dressed as clowns mimicking an artist trying to create her masterpiece and a self-absorbed critic. All the art clichés are there, including the artist who "just wants to be loved," Browne said. The uncomprehending critic leaves the studio, the artist's tears dry and she gets back to work.

It's a hopeful video, Browne said. The artist's spirit is unbroken.

For more on the RBC contest: www.rbc.com/sponsorship/paintingcompetition. **The Studio Visit** by Shari Hatt continues until Oct. 1 at Galerie Donald Browne, Suite 528, 372 Ste. Catherine St. W. For more information, visit galerie.donaldbrowne.com.

You might not think that a gallery lined with 80 photographs of the surface of the Thames River could be interesting, but the American artist Roni Horn pulls it off at Galerie de l'UQAM by showing the fleeting nature of a scene animated by the sun and wind. And at Concordia's Leonard and Bina Ellen Art Gallery, the Danish video-maker Jesper Just presents *Nomad* in *One's Own Mind*, five big-screen works

about loneliness. One of them, *Romantic Delusions*, features a hermaphrodite wandering the streets of Bucharest. Nobody pays any attention, even when he/she sings out her pain.

The two shows are part of the *Mois de la Photo*, which continues until Oct. 9 at the Arsenal and 13 other venues.

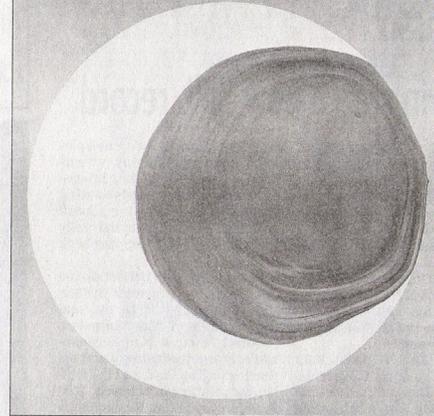
Beaux-arts des Amériques, one of the commercial galleries featuring photography this month, is showing Thaddeus Holownia's *Paris After Atget*, a series of black and white photos in the spirit of Eugène Atget (1857-1927). Holownia does street scenes, focusing on architecture that shows the layers of history—a beaux-arts building with contemporary signage, but with details of all the periods in between.

And the details are plainly visible, thanks to Holownia's view cameras, which make large negatives that need little extra enlargement. "I try to capture the beauty of a place through people's inhabitation of that place," he said.

For information on the *Mois de la Photo*, visit www.moisdelaphoto.com. **Thaddeus Holownia's Paris After Atget** continues until Oct. 9 at Beaux-arts des Amériques, 3944 St. Denis St. For more information, visit beauxartsdesameriques.com.

A pioneering feminist artist is being rescued from obscurity, thanks to the graphic novel *Who Is Ana Mendieta?*, as well as *Anima*, an exhibition at Concordia's FOFA Gallery curated by Christine Redfern.

The book, written by Redfern and illustrated by Caro Caron, describes the Cuban-born Mendieta's life, death and work. She made numerous videos of performances in which she used her own body to connect, she said, to "the unconscious urges that animate the world." The graphic novel is a polemic about



RICHARD-MAX TREMBLAY

Julie Trudel's *Test 44* is part of her intensive exploration of the uses of colour, to produce art that "has never been seen before."



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Caro Caron illustrated *Who Is Ana Mendieta?*, a graphic novel about the artist's fight for recognition in the male-dominated art world.

"What if the paint is more liquid, more transparent, if it drops like this, or that?"

Artist Julie Trudel on her CMYK series of experiments with use of colour

the fight by Mendieta and other female artists to win recognition in the male-dominated art world.

"She was a woman at the very forefront of using technology in art," Redfern said. Caron's original drawings are accompanied by the videos of several Montreal artists who use cutting-edge technology and are engaged with Mendieta's issues. They include Karilee Fuglem, Elena Willis and Jason Sanchez, and Philomène Longpré.

Anima continues until Oct. 7 at Concordia's FOFA Gallery on the first floor of the Engineering and Visual Arts Building, 1515 Ste. Catherine St. W. **Who Is Ana Mendieta?** will be launched Saturday at 2 p.m. at the gallery. On Wednesday, from 6 to 8 p.m., Longpré, Fuglem and Willis will discuss their work. For more information, visit fofagallery.concordia.ca.

john.o.pohl@gmail.com