

# WE COME in ART PIECES



**REMIX  
COLLECTIVE**

Norman Barney  
Claude Bolduc  
Karine Gibouleau  
Terry Graff  
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# REMIX COLLECTIVE: WE COME IN PIECES

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Terry Graff, Laurie Langford

*Singular Art*, as in *Strange Art*, *Bizarre Art*, *Awkward Art* or even *Deranged Art*, is a complex and rather eclectic trend in contemporary pictorial and plastic arts. Its sources of emergence are diverse and disparate. Though *Singular Art* finds its origins primarily in *Raw Art* (*Art Brut* — or so-called *Outsider Art*), one can also cite *Visionary Art*, *New Objectivity*, *Naïve Art*, and even urban and rural folk art amongst its trends of influence.

Historically, *Singular Art* was developed mainly out of *Raw Art*, a movement formalized circa 1945, emerging out of insane asylums. A number of observers began to invest the pictorial productions of asylum patients with artistic value. Amongst certain visual artists, this phenomenon triggered a desire to return to a more crude or raw, mode of artistic expression. Something so intensely pure, gritty and authentic seemed to emanate from the works of these “madmen” or “madwomen.” This art of the “outsider”, the “non-artist,” had a powerful impact. It can be said that it was the particular approach to *Raw Art* adopted by artists in the second half of the twentieth century that gave rise to *Singular Art*. One must also mention the crucial impact of the *ready-made* on *Singular Arts*. Since its introduction circa 1913 by Marcel Duchamp, the idea of investing a pre-existing industrial object with artistic qualities (the so-called *ready-made*) evolved. The use of industrial objects in plastic arts gradually gave rise to the assisted ready-made, namely, a ready-made that combines different pre-existing components in a new combination. Many artists adopted the practice of appropriating day-to-day manufactured objects and incorporating them into their works —deliberately or not— as pseudo raw material to create new configurations. Again, it was precisely the ostensible “artlessness” and strangeness of such a practice that contributed to the emergence of *Outsider Art* as a movement.

One must understand that the terms *Outsider Art*, and *Marginal Art*, are not to be taken as definitional. Far from describing its core artistic features, they reference, rather, the extrainstitutional way in which this artistic tendency developed. It is important, however, to describe this specific mode of expression based on its inner features rather than its transitory, socio-historical emergence. *Singular Art* (*Art Singulier*) is a contemporary trend in painting.



As a late development of **Raw Art** (*Art Brut/Outsider Art*), it is to be defined as a modernist sub-trend of neo-figurative art, which focuses largely on the strangeness of the living subject. It can include Goya and Bruegel the Elder among its precursors. Primarily symbolist, **Singular Art** expresses the torment and turmoil of contemporary life. To do so, it incorporates important mythological and dreamlike distortions of figuration in order to, at once, display and subvert the pictorial expression of the permanent crisis of the human condition.

Initially restricted to drawing and painting, **Singular Art** expands nowadays to all the other segments of plastic arts. Despite its wild variability and diversification, it is possible to observe a certain number of very stable elements in **Singular Art**.



1 - **Singular Art** often involves precision and virtuosity in its material execution. It is neither naïve nor raw.

2 - **Singular Art** typically represents living figures. These figures can be zoomorphic, anthropomorphic or both. Though they tend to exist in a world of fiction or mythology, they move and they act. Singular Art is not particularly interested in still life.

3 - The living entities presented are usually displayed in very complex collectives. The isolated portrait, or bust, are rare in **Singular Art**.

4 - **Singular Art** is simultaneously neo-figurative and antirealist. It presents living entities, which are radically problematic and bizarre. However, it tends to build a world of fiction that is open to symbolic interpretation and, hence, understandable.

5 - Tonally, **Singular Art** is ironic, despaired and derisive. It portrays a human condition that is painful and tormented, always transmitting a potent statement about the tragedy of existence.

6 - Polymorphic multiplicity is key. Oneiric in character, **Singular Art** rarely tells a single story. Rather, it tends to integrate a diversity of narratives and settings.

7 - There is no isolated landscape in **Singular Art**. Should it depict a town or a field, this town or field will be crowded, invaded, invested, messy, and carnivalesque.

8 - This mode of expression is neither formalist, nor geometric. It is more descriptive and figurative than "abstract" and decorative. Should non-figurative elements appear, they are typically tightly subordinated to an explicit narrative or statement.

9 - **Singular Art** tends to be more "ugly" than "pleasant", more "bitter" than "sweet", more "dirty" than "clean".

10 - When ready-made elements are incorporated into **Singular Art**, they are always in **assisted ready-made** mode. That is, they appear as clusters of pre-existing objects, not standing for themselves in isolation (classical ready-made), but placed by the artist at the service of a larger display, statement or narrative.

The title of the present exposition is crucial for an accurate understanding of our intent as a group, we come in peace. Although our popularity is on the rise, though we are the new kids on the block, it is neither our intention, nor our reason for being, to jeopardize the foundations of institutional art. Rather, as innovative artists, we wish to rattle and shake those foundations, as it is our fundamental role to do so. Though we are sharp and edgy, we remain an integral part of the vast and diversified family of plastic and pictorial arts. Our exhibition name is We come in pieces because we charge in disorder, in fragmented ranks, assuming peacefully our strict dissemblance and the eclecticism of our works. We are not a unified school or trend with a plain and monolithic doctrine. We are sparse, we are diverse, and we are motley. We are respectful (peace), but we are messy (pieces). We are who we are and we stand for what we stand for.



**Singular Art** brings discomfort and unease. It is neither easy listening nor light entertainment. It places us at the center of an incredibly uncomfortable and difficult aesthetic experience. It prioritizes its themes and its obsessions above all else. **Singular Art** is the art of the wrong, the broken, the wounded, and the sickened. It is neither decorative nor pretty. The artists we present here are making statements on the subject of humanity, society and history. They do not deliver an ugly art. They rather represent an ugly world. However, as these five artists solidly demonstrate, **Singular Art** is fundamentally humanist. It places the human being, and his or her painful alienation, at the very core of the philosophical reflection triggered by the artistic intervention. Animals are crucial also. They are, at once, simplified transpositions of the human being itself and autonomous entities. As such, they too display the destructive and polluting impact of humanity on its close environment. Humanity and animality, masculinity and femininity, mechanized persons and merchandized objects, crisis of our practical actions and disarray of our intellectual representations, are at the center of **Singular Art**. Something has gone terribly wrong. **We Come in Pieces** talks to you about it and shares with you our emotions on the subject of a strange and disquieting experience: existence.

*Paul Laurendeau, Docteur ès Lettres, 2019*

**Paul Laurendeau** born in 1958, Paul Laurendeau, Ph.D, University of Paris - Denis Diderot (Paris 7), has written over 50 articles and chapters on the subject of linguistics and the philosophy of language. He was a collaborator with Canadian Encyclopedia and co-authored the collective work *Entretien avec quatre philosophes*, (Éditions Hurtubise HMH), in which he wrote under the persona of Karl Marx and Socrates. He has also published a number of novels and poetry collections with *éditions ELP* as well as two essays. In regards to poetry, he most notably worked with photographer Allan Erwan Berger to create collections of **Pictopoetry** (under the joint pen name LauBer). He is presently working with painter Claude Bolduc on a collection of pictorial pictopoetry. He is the author of the blog *Le Carnet d'Ysengrimus*.



## About the Artists

We shall now summarize the vision of the five artists of Remix Gallery Collective whose works comprise this exposition:

**Norman Barney** - Norman builds assisted ready-mades. Starting with pre-existing objects, he organises configurations that impose new shapes and a perplexing semantics on the objects of origin. Inert, ordinary objects have an important place in his work. One could even consider that Norman's work confronts us with a reflection on how human existence has devolved into a collection of domestic objects whose initial intention of comfort has gradually transformed into a form of torture.

**Claude Bolduc** - Claude paints and draws. His vision is the strict result of his imagination. His work displays zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures that are often tangled in complex collectives and geometrical shapes and structures. A very rich symbolism emanates from his work. The religious dimension of certain of his paintings and drawings is actually often less sacred than profane. Sexuality, mythology and onirism are also key elements of his work.

**Karine Gibouleau** - Karine creates colourful miniature worlds in which depictions of reality and flights of fantasy mingle. Her intricate sculpted scenes use pathos and humour to comment on the human condition and issues such as globalization, consumerism and the environment. A large amount of her work consists of groups of dolls organized as complex collectives. She builds villages with tangles of crowds. The use of bright colors and the personification of animals give her work a childish and naive imprint which belies the often serious subject matter. The characters in Karine's narratives maintain dignity in difficult circumstances and her critique of society and human nature is couched in playfulness. The characters are usually placed amongst toy-like scenery incorporating subversive and bizarre elements. It is doll play turned nightmare.

**Terry Graff** - Terry draws and constructs kinetic figures and various structures of montages. He produces large multi-media constructions. He is also a painter. The haunting figure of the bird is the key element of his pictorial work. His bird figures are often in situations of *téléscopage* with technological elements (wheels, missiles, rocket propellers). His birds (or warbirds) are often involved in complicated and terrifying war-like interactions.

**Laurie Langford** - Laurie works with pre-existing material. She creates photographic collages, which are sometimes reproduced and copied or shredded and dismantled, as well as constructs complex assisted ready-mades. The intention is vividly subversive and very openly directed towards the theme of the crisis of interaction between genders. The world she creates is one of pain, a world in which initially, there may have existed the potential for joy, but in which something has gone terribly wrong.

# Remix Collective *We Come in Pieces*

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## List of Works

Norman Barney, *Apartment Dog*, 2016; Mixed Media Sculpture 31 in X 68 in X 28 in;  
Photograph taken by Jane Austin

Terry Graff, *Out of Order*, 2018; Mixed media assemblage 31.75 X 29.21 cm;  
Photograph courtesy of artist

Karine Gibouleau, *HYPERland*, 2014; Mixed media Installation; Photograph courtesy of artist

Claude Bolduc, *Midnight, January 1st 2000*, 2000; Oil on Canvas, 24 X 30 in;  
Photograph courtesy of artist

Laurie Langford, *Fastfood Prison (Sad Meal)*, 2019; Assemblage with mannequin legs,  
89 cm x 203 cm x 48 cm; Photograph by Donna Nolan



75 William Street North  
Chatham, Ontario N7M 4L4  
519.360.1998  
[www.chatham-kent.ca/TAG](http://www.chatham-kent.ca/TAG)



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