



Ted Fullerton
Will Gorlitz
John Kissick
Stu Oxley
Martin Pearce
Cheryl Ruddock

The Banquet Years

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In his 1969 book, *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I*, Roger Shattuck identified dinners, large and small, grand and humble, as markers of fin-de-siecle occasions and as progenitors of a nascent revolution in all aspects of life, but, most significantly in the creative arts. Shattuck casts four very different artists to represent the period - Rousseau, Satie, Jarry and Apollinaire.

A hundred years later and a continent removed, our group of artists has met consistently, but sporadically. We have eaten, talked, visited studios and taken encouragement and inspiration from our disparate approaches to painting.

Let's be clear - it's all been more modest. We can assume that our menus have been lower on the Michelin scale, and Paisley Street in downtown Guelph, certainly lacks some of the charm of the Boulevard Montparnasse. Ours is not a revolutionary historical moment - early twentieth century "newness" seems, in some ways, more distant than Giotto. However, our long engagement with making paintings defines us all. And to gather, share food and talk, before we return to our studios, has been sustaining in times that have increasingly seemed so very dark.

Ted Fullerton is a Canadian artist who works in painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture while also having been commissioned for a number of public sculpture installations. As a figurative artist his work is symbolic in nature. The conceptual foundation and ideology within his art practice is humanist in nature emphasizing the notion of belief, purpose and relationships: being and becoming. The inclination of humanity as "Other" from nature as opposed to nature being "Other" from humanity, which is the general and assumed collective acceptance, is a frequent conceptual and visual pursuit within his work. The selected paintings within this exhibition express, in part, the idea that nature is perceived and seen as different and alien from oneself yet we yearn and "feel" an affinity with it. Fullerton's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and is represented by the Bau-Xi Gallery in Toronto and Vancouver.



Will Gorlitz, *Late Evening*, 2017

Will Gorlitz has been working as a representational painter since the early 1980s. His distinctive iconography critically involves a variety of cultural art genre, while his non-narrative subjects present a metaphorical openness that situates personal experience within wider world concerns. Gorlitz's process employs photographic sources that are reformulated with an interpretive painterly approach to foreground visuality. Idiosyncratic support formats and installation considerations are often deployed in the presentation of his paintings in order to disrupt and reconfigure traditional viewing conventions. The diptych painting "Late Evening" that is included in this exhibition most clearly displays this feature of his practice. The three paintings by Will Gorlitz in "The Banquet Years" exhibition represent a sampling from different larger thematic bodies of work that he produced during his time living in Guelph when he became socially acquainted with the other painters in this exhibition. Will Gorlitz studied art at the University of Manitoba School of Art as well as the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design. He is represented by Birch Contemporary in Toronto, and Michael Gibson Gallery in London.



Stu Oxley, *Untitled*, 2023

Stu Oxley is a Canadian artist with a forty-five year history of exhibitions in national and international, public and private galleries. Primarily working as a printmaker and painter, Oxley's practice is defined by a distinctive form of poetic abstraction involving evocative colour and exquisitely responsive mark-making. He has a capacity to produce profoundly atmospheric and serene canvases with a seemingly sparse assembly of lines and washes. Oxley is intrigued by the nature of the marks themselves: their weight, size, placement and association. Rather than creating a literal transcription of the world, Oxley gets under the surface of things. His language of intuition and spontaneous mark-making seems to sit at the edge of consciousness. Oxley is represented in public and corporate collections across Canada and he is represented by Paul Kuhn Gallery in Calgary and Jennifer Kostuik Gallery in Vancouver.

John Kissick is known both as a painter and writer with exhibition record that includes over 40 solo exhibitions in Canada, the USA and Germany. His work has been featured in two nationally touring solo exhibitions: *A Nervous Decade* (2010) and *The Boom Bits* (2015) and included in a number of survey exhibitions on contemporary painting, such as the recent *Entangled: Two views on Contemporary Canadian Painting* exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery. As an essayist, John Kissick has written numerous catalogue essays and articles for periodicals, and was the recipient of a 2014 Ontario Association of Art Galleries (OAAG) Award for Curatorial Writing. Two recent essays: “Elephants in the Room” for *Canadian Art Magazine* and “Disco and the Death Switch: Tales from Contemporary Abstraction” for *Border Crossings* were nominated for National Magazine Awards. John Kissick is represented by Paul Kuhn Gallery.

Cheryl Ruddock is a painter from Detroit, Michigan who has been a practicing artist in Guelph, Ontario for more than 30 years. Her paintings belong to public, private, and corporate collections internationally. Cheryl Ruddock’s paintings operate at the edge of abstraction, exploring and pushing the boundaries of colour on canvas, paper, and wood. Recurring themes of femininity and the climate in crisis recur in her work. Her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Guelph, Gallery Stratford, Renaan Isaacs Contemporary, the University of Waterloo Art Gallery, the Kitchener Waterloo Gallery, Art Gallery of Peel, XEXE Gallery, and Prime Gallery, among others. She holds a BFA from the University of Guelph.

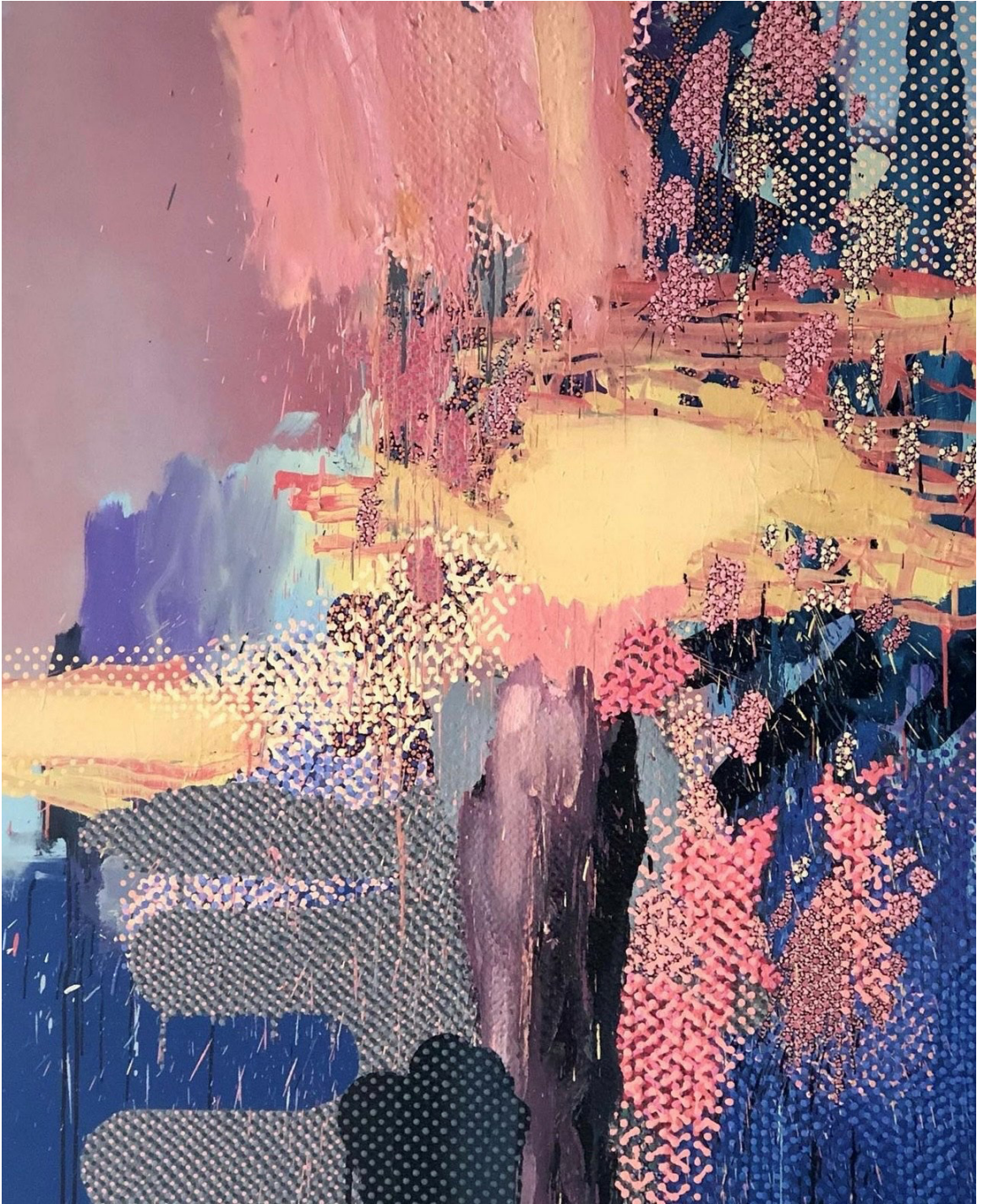


Cheryl Ruddock, *Meltdown, No. 4, 2023*



Martin Pearce, *The Shore*, 2023

Martin Pearce has been making paintings and drawings for 35 years. Pearce works in the interstices between drawing and painting, exploring the relationship between images as representation and images as a record or evidence of process. His work has been exhibited widely and is represented by Birch Contemporary in Toronto. He is the Director of the School of Fine Art and Music at the University of Guelph.



John Kissick, *The Slightest Chemical Taste*, 2021

The Banquet Years Ted Fullerton, Will Gorlitz, John Kissick, Stu Oxley, Martin Pearce, Cheryl Ruddock

April 5, 2024 - June 2, 2024

Opening Reception: Friday, April 5, 2024 | 7:00 pm

Assistant Curator: Michaela Lucio

Acting Assistant Curator: Tavis Lea

Program Coordinator: Irene MacCreadie

Design: Donna Nolan

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List of works

Ted Fullerton

Offering, 2013, oil on canvas, 48" x 72"

Return To the Nowhere At All, 2008, oil on canvas, 48" x 72"

Consumed Within a Landscape – Figure in a Landscape, 2013, oil on wood panel, 48" x 42"

Will Gorlitz

White & Yellow Roses / Red Vase, 2005, oil on canvas, 77" x 55"

Rhodesia, 2008, oil on canvas, 72" x 54"

Late Evening, 2017, oil on canvas, diptych, 2 canvases 72" x 54" each

John Kissick

Hang the DJ, 2016, oil and acrylic on canvas, 72" x 66"

The Slightest Chemical Taste, 2021, oil and acrylic on canvas, 60" x 48"

Stu Oxley

Untitled, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48"

Untitled, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 96"

Untitled, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 72" x 72"

Martin Pearce

Tremolite, mixed media on canvas, 52" x 52"

Northern Peninsula, mixed media on canvas, 24" x 20"

Ashes, mixed media on canvas, 48" x 36"

The Shore, mixed media on canvas, 24" x 24"

Locard's Exchange, mixed media on canvas, 18" x 24"

Memory Colours: Smith Square, mixed media on canvas, 22" x 30"

Memory Colours: Green Screen, mixed media on canvas, 24" x 36"

Danae, mixed media on canvas, 24" x 36"

Cheryl Ruddock

Meltdown, No. 4, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 84" x 48"

Meltdown, No. 6, 2022, acrylic on wood panel, 24" x 24"

Meltdown, No. 7, 2022, acrylic on wood panel, 24" x 24"

Meltdown, No. 9, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 24"

Meltdown No. 13, 2024, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 36"

Cover image: Ted Fullerton, *Return To the Nowhere At All*, 2008



75 William St. N., Chatham, ON

519-360-1998 | ckartgallery@chatham-kent.ca

www.tagartspace.com | www.chatham-kent.ca/TAG



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