

Fresh mashups

Collage persists in the digital age

By FRAN SCHECHTER



➔ **FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY** at Oakville Galleries (Gairloch Garden, 1306 Lakeshore East; Centennial Square, 120 Navy, Oakville), to September 1. 905-815-5989. [See listing.](#)

NOW RATING: **N N N N**



Jason de Haan fuels fantasy by cutting up 1,400 science fiction book covers.

Collage and assemblage, techniques that played a major role in 20th-century art movements like cubism, Russian constructivism and surrealism, are still going strong in the digital age. In this entertaining show curated by Matthew Hyland, 18 contemporary Canadians, working in media ranging from traditional cut-and-paste to painting, sculpture and video, create quirky, lively mashups of art-historical and media imagery and found objects.

Some wall works get a visual charge by liberating material from a background, like Balint Zsako's *Monolith*, made of skeletons from a human anatomy text, and Jennifer Murphy's *Pink Moon*, a wall-filling spiral of paper fish, birds, butterflies and flowers strung together with thread.

Smaller works cut up classical art: Zsako wittily superimposes still life and portrait elements from auction catalogues; Elizabeth Zvonar juxtaposes images from an art history textbook to comment on its Western-centric bias.

Jason de Haan's *New Jerusalem*, two huge circles built up with colourful cutouts from pulp sci-fi book covers, is an eye-popping take on futuristic fantasy, while Barbara Astman stays topical in photo-enlarged notebook-page collages of politicians and celebrities, spare works enhanced by shadows of works on the other side of the page.

Jacob Whibley channels mid-century graphic and architectural design in geometric collages meticulously crafted from old paper. In Luanne Martineau's *Saskatchewan*, a sprawling, origami-like "creature" of black paper hexagons gets a subtle kick from a hint of bright-coloured braided string.

Georgia Dickie makes simple, evocative assemblages from wood and metal bits that look salvaged from a carpenter or metal smith's workshop; Valérie Blass's plaster – possibly two draped human forms on an inclined base from which a hand protrudes – plays with tropes of classical sculpture, and Geoffrey Farmer's two enigmatic floor-lamp-like works feature light bulbs on sticks ornamented by poems, a hat and mysterious postcard-sized framed pictures.

In the age of Photoshop, there's something lovely and tactile about art that relies mainly on paper, scissors, glue and imagination. (And you also get an end-of-summer stroll in the scenic Gairloch Gardens.)

art@nowtoronto.com

• NOW | August 23-30, 2012 | VOL 31 NO 52

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