

ABOUT US
VISITOR INFORMATION
JOIN + SUPPORT
CONTACT US
HOME

EXHIBITIONS
COLLECTIONS
ART EDUCATION
FESTIVAL OF BANNERS
ARTFEST

ART RENTAL + SALES
GIFT SHOP
FACILITY RENTAL
LINKS
SITE MAP

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

FUTURE EXHIBITIONS

ART EXHIBITIONS

MISSIONS

ONWARD

PAST EXHIBITIONS

NOVEMBER 2 - 22, 2007

This interview with artist Tom Bendtsen and curator Gregory Ball was conducted on October 10, 2007.

Q:

Your exhibition entitled *Onward* in the lower gallery is a departure from the three-dimensional bodies of work you have created in the past. I am interested in why you have moved into the territory of the two dimensional and why you have chosen drawing specifically as a medium of expression?

A:

Although the majority of my work has been three dimensional in nature, past works have involved photography, film, video and some very poorly executed paintings. Ideas usually begin the process for me. The first drawing I did for this series came about quite unexpectedly. In 2003 one of my book works prompted a gallery director to request a drawing of said piece. This large book work involved using books as pixels to create a landscape image. It also contained a small mechanical bird as part of the larger installation. Rather than creating a straightforward illustration of this work, I offered a rendering that summarized Argument #4(b). That drawing led to the 'Terminal' series.

INFORMATION

Address
900 Fifth Street
Nanaimo, BC V9R 5S5

[view map](#)

Contact
info@nanaimogallery.ca
Tel: (250) 740-6350
Fax: (250) 740-6475

Opening Hours
Monday to Friday
10 AM - 5 PM
Saturday
12 PM - 4 PM



Over the past two decades you have described your artwork as being oppositional; the balance of work is constantly at odds with opposing forces. You use the term oppositionalism to define this discordant relationship in your work. Could you elaborate on this idea and how it functions in these particular drawings?

In other works the appearance of confidence/stability has always been tempered with a fallibility or inflexibility. This show and these works are more concerned with a specific human driver, the predominant instinct that leads us to innovate, remain in motion. Combining the feeding instinct of a baby bird with an adult human body results in a combined figure; one that is constantly hungry for what is just beyond its reach. This seems to me to be a realistic portrait of the contemporary individual.

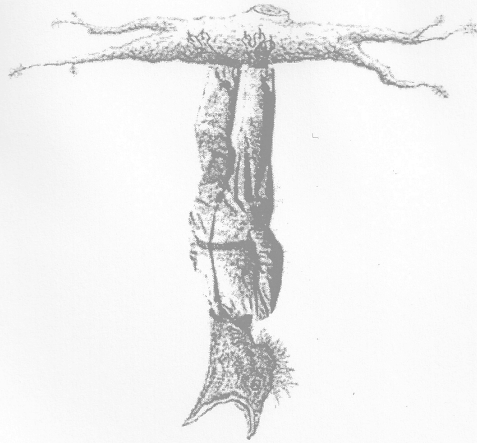
Some of the drawings are singular birds while others are grouped. Could you discuss some of the narratives in individual pieces and in the series as a whole?

The group drawings are an attempt to link our individual drives/goals/obsessions. My impatience with a very familiar art making strategy may not be that different than someone else's need for the latest playstation. We all instinctively move towards what comes next.



The drawings themselves are exquisite and beautifully rendered. There are wonderful and minute details in the drawings; an example would be a coloured badminton bird in Terminal # 13. They perhaps have historical connections with the printed etchings of the 18 th century artist Francesco de Goya. Would you agree? Are there other historical influences that you feel are prominent?

The connections you make are very flattering, however I think the reason these drawings are rendered as they are has more to do with my own tendency towards obsessive reasoning, to give them expression would create ambiguity. The abstracted objects that float just beyond the reach are designed to be somewhat familiar, to be almost known.

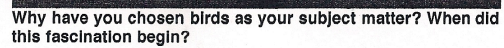


Each drawing is numbered and given the word Terminal as a title. What is the purpose of consistently using this word in the titles?

Although our instinctive need to constantly redefine ourselves, innovate, avoid statuses, is largely responsible for our evolution, it's my view that our current manifestation of this instinct has outgrown its effectiveness. The title 'Terminal' simultaneously refers to a dock to be engaged and an irreversible momentum towards an end.

You have also included in this exhibition a video piece entitled Push. I am interested in the connection between this specific piece and its relationship to the series of drawings. Is there a particular dialogue that you want the audience to observe when viewing these works together?

The sculptural work Push is the physical manifestation of the abstracted design element in each drawing. The viewer sets this kinetic work in motion. The piece only operates while a button is being pushed.









MADE  DESIGN.CA