

Argument #5

Tom Bendtsen

May 11 – June 16, 2001

Hamilton Artists Inc., Hamilton, Ontario

Tom Bendtsen's *Argument* series—this gallery is now graced with *Argument #5*—gives us an opportunity to look at a manifestation of tradition. Using books from his own collection, along with books borrowed from libraries, churches, and other public institutions, Bendtsen constructs impressively large imitations of classic architectural forms: arches, towers, walls, columns. Textbooks, literary classics, and pocket novels are strategically arranged and juxtaposed to create "dialogues" within this architecture. Series' books, like F.W. Dixon's "Hardy Boys", or "Reader's Digest Condensed Classics", establish level lines that ultimately organize the otherwise chaotic barrage of titles, genres, binding methods, and font styles. Thousands of books are meticulously stacked and ordered.

Finally, we have to admit that Bendtsen's *Arguments* mark the coming death of a very tangible historical legacy: the printing and collecting of books. Libraries are filling dumpsters with tomes that they have meticulously eviscerated and digitized. Lunatics are building obsessive tunnels inside their homes with cheap, easily accessible volumes. Books are rotting, left out in piles and falling out of order—note that the books Bendtsen has borrowed from libraries have intentionally been freed of their library registration codes. A glorious, magnificent tradition is coming to a close. The very history of books, like old Roman pillars or the walls of Jerusalem, is crumbling to an end. Bendtsen's *Argument #5* simply restores to the tradition of books a semblance of its former majesty.—Tor Lukasik-Foss

One-Year Anniversary of The Marguerita Project Guerrilla Postering Campaign

Shaan Syed

800 silkscreened posters mounted on the streets of downtown Toronto

An ongoing project executed summer 2000 and lasting as long as people remember it

To live and not somehow be validated or recognized is terrifying. Perhaps making art is a way of grasping at importance in this lifetime.

I have a friend. Her name is Marguerita. Last summer, a quick and unimportant sketch of her was taken and blown up over 200 times its original sketchbook size. Eight hundred posters were silkscreened and mounted guerrilla-style on the streets of Toronto. At one point Marguerita was everywhere you turned. It seemed everyone "knew" the woman with the name of a drink, yet very few people knew why or how she had suddenly appeared. Her pensive and slightly sad expression seemed to create an air of mystery within back alleys and boarded-up housing. Eventually, the posters began to fade. They were posterized over, graffitied, ripped down, stolen. The occasional Marguerita still survives as a ghost in more remote corners of the city. When I wear my Marguerita T-shirt I am asked by strangers, "Where have I seen that woman before?" However fleetingly her image appeared, Marguerita proved to have lodged herself in people's psyches. Fewer and fewer people approach me with this question now. This August marks the one-year anniversary of Marguerita's initial glory and will be celebrated with the appearance of a new face: Jane's.

—Shaan Syed

