

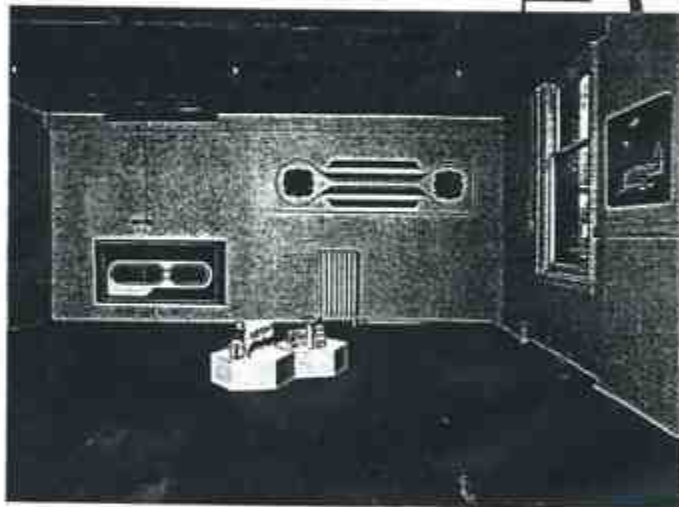
MISRULE AT THE APOLLO

12 Temperance Street, Toronto

"Misrule at the Apollo" was an exhibition of twelve Toronto and Montreal artists held in a vacant, unrepentant 1950s downtown office space. The exhibition sought to provide an alternative to the orthodoxy of much current curatorial practice and art writing. (An Apollonian orthodoxy might be described as theoretical and well-ordered.) Artists Jennifer McMackon and Oliver Girling, the exhibition's curators, plot out their version of Apollonian orthodoxy in an accompanying catalogue with a romp through textbook modernism that concludes with a warning of the perils of partially digested French post-structuralism. Structured as a weave in two typefaces, the catalogue – aptly designed by John Massier – downplays any single authoritative voice. The text is also a record of the correspondence, conversations and studio visits between the artists and curators, and frankly relates whether the curators were able to negotiate meaning in the exhibiting artists' work. To support artworks that are, arguably, not theory focused, the curators have presented their first-hand research notes and an exhibition laid out with the clarity of a jumble sale.

In addition to existing outside of canonical modernism or modish readings of theory, many of these artworks pointedly, and with some humour, reflect on the manufacture of art and cultural history. Marlene Klassen's guided *Trophy Girl* figurines climb billiard-table green walls to dissolve in a Bernini ecstasy under the hallway's skylight. These factory-made casts of women's achievements – in water skiing, gymnastics, sharpshooting, etc. – are accompanied by a set of nine mahogany award-shields mounted on an adjacent wall. Each shield has an engraved metal plate tacked onto it that announces a Christian virtue – obedience, patience, purity....

Eric Glavin's three oblong paintings – using a greyed (faintly insipid) pastel palette and mounted on deep stretchers (at least 10 cm) – recall 1970s supergraphics, Peter Halley's paintings and, in a gesture both corporate and only too familiar, the packaging design of the household cleaning products the artist has arranged on a low, illuminated plinth. These paintings seem comfortable in this utilitarian room above the many-times-painted radiators and well-travelled linoleum.



Eric Glavin, paintings and sculpture (1994), photo by Pouzant Apkanan