





WAG

WATERLOO

ART GALLERY

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

**September 11 – November 20, 2005**

Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery

**September 15 – October 20, 2005**

University of Waterloo Art Gallery

Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery  
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*Connecting Art and Life*

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO  
art gallery





# **GUNTERS**

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## **Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery**

It is a pleasure to pen this introduction to a catalogue documenting the retrospective of the work of Art Green. I have known and admired Art's work from afar for many years, and upon moving to this city, cited this project among the "must do" items for the Gallery. Art's contribution to the international artworld dates from the sixties in Chicago, and continues today as the artist flourishes here on Canadian soil. An influential artist, he has made as great a contribution as a teacher; and his example, gentle humour and insight have inspired many young artists.

Organized with the University of Waterloo Art Gallery, the *Art Green Retrospective* provides another example of the collaborative nature of the work that KW|AG and our colleagues are undertaking in this community. We are blessed to be able to work with so many generous and creative people. Carol Podedworny has been enthusiastic about the undertaking of the project from the first conversation. Her efforts and UWAG's contribution, along with the work of KW|AG Curatorial Consultant Allan MacKay, have enabled this project to happen.

Gary Michael Dault has written a terrific essay in his usual fashion, providing real insight into the creative meaning of Art's work, in addition to assisting Art with selecting the works on loan. We are grateful to the many organizations and individuals in the United States and Canada who contributed works to this exhibition.

Thank you to the Musagetes Fund at the Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation, Canada Council for the Arts, and the Ontario Arts Council support towards KW|AG exhibitions and activities.

To all who have assisted with this endeavour I express the gratitude of our Board and Staff; and to the artist, our congratulations and admiration for his excellent work.

**Alf Bogusky**

Director General, KW|AG







## University of Waterloo Art Gallery

Art Green has been an important, generous and committed member of the University of Waterloo community for near 30 years. As a professor in the Department of Fine Arts, Art has influenced the work and character of many of the students who have passed through our doors. In 1990, Art received the prestigious Distinguished Teacher Award, an acclaim bestowed on only four professors in the university community per year. As a practising visual artist, Art has contributed to the dialogue on contemporary painting in both Canada and the United States. From his critical work as a member of artistic up-starts “the Hairy Who” in Chicago in the 1960s, to his election as a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts in 1999, Art’s career has been marked by awards and exhibitions that cross the border and the continent. It is gratifying to be able to mark this exceptional artistic and academic career in joint exhibitions at the UWAG and the KW|AG.

The University of Waterloo Art Gallery is pleased to collaborate on *Heavy Weather: Art Green Retrospective* to document a significant 40 year practice; to celebrate a good friend and wise colleague; and to work with the outstanding staff at the KW|AG. *Heavy Weather* is also a satisfying vehicle with which to send Art “off to the studio” as he retires from the University in spring 2006.

My thanks to Art for his generous assistance in producing the UWAG arm of the Art Green Project; to Alf Bogusky, Allan MacKay, Zhe Gu and Tiffanie Ting at KW|AG for their assistance in the exhibition’s production; and to Dean Robert Kerton at the University of Waterloo who has provided generous support for the exhibition.

### **Carol Podedworny**

Director/Curator, UWAG



Source image courtesy of the artist.

ARTIST

STATEMENT

My father was a civil engineer who designed bridges for the Nickel Plate Road, and my mother was a natural colourist who pieced quilts and loved to grow flowers. Naturally, I strongly identified with each of them, which no doubt primed me for my continuing interest in uniting opposites in my work.

I had originally planned to study industrial design (which seemed a reasonable compromise between engineering and art) but during my foundation year at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, I changed course and switched to painting and drawing. The nature of my work has been deeply influenced by the artists I met during my studies there; as well as by living in Chicago, a place of great contrasts and competing ideas. I loved the rich variety of its structures (by architects as different as Louis Sullivan and Mies van der Rohe), the artworks displayed at the museum, the art of the street, and the entirely compelling and aloof images of other cultures I saw at the Field Museum. I heard the Chicago Symphony — and Glenn Gould — as a doorman at Orchestra Hall and loved Chicago blues. Influenced equally by de Chirico; Magritte; and the sometimes idealized, sometimes sadly objective and melancholic images I collected from old texts and magazines, I aspired to make paintings that were (in my words at the time) “...awkward and monstrous, boring and familiar.”

In the late 60s, it was my immense good fortune to be invited to join a group of artists for a series of rambunctious shows at Chicago’s Hyde Park Art Center — we chose to call ourselves, our exhibition and its comic book catalogue “the Hairy Who”. These shows generated an astonishing response of interest and critical notice, which eventually led to an equally surprising offer to teach at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, a school that, in 1969, was virtually at the centre of the conceptual art movement (and as such, represented an approach approximately opposite to that which I knew in Chicago). The shakeup entailed in accepting that offer was balanced by another positive development — my marriage to my wife Natalie, whose Art Institute education in pattern and

fabric design became another strong influence. I lashed my disparate images together with painted cords and began to emphasize my own version of the picture plane.

After a few years in Nova Scotia, a Canada Council Bursary allowed us to move to Vancouver, British Columbia. There, I accumulated many more influences, enlarged my catalogue of idealized and oppositional imagery, and also added to my repertoire of time-worn and useful visual conventions. We moved to Toronto in 1976 and in 1977 I joined the Fine Arts Department at the University of Waterloo, where I have remained ever since.

Although the University of Waterloo is best known for its Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science programs, teaching painting and drawing in such an environment has been a good fit for me. Inspired by psychology and geometry texts, I became more interested in how we interpret and form images in our minds; I tried pushing perspective to the breaking point, and got interested in the Necker Cube (often used in quilt patterns). I was intrigued by the possibilities of simultaneously representing all sides of a rotating cube and, starting in the mid-1980s, I incorporated tiling patterns of unfolded cubes along with the hypercube in my work.

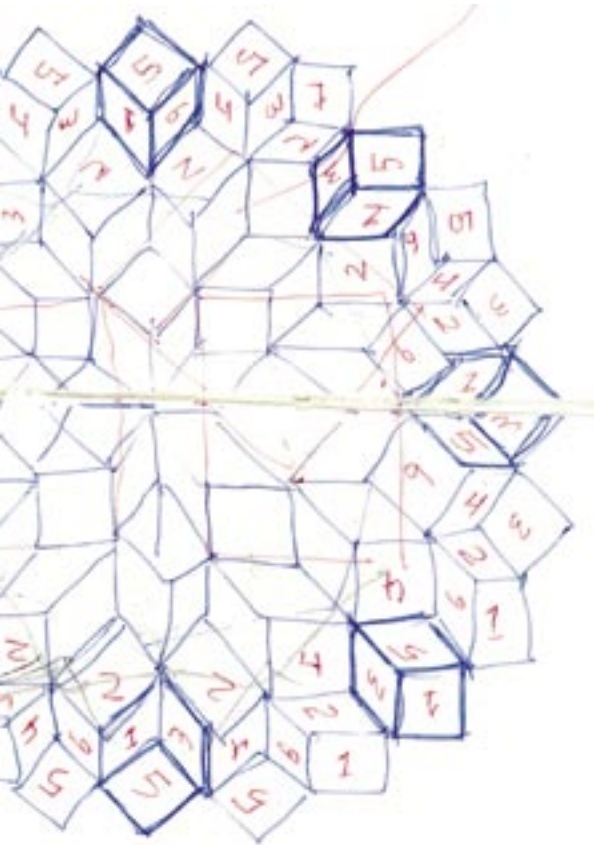
Since then, I have been trying to make layered paintings that take a long time to “see”. I want to encourage the viewer to be conscious of the (usually unconscious) process of the interpretation and construction of images in the mind. At the same time as I have been incorporating “rational” ideas and geometric structure in my work, I have opposed that with imagery inspired by personally compelling notions such as action at a distance, for example an image of a candle lighting the moon.

I have often described my ideal viewer as someone with time on their hands (perhaps fighting off a lingering head cold) who has tired of critiquing TV shows and of mentally sorting out the repeats in the wallpaper, who also takes a similar approach to examining my work — seeing patterns, making connections, sorting out layers, interpreting the imagery and questioning my motives.

## **Art Green**



Source image courtesy of the artist.







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“In every work of art,” he said, “the subject matter is primordial, whatever the artist is conscious of it or not. A greater or lesser degree of plastic quality is no more than evidence of the degree to which the artist is obsessed by his subject matter; form is always the measure of this obsession. But it is the origin of the subject and of the obsession which should be sought....”

— James Lord, *Giacometti* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1985), 303.

But your eyes proclaim  
That everything is surface. The surface is what's there  
And nothing can exist except what's there....

— John Ashbery, “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror” in *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror: Poems by John Ashbery* (New York: Penguin, 1976), 70.

Preliminary sketches courtesy of the artist.

You have to keep your head with Art Green's paintings, even though, in work after work, he is abjuring you to lose it. About which pictorial undertow, there is more to be said shortly.

The title of this meditation on the long, vivid trajectory of Green's work is, of course, an unwarranted pillaging from Samuel Beckett: the allusion is specifically to Richard W. Seaver's selection from Beckett writings called *I Can't Go On, I'll Go On* (Grove Press, 1976), and ultimately, from a famous interchange between Beckett's two legendary supertramps Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* (1948):

Estragon: I can't go on like this.

Vladimir: That's what you think.

What do I mean, in the case of Green's paintings, by going on like this?

I mean that a retrospective exhibition is a deepening mystery.

I mean that from the very beginning of the arc of Green's painting practice which began forty years ago in Chicago, his paintings have always been chromatically intense, theatrical and hierarchical (one critic, writing in *ARTnews* in 1977, mentioned the "aggressive clarity of Green's technique" but then rather oddly referred to the paintings as "relaxingly symmetrical"). But as Green has *gone on*, the paintings have relentlessly, inexorably become a great deal more imagistically congested; and coolly, cunningly, almost demonically layered, in a way that requires something akin to imagistic archeology and exegesis to read them fully. His works have proceeded, in other words, from an initial brassy, boyish blare, to the accelerating attainment of a dizzying procedural delicacy, rounded by a perceptual complexity of an almost daunting subtlety. In a review in the *Chicago Daily News* (Feb.11-12, 1978), Franz Schulze noted that while "in the middle 1960s Green was working in a shoot-from-the-hip, pop-influenced manner that featured large commercial images done in strident color and a gruff drawing style," the work of "a young man too coarse to be elegant, yet too vigorous to fret about his coarseness..." Nevertheless by 1978, the reviewer felt Green had "gained suavity." Which is true enough, if a tad understated.

In the beginning, Green's paintings were boppy fun to look at. They cheerfully provided the visual pop of a burgeoning wad of bubble gum, blown and burst. As the work continued, however, the paintings slowly appeared to densify not colouristically (though often in that way too), but in the ways in which the language of the paintings was gradually pared away into a visual poetry engendered by a handful of pure, true things.

Over the years, Green has gradually honed and winnowed himself an imagistic repertoire that is has become, in aggregate, a subtle, flexible tool for going on. Certain favoured images, the fallout of a process akin to evolutionary natural selection, have coalesced into an imagistic vocabulary, leaving behind images less nuanced, less



resonant, less given to integration within the parameters of his practice (that which thou lovest well, noted Ezra Pound, remains; the rest is dross). Green's painting has gradually come to define and then employ a flexible, elastic language of symbols, a discourse of depicted things, codified into a grammar of belief, and finally into a canon of meaning.

It is easy to overlook the fact that while they seem merely (and arbitrarily) to constitute the *spiritus mundi* (the image bank or image-frequency list) of his later paintings, such "large" symbols, symbolic objects and symbolic conditions as flames, bridges, tires, moons over water, searchlights, tornados,<sup>1</sup> passing airplanes, scissors, detached, shield-like, female fingernails (which Green once found in British Vogue "all lined up in rows like paint-chips"), puzzle-pieces, the projected shadowy shapes of lovers embracing — all these are deeply, archetypally positioned, first within culture at large, and as an intimating echo within the fabric of Green's works — and are thus essential to the import of his art.



Source images courtesy of the artist.

This is what I have come to think about the art of Green. The fact that the following passage occurs in a book I was reading just few hours ago about Dostoevsky ought not to compromise its usefulness here:

The truth is that all essential *art* is symbolical; it is a *bridge built* between *two worlds*, a sign that expresses a deep, authentic reality; the end of art surpasses experimental reality and is to express hidden reality, *not in a direct way but by means of projected shadows* [my italics].<sup>2</sup>

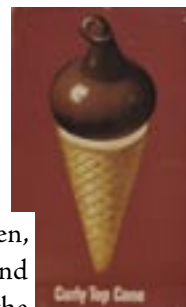
I am using this generalized language more literally, clearly, than is warranted (Green, in fact, does actually trade in the depiction of bridges “built between two worlds” and in “projected shadows”, which is why the passage is irresistible). But the point of the passage is that it reminds me that the continuing and, more importantly, the deepening location of the images and symbols located within the tissue of the later paintings, their frequency and recurrence, lend these works an essentially *tragic* dimension — a suggestion that may well seem wide of the mark when first raised up into the glare of the zappy “fun” Green’s paintings have always been expected to provide.

For now, let us at least say this: the early paintings are essentially *centrifugal* in effect. That is, they throw outwards, from the jaunty cornucopia of their own barely quenchable pictorial appetites, an exuberance of objects and ideas.



In two of the early Tastee-Freeze paintings (we would say Dairy Queen, but Green’s pictures were made by an American boy) *Absolute Purity* (1967) and *Saturated Fat* (1971) for example, the gigantic, human-scaled custard-cone in the former is, for some reason, made to share a portrait-like centrality with an obese, pump-shod, female leg (Green has referred irreverently to its fleshly mass as “diseased flesh”) which, as if forced to do double-duty as a chimney, is now belching fire; while in the latter painting, there is so much going on it all has to be lashed together to keep it, you feel, from flying in your face.

About *Saturated Fat*, teacher and critic Dennis Adrian, generally acknowledged to be the chief historian of Chicago painting, wrote in the *Chicago Daily News* in July of 1972 that while we could all see the giant (and convincingly rendered) Tastee-Freeze cone clearly enough:



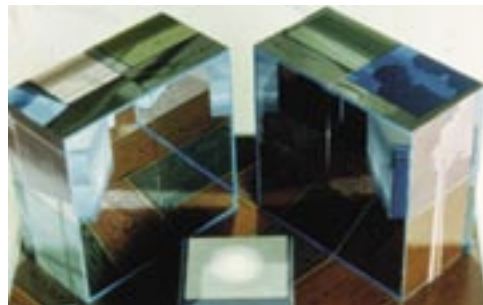
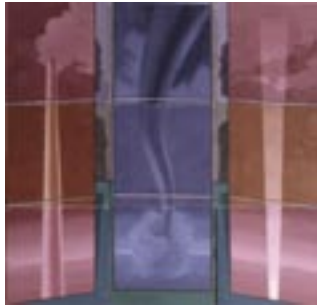
Source image courtesy of the artist; *Absolute Purity*, 1967

...why is it lashed, together with a wide-track tire, in suspension before a moonlit sea in the background, to the rubbery draperies of a strange proscenium? Elements of contradiction abound; an inferno rages within the ice cream; the various images described are tied within the broken-out opening of some wood-grain wallpaper that perversely imitates a herringbone parquet floor.



*Saturated Fat*, 1971





*Hit or Miss* (various installation details), 1984

The centre cannot apparently hold (to paraphrase Yeats), and things are on the point of falling apart. Indeed mere chaos might well be loosed upon the world were it not for the fact that Green is both the perpetrator of his own burgeoning heterodox events, a wicked, pictorial catcher-in-the-rye, and at the same time, the custodian of that “mere chaos,” the whip-cracking trainer of these imagistic wild beasts that threaten any moment to bite your head off. One of the paintings included in this exhibition from 1992 is titled *Centrifugal Force*, and is a *tour de force*, summary, centrifuge-painting in the sense that it brings together a compendium of favourite Green images and positively whirls them about within its diagonal-filled, rotor-like format.

Later paintings, by contrast, are increasingly *centripetal*. That is to say, they feed hungrily and with increasingly rococo complexity upon certain clarified images and ideas that have already, in the course of the painter’s practice, imbedded themselves in the inner workings of his sensibility (the extraneous, mostly pure-pop ideas seemed gradually to be dispersing; the boyish ice cream cones melt away, giving place to the exquisite lyricism of, say, searchlights questing after the moon). “The mysterious road goes inwards,” noted Novalis.<sup>3</sup>

This arsenal of residual, surfacing images, bobbing more frequently now to the surface of the works, has somehow become internalized within his production — sometimes almost impenetrably deeply — by means of repetition, layering, shadowing, distortion and projection, and, given Green’s predilection for wood-grain effects in pigment, by means of something you might call an *in-grained absorption into the whole*.<sup>4</sup>

In a painting such as *Hit or Miss* (1984), one of the Green’s few “lettrist” paintings (along with, in this exhibition, the remarkably restrained *Trial + Error*), letters function as compositional elements as a means of proclaiming the work’s title and as a kind of thwarted utterance (part of the fundamentally anti-linguistic, if not anti-discursive, nature of his paintings). The carefully painted panels of faux-wood grain (or is it more a matter of high mimetic wood-grain, painted in a faux or artificial manner?) slice through the picture’s shallow, illusory space, providing a wonky kind of support to the work’s romantic central panel; the system of diagonals contribute greatly, accelerating the vitality, the kineticism of this slippery, delicately tectonic work — as diagonals always will.<sup>5</sup>

All these ideas cry out for explanation and example.

It might be prudent, however, before tackling more of the meaning of Green’s paintings, to circle round a little first and catch ourselves up with the painter’s history, albeit in a somewhat abbreviated way.

Green has been committedly *going on* with painting since he decamped from his native Indiana and fetched up at the Art Institute of Chicago, where, during his work as a graduate student (he had earned his B.F.A. degree in 1965), he became one of the founding members of that city’s soon-to-be notorious collective of six young artists who proceeded to call themselves *the Hairy Who*.



*Trail + Error* (detail), 1980; the Hairy Who Exhibition, Chicago, 1968, courtesy of Jim Nutt; *Hairy Who* comic cover, 1966.

The Hairy Who, in addition to Green, was Jim Nutt, Gladys Nilsson, Suellen Rocca, Karl Wirsum and Jim Falconer. Given the group's predilection for making an art that embodied a disrespectful, confrontational, abrasive, low-cultural, contrarian *joie de vivre*;<sup>6</sup> for celebrating their stridently sidestream, peripheral aesthetic in their beloved comic-book posters and catalogues; and laughing and snickering their way through most of the media coverage they garnered (which was a lot); they appear to have been a madcap bunch. By the time Green moved to Canada to accept a teaching position at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax in 1969, he was gaily if a bit ruefully referring to the jocular aura surrounding Who activity as "Hairy hoopla".

What did Hairy Who art look like? The aforementioned Dennis Adrian points out in *Who Chicago?*,<sup>7</sup> a book-length catalogue that accompanied an exhibition of the art of these Chicago Imagists (as the Hairy Who and a few other assorted area artists were often called) that toured the British Isles in 1980-81: although the painters in the exhibition were clearly their own men and women, there did appear to be a certain sharing of attitudes and sensibilities among them, that, if it did not strictly define what they did, at least helped make intelligible the look and the preoccupations of their art. Adrian mentions, for example, "a high quotient of formal incident throughout the pictorial field: the works", he wrote, with a nice feeling for understatement "are very busy." (Russell Bowman, in a second essay in the book, uses the term "*horror vacui*" to describe the degree to which painters like Green, Wirsum and Nilsson tended to "fill every available space in their compositions with dense detail".)

Colour in the work of the Chicago Imagists, Adrian suggests, is usually "high and intense, even in works where the chroma consists largely of closely related hues". He also notes that, by and large, these painters traded in "a highly refined, intricate technique: any sense of gestural direction of the stroke or of the 'hand' of expressionist painting is all but completely absent. This careful finish," adds Adrian, "gives the image a high degree of resolution, enhancing its visionary force." (He cites Green as well as painters Ed Paschke, Jim Nutt and Karl Wirsum as convincing practitioners of this "high degree of resolution".)

Adrian also draws attention to the extent to which the Chicago Imagists tended to emphasize the "object-like character" of their work, citing Nutt's frequent painting on both sides of a work, the extensive use these artists made of painted frames and "reverse-painting on plexiglass", and their predilection for the making of out-and-out constructions that lie somewhere between painting and sculpture; to which one can add Green's fondness for aluminum kitchen molding as framing,<sup>8</sup> as well as his use of layered and shaped canvases, some of which employ altar-like wings and other spatially assertive extensions to the point of their achieving an almost architectural authority, see for example later works such as *Risky Business* (1980), *Persons Unknown* (1985) and *Circular Argument* (1994).



But Chicago-art-qua-Chicago-art notwithstanding, there is a persuasive argument to be made that, as much as Green's involvement with the Hairy Who, it was the city of Chicago itself, as well as Green's own background, tastes and interests, that most powerfully fueled the art he would come to make. And this has seemed especially true as his post-Who career continued.

In interviews, Green often mentions the importance of his father having been an engineer, and the degree to which his father's profession nurtured his love of graphic precision and general *exactitude*. In his artist's statement for a recent exhibition at Chicago's Fassbender Gallery (1999), Green wrote "My father was a civil engineer, I remember the highly controlled and precise drawings he sometimes completed on our dining room table. His drawings had a directly measurable and verifiable relation to their world. I wish I had such faith," he adds wistfully. "...sometimes I see my paintings as a kind of atonement."

Atonement? For some insufficient ability to limn the unverifiable? Over-compensation, maybe, given the degree to which the imagery in Green's paintings is secured, wired, lashed, tied-off, taped, and fastened with screws (literally, in some of the late paintings such as *Double Crosser* from 1991).

Architecture was important to him too. And there was plenty of it to look at in Chicago. He talks about his early affection for the old *B & O train station* with its "beautiful tower" — which would turn up in a number of his early paintings — and about the importance to his art of an understanding of structures, especially bridges (his father designed bridges). "I always felt the need to include structures [in his paintings] to *support my imagery*" [my italics], as opposed, say, to simply painting objects on a surface. He mentions the gentle poetic power engendered by trains ("my dad was a railroad man," he adds, and Chicago was a railroad town) and the "special melancholy" of the "obsolete industrial structures and bridges" he could see from train windows. The "special melancholy" engendered by empty streets and evacuated industrial buildings



*Risky Business*, 1980; *Circular Argument*, 1994; *Double Crosser*, 1992.

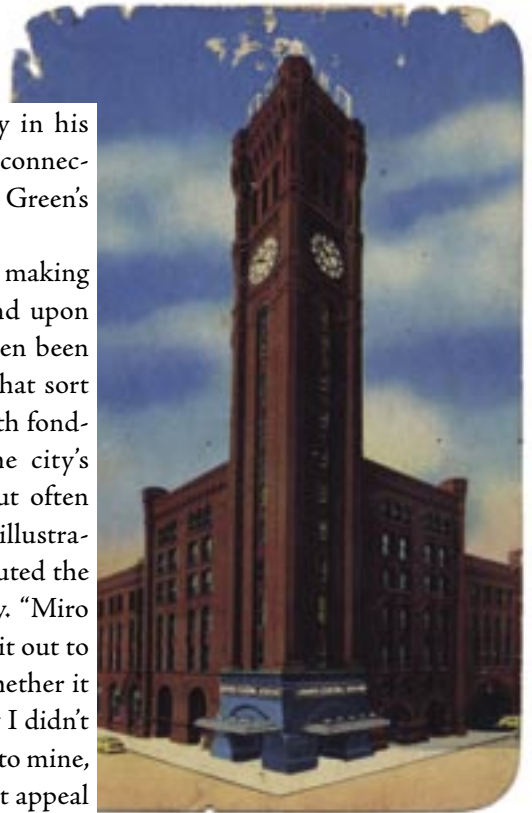


and so on, also aligned him in sensibility early in his career with the “metaphysical” art of de Chirico, a connection mentioned by a number of commentators on Green’s work. And he loved Chicago blues.

Green once told me that he liked the idea of making paintings that were “accessible, that didn’t depend upon the viewer’s knowing a lot about art”. He has often been more inspired, he says, by manuals, catalogues, that sort of thing, than by art history, per se. He recalls with fondness happy hours spent browsing through the city’s second hand stores, delighting in the kitschy but often moving graphic directness and authority of the illustrations in old magazines — some of which contributed the imagery that informs Green’s paintings to this day. “Miro said that when he would do a painting, he’d bring it out to his garden and hold his hand next to it, to see whether it seemed like part of nature,” Green tells me. “Now I didn’t do that,” he grins. “I’d hold an advertisement next to mine, to see if it was part of artifice!” Certain images just appeal to him, Green adds, “They just grab me.”

Chicago may well also be embodied in Green’s work in more displaced, non-kitsch ways. In the fires, for example, that burn through dozens of Green’s canvases. In this exhibition, there are controlled rampages of painted flame crackling somewhere within *Double Crosser*, *Ground Zero* (a wheel of fire, the title of which now comes freighted with troubling memories and visions), *Enclosing Disclosure*, *Immoderate Abstention*, *Unexpected Reversals*, *Metal Fatigue* (given its conflagration and its constellations of taped mirrors, the painting is almost an incarnation of the time-honoured tethering that facilitates artifice “smoke-and-mirrors”), *Inescapable Confusion*, *Risky Business* (a fire-and-fingernail totem), *Conflicting Signals* and *Hit or Miss*. And I may well have missed some. There are small fires everywhere.

Sometimes the carefully rendered flames in the paintings seem determined to engulf them — as in the barely controlled burn of *Metal Fatigue* (where the flames reign fierce and supreme within the inner rectangle of the work,



Source image of B&O Train Station; *Conflicting Signals*, 1981.



*Immoderate Abstention, 1969.*

in this painting-within-a-painting, the way flames reign inside an open furnace door) — while at other times, there are dangerous little adjacent, subsidiary fires burning here and there throughout the work.

The point is, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the Great Chicago fire, which burned through the heart of the city from Friday, October 8 until Sunday, October 10, 1871, and about which Chicago history teems (see for example the Chicago Historical Society's fire-website, [www.chicagohs.org/fire/intro/gcf-index.html](http://www.chicagohs.org/fire/intro/gcf-index.html)) had some residual, mnemonic impact on the artist, and that the magic fire still rises again and again, phoenix-like, in his paintings.

But that's Chicago.

And of course the symbolic meanings associated with fire generally are many and large, and may well suit Green's purposes admirably, Chicago notwithstanding. The anthropological literature about fire is vast and need not — cannot — delay us here. Suffice it to say, fire is inevitably a thermal echo of the sun and is therefore related to concepts of life and health as well as, perhaps more interestingly, given its presence in Green's work, about concepts of superiority and, most relevantly, of control. For the endlessly stimulating Gaston Bachelard, in his *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (1964), "sexual reverie is a fireside reverie", fire being "an attempt to *inscribe* human love at the heart of things". The Alchemists, Bachelard points out, worked with an "enclosed fire", a controlled fire which, handled deftly, could "open bodies" by leading to "a more free and winged kind of reverie", generated by "the alchemist at work in his underground workshop" (or the artist at work in his above-ground studio).<sup>9</sup>

And that's fire at large.

When you read through what has been written about Green's painting in general over the years, you come inevitably upon comment after similar comment about certain concepts informing his work — ideas about opposition, conflict, "tensions set up between disparate attitudes", the network condition Gilles Deleuze calls "a distribution of singularities";<sup>10</sup> instances of juxtaposition, paring, symmetry, paradox, dialectic, and oxymoron. (Many of Green's titles, like *Disclosing Enclosure*, *Immoderate Abstention*, *Guarded Irregularities*, *Hit or Miss*, *Working Knowledge*, *Metal Fatigue*, *Seen and Unseen*, are self-canceling adjacencies of this opposed and internally energetic sort.)

You also find, once reviewers are finished totting up oppositional sets and enumerating the dichotomies, the appearance of a subsequent recourse to highlighting the presence in Green's paintings, of resolution, of equilibrium, of "the tense integrity of competing parts" (this arresting phrase is from painter-teacher Ron Shuebrook, in his preface to an exhibition of the work of Green and three other painters called *View From the Chesterfield*, mounted at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery in 1992). Terry deRoy Gruber, writing in *Arts Magazine* in 1974, noted "Green's genius is that he maintains such absolute control of his medium that opposing forces or contradictory ideas are perfectly balanced."

Balanced. Clenched and unclenched. The knot of the node and the billowing of amplitude. Yeat's widening and tightening gyres. The rhythm of the breath, the beat of the heart, the wash and wane of circulation.

Green's art is informed by concepts of connection. By connection which yokes together disparate objects and ideas.

In the course of looking at paintings in his studio one day, Green mentioned, during our examination of the imagery in one of the many works that offers a representation of a tornado, that tornados were beautiful and interesting to him for the same reason that bridges were — both existed because of the resolution of opposites (hot and cold, rising air and falling air, compression and tension). "I really kind of *like* opposition," he told me, grinning broadly. He went on to tell me that it had always been important to him that the viewer could look at one of his paintings and tell "how *this* was being held up and how *that* was being held up, and so on. I always needed things to be fixed and supported in my pictures. I couldn't just paint an image on the canvas and let the canvas support it — I'd have to have a little clamp somewhere, or have the thing tethered somehow..." Then he paused for a moment, and added a really useful insight into his practice: "maybe this diagram-like, plan-like requirement", he suggested, "allows me to put more outrageous things into the painting than I otherwise would have if I didn't have this kind of rational underpinning. I like the viewer to be able to say, 'oh, well *that* still makes sense!'"

Everyone remembers the degree to which the concept of connection is emblemized by the famous passage in E. M. Forster's novel *Howard's End* (1910), "only connect". Like all shards of wisdom that have dwindled, through the years, into bromides, "only connect" has become as isolated and decontextualized as a bumper sticker. The admonition, as it is offered in the novel, actually reads "Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer."

Influenced by an engineering father or not, Green paints etudes of connectivity, that incarnate the desire to join the "passionate" and the "prosaic" elements of existence into a grounded, hieratical whole. It is possible, no doubt, to make image-idea lists, A and B, of those elements of Greenean content that seem most to be the one or the other: Fire is passion. Scissors are prose (scissors, which are as ingenious as opposable thumbs, consist of two elements which, useless in themselves, are directed and decisive in the world when conjoined). Bridges, the engineered yearning to reach, close and complete, are passion. Lengths of transparent tape are prose. Mirrors are passion (The mirror, "matrix of the symbolic", writes Sabine Melchior-Bonnet in her cultural history of the mirror, "accompanies the human quest for identity".)<sup>11</sup>

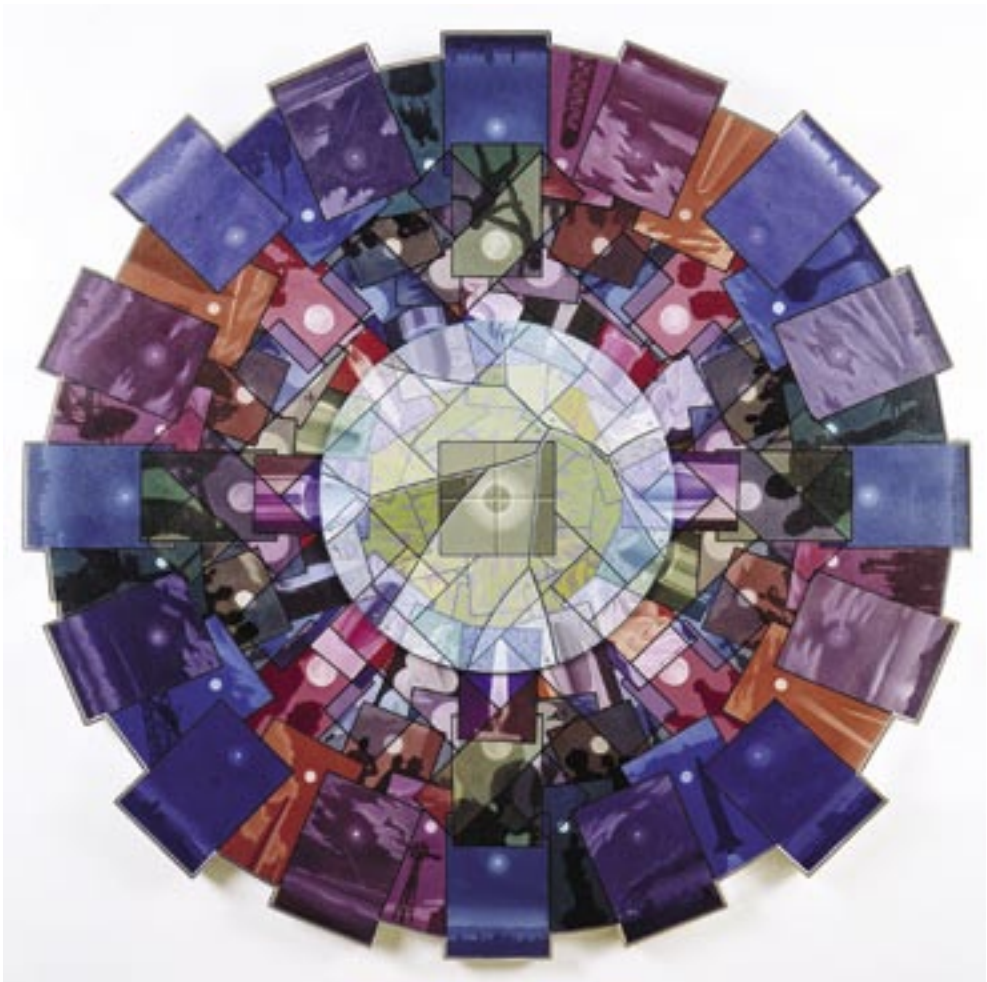
Rips in fabric — or rather "rips", since we're talking about painted, simulated rips — are passion. Lashings, knots, cables, screws are prose. Tires are passion (all those



teeth-like treads cause Green's tires to roar like beasts). Ice cream is prose. A loving couple made of shadows is passion. A solitary man made of shadows is prose. Fingernails are passion, but passion commodified, and therefore prose. What is a passing aircraft? A sublime banality (an airplane is, after all, a momentary, discontinuous bridge)? The moon is passion. And the searchlight is a lesser passion, reaching for the larger passion of the moon. Connected, the searchlight having attained and closed on the moon, the configuration makes for one of Green's most powerful and telling symbols of connectivity, of synthesis.

To connect, to synthesize, is to create a new third thing.

About his painting *Centrifugal Force*, for example, Green has written (in an unpublished



*Centrifugal Force*, 1992

artist's statement from November 25, 2002, for another painting's purchaser) that, in addition to his accelerating absorption in the problems and the knowledge lurking in questions of perspective, he revived his childhood interest in "the surprises inherent in...holding a pencil at arm's length so that it covers the full moon." *Centrifugal Force*, he says, was inspired by "this commonplace illusion". While painting it, Green recalls imagining that, "with a little luck, one could take a photo of a finger touching the moon." He goes on to note that some time earlier, he had done a long series of paintings "which included images that implied a reciprocal relation between the earth and sky — a searchlight pointing at the moon, in such a way that one could interpret it as an image of a searchlight *creating* the moon, for example".

All in all, Green's paintings make palpable the rapture (and rupture) of contradiction,<sup>12</sup> and in the end, the edgy, uneasy bliss of reconciliation, the rapture (or rupture) of convergence. They don't "only connect", they connect and cauterize.

This, by the way, may be a meaningful source of the difficulty some viewers have with Green's art: for it is an art that invites you into its pictorial labyrinths, but which doesn't invite you to invent once you're there. With Green, you can't look at a painting the way Hamlet and Polonius stood around gazing at clouds, thrusting and parrying in their fanciful interpretations of what they saw there ("Tis very like a whale...etc); in other words, you can't finish an Art Green for yourself. You can retrace it, stay the course of it, meet it on its own perceptually dizzying turf, where you can try to affect a foothold, but you can't usher its ambiguities into a brand new painting for yourself. Click on submit.

But the joy of contradiction reconciled — or even lucidly spelled out — is a heady, profound one.

And that is because contradictions reconciled invariably generate suspension, lift. Contradictions reconciled — or even co-existing in a bounded place (the canvas, for example) in a state of jostling détente — create the quickening synthesis that a battery creates when its two mineralized poles are connected through a matrix of pure energy. This is current thinking.

There is a section of John Ashbery's great poem *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1974) that, while it sprang from the poet's musings upon the mannerist painter Parmigianino (to whom Green bears some distant but genuine affinity), is inescapably suggestive of the buoyancy achieved in any of Green's mature paintings, where a resolution of opposites, a conflation of conundrums, results in a kind of internally webbed levitation in the work. Ashbery writes:

The whole is stable within  
Instability, a globe like ours, resting  
On a pedestal of vacuum, a ping-pong ball  
Secure on its jet of water. (p.70)

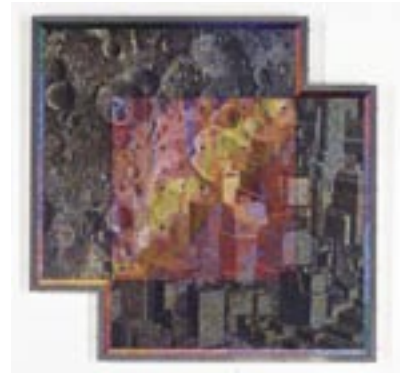
A painting is, within and because of its boundaries, a totalizing experience. And, as with any respectable mystical experience — a spot of time or an *I-thou* moment — an end-stopped in the four cardinal directions, seizing up its content in silence. As Octavio Paz points out, in *The Monkey Grammarian*, “No painting can tell a story because nothing happens in it. Painting confronts us with fixed, unchangeable, motionless realities:

In no canvas, not even excepting those that have as their theme real or supernatural happenings and those that give us the impression or the sensation of movement, does anything *happen*. In paintings things simply *are*; they do not *happen*. To speak and to write, to tell stories and to think, is to experience time elapsing, to go from one place to another: to advance. A painting has spatial limits, yet it has neither a beginning nor an end; a text is a succession that begins at one point and ends at another. To write and speak are to trace a path: to create, to remember, to imagine a trajectory, to go toward.... Painting offers us a vision, literature invites us to seek one and therefore traces an imaginary path toward it. Painting constructs presences, literature emits meanings and then attempts to catch up with them....<sup>13</sup>

Paintings construct presences, and these presences are mute. The dazzling, disruptive force running through Green’s work, deepening as the work progresses, is the thickening and darkening of the self-referential mode he has come increasingly to employ.

In paintings like *Blockbuster* (1985), and more particularly, in more recent paintings like *Closed Quotes* (1991), *Circular Argument* (1994), *Seen and Unseen* (1999), and *Dark Matter* (2004), Green’s now-familiar repertoire of images (airplanes, lovers, tornados, bridge, telescope and moon, as well as certain other human players gradually added, like new characters folded into a play), are subjected to a kind of accelerating perceptual intricacy.

With *Blockbuster*, a cube resting at the “foot” of this



*Closed Quotes*, 1991; *Dark Matter*, 2004.

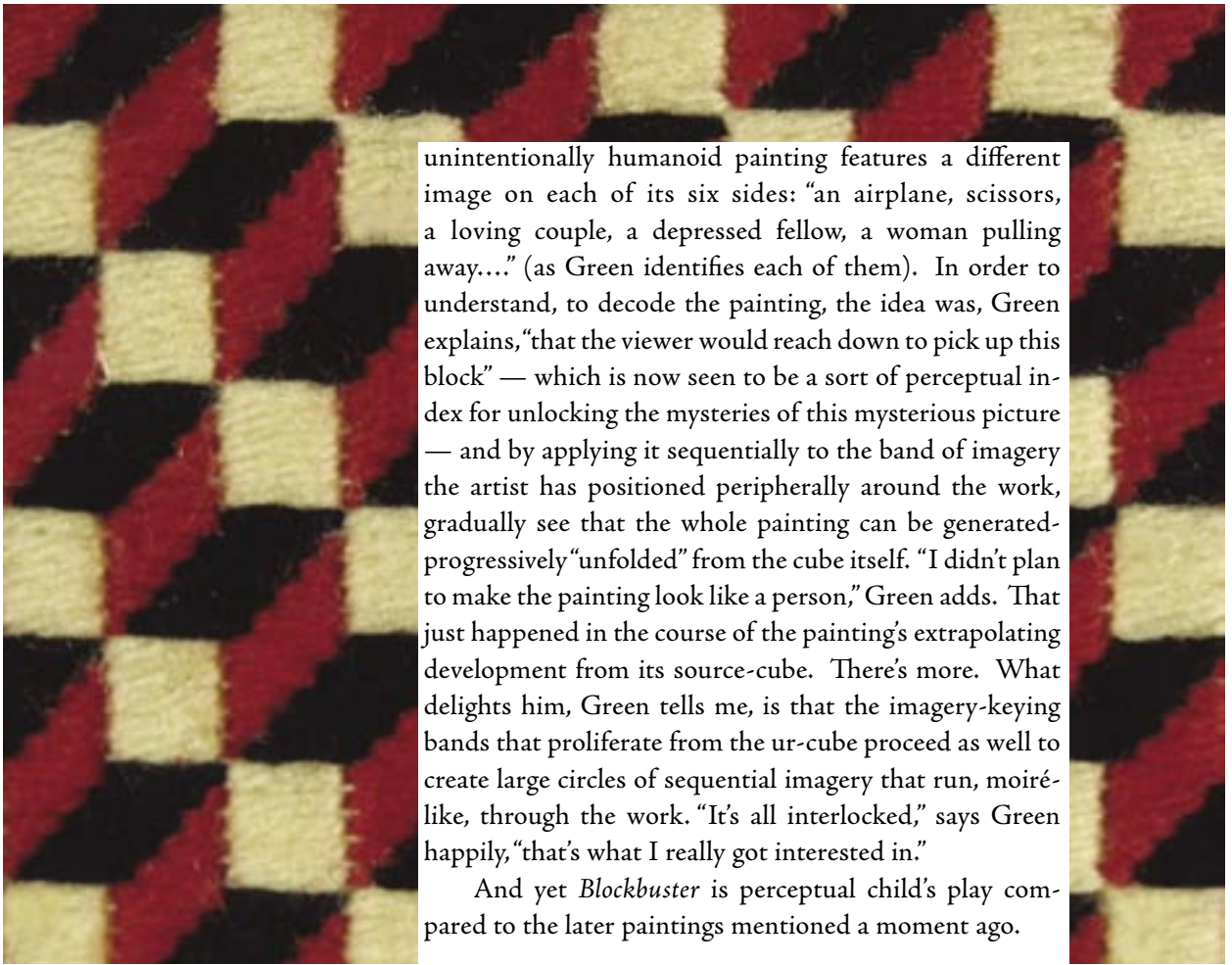


*Blockbuster*, 1987.





*Blockbuster* (detail), 1987.



Necker Cube pattern courtesy of the artist.

unintentionally humanoid painting features a different image on each of its six sides: “an airplane, scissors, a loving couple, a depressed fellow, a woman pulling away...” (as Green identifies each of them). In order to understand, to decode the painting, the idea was, Green explains, “that the viewer would reach down to pick up this block” — which is now seen to be a sort of perceptual index for unlocking the mysteries of this mysterious picture — and by applying it sequentially to the band of imagery the artist has positioned peripherally around the work, gradually see that the whole painting can be generated progressively “unfolded” from the cube itself. “I didn’t plan to make the painting look like a person,” Green adds. That just happened in the course of the painting’s extrapolating development from its source-cube. There’s more. What delights him, Green tells me, is that the imagery-keying bands that proliferate from the ur-cube proceed as well to create large circles of sequential imagery that run, moiré-like, through the work. “It’s all interlocked,” says Green happily, “that’s what I really got interested in.”

And yet *Blockbuster* is perceptual child’s play compared to the later paintings mentioned a moment ago.

Estragon: I can’t go on like this.

Vladimir: That’s what you think.

Absorbed by the way we recognize and interpret images, fascinated by the perceptual difficulties and intensities that result from the imposition of “multiple transparent layers of imagery [that] occupy the same space” (which is frequently the space of that mathematical set of elisions and collapses called the Hypercube or the maddening — and delightfully engaging — optically reversing cube called the Necker Cube so popular with quilt-makers), Green’s newer paintings, as he explained in an artist’s statement prepared for Chicago’s Fassbender Gallery in 1999, “make the process of selective viewing a conscious part of the viewer’s experience”. Green talks about being interested in the fact that his recent paintings “can only be

fully experienced in a sequential fashion, as the human mind seems capable of holding only one image of this sort in its grasp at one time". He talks about his pursuit of *active looking*, and assures his viewers that he is labouring towards its emergence.

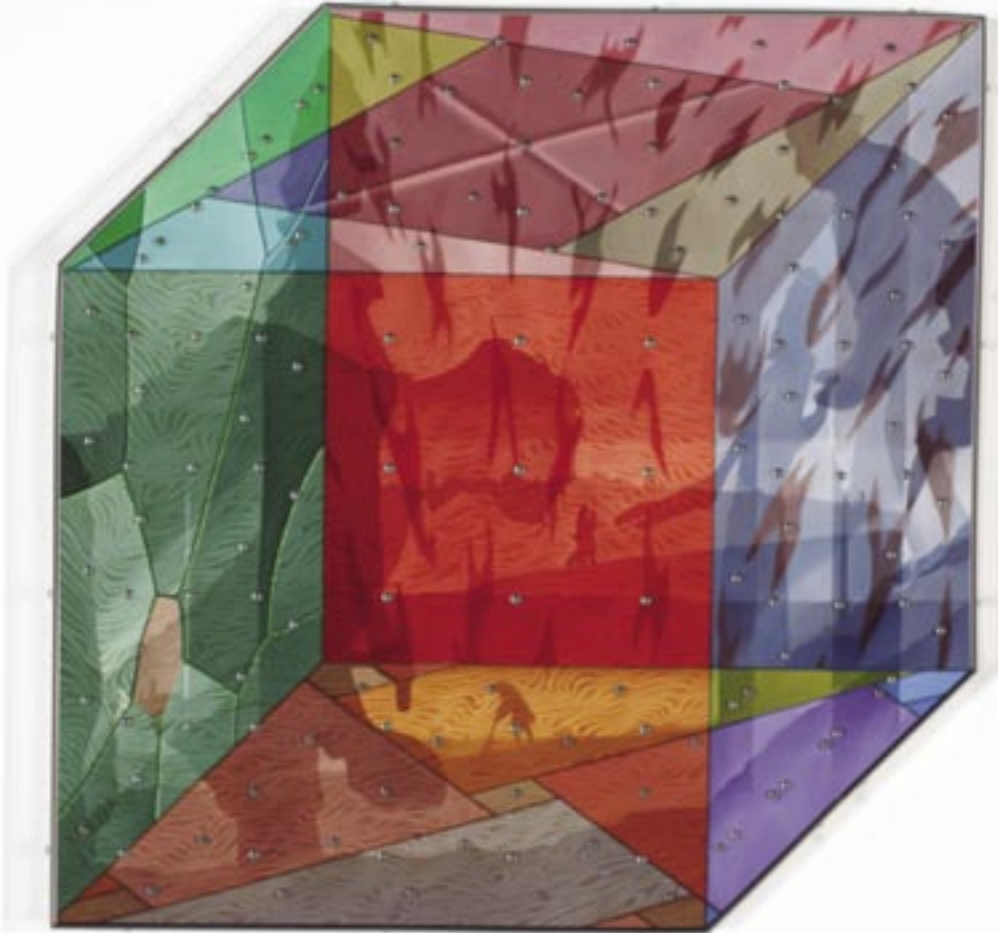
This is complex for Green and highly demanding for his audience. I recall, with a mixture of excitement and exhaustion recollected in tranquility, at Green's attempt, one afternoon last summer in his studio, to reconstruct for me the sequencing of images, and the nature of their inter-relating, in *Seen and Unseen*, and then in *Circular Argument*.

*Seen and Unseen* began life innocently enough as Green's desire to make a cube-painting for his daughter, in homage to those picture blocks of antique childhood which have a different picture on each of their six sides. What I remember mostly about *Seen and Unseen*, however, in addition to inchoate thoughts about its perceptually gnomic, mind-bending inscrutability, is the fact that the picture — which is actually seven pictures, a centerpiece made up of a translucent-appearing faux-cube, and six attendant square paintings, representations of each of the six sides — is not simply a problem in geometry or space-relations, but a virtuoso theatre for the demonstration of presumably impossible-to-paint reflections, refractions, transparency, doublings, compressions, and perspectives. "The point is," Green assures me, as *he* finds even he cannot, for a few moments, assemble the painting's seven elements in the correct order, "that they all add back again to reconstitute the block."

*Circular Argument*, a remarkably elegant painting made from what first appears to be the interleaving of six different paintings melded into a pinwheel-like or windmill-



*Seen and Unseen*, 1999.



*Seen and Unseen* (details), 1999.



like whole, turns out to be about a couple having an argument. The phases of their progressive estrangement are depicted in the individual panels of the painting, in the form of “projections” and “reflections” superimposed on the faux wood-grain ground. “Here they are,” Green shows me, pointing to one panel that shows the couple together. Then, the moving finger pointing on, “she’s by herself”. But then by pressing forwards, revolving the picture, “he’s by himself”. And so on, the pictorial representation of their dissolution fanning out into what Green thinks of as a reasonable lucidity of depiction. “Mind you,” he tells me, “any time you have to accompany a painting with a lecture, you know you’re in strange territory!”

Strange territory is where we are. For what seems to be going on in Green’s work is something we might call the progressive etherealization of his paintings. It’s been a long rarified journey from his early flaming ice cream cones and feral Firestone tires to his current sojourn in painterly dematerialization.

Early in this collection of remarks, I had occasion to suggest the presence of an essentially tragic axis running through Green’s production. Maybe tragic is going too far. But the fact remains that the artist’s spiraling journey into the perceptually ineffable leads him directly to the realms of the perceptually marvelous. Which is a dangerous place to be.

The new paintings beckon their viewers to take up their whispered codes and follow them into a delicate but daunting world in which the senses of visual comprehension, spatial memory and understanding, are stretched to the perceptual breaking point. The fascinating secret of Green’s latest work is that all his newest paintings, however much they may appear on their operatic surfaces to clamour, jibber and jostle through an implied grammar of intent; no matter how frenetic, urban and cacophonous they seem in their insistence on lashing together their self-contradictory narratives; they nevertheless fall into silence at every turn, on every plane, during every elision.

Paintings, of course, are supposed to be silent. What is tragic, however, about these paintings — which seem to me to constitute, as a whole, one of the truly majestic bodies of cultural work of our time — is that they do not appear to understand the nature of their own fall into the void. They go on signing, sighing, beckoning through time, ending up on the far side of meaning where they come to rest as shadows grappling with images, where they act out the role of the “somnambulist who sees *himself* walking”.

This is the site of their tragic nature. And the locus of their astonishing achievement.<sup>14</sup>

**Gary Michael Dault**

April 1, 2005

<sup>1</sup> “I grew up in a place — Indiana — where there were a lot of tornados.” (Art Green, in conversation with the writer).

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 25.

<sup>3</sup> “We dream of traveling through the world. But isn’t the world within us? We little know the depths of our own minds. The mysterious road goes inwards.” Novalis, *Sticky Sublime*, Bill Beckley, ed. (New York: Allworth Press, 2001), 2.

<sup>4</sup> During a recent visit to Art Green’s home and studio in Stratford, Ontario (he has been teaching at the nearby University of Waterloo since 1977), I had occasion to ask him about his penchant for painting wood grain effects and whether it wasn’t an exhaustingly intense procedure? “No,” he told me, “it just takes time.” “Actually,” he went on, warming to the subject “it’s kind of nice, meditative thing — you sort of feel the *flow* of it. You know how they say that if you want to make life last longer, you should do boring things?” Then he thought of a revealing wood-grain story:

“I remember working on a picture I had to get onto a truck and drive to Chicago the next day for a show,” he tells me, “and I was painting it at night, and was drawing the lines [that would become the wood-grain effect] very slowly, and I had the radio station set and then, you know, the radio station went off, and other stations would come on, and you’d hear things coming in and out — it was about 4 am, you know? — and I’m painting along and I heard this snow-shoveling sound outside. The radio had said it might soon be snowing, and I thought, well this is probably going to be one helluva storm, and I probably won’t be able to drive, and maybe I should just go to sleep? So I’m sitting there painting and painting and I kept hearing this snow shovel and then I started to get alarmed, thinking, well, if I don’t drive, I won’t get into the show...you know, I have to drive. So I got up, went over to the window, and...there’s no snow! There’s nobody on the street. So I went back, and I’m painting again, and I realize suddenly that the sound of the snow shovel *was the sound of my brush!*”

<sup>5</sup> You could make a convincing argument that horizontals and verticals in painting — as in anything else — make for the calm and perhaps exhilarating resignation one feels before endlessness. Horizontal — as in the surface of the sea, the sweep of a prairie (which we know are not horizontal but which, in the grammar of the visual world, nevertheless are) — appear to go on forever, as does the idea of unstoppable verticality, a verticality stretching from the earth up to who knows where? These are the x and y coordinates of our bearings, against which all diagonals are inherently plotted. Because x and y conventionally go on “forever”, diagonals are all relegated, by contrast, to their role as lengths of localized energy. Wherever they appear, as in certain Green’s paintings such as the meta-cross-hatched and aptly named *Inescapable Confusion* (1977), *Hit or*

*Miss* (1984), or *Circular Argument* (1994), which positively fetishizes the diagonal, they add a galvanizing, ad hoc kind of immediacy to the mix. Why? Because diagonals always appear to be either a) rising to become verticals, or b) falling to become horizontals. Because they are fixed — in painting anyhow — and cannot, therefore, become either of those orientations, they remain where they are, bristling, vibrating, scintillating with blocked, burgeoning energy. Look at any of Green’s solidly constructed, hierarchical, sometimes even altar-like horizontal paintings (which the majority of them are, probably because of Green’s fondness for that satisfying feeling of a carpenter’s or engineer’s sense of delight in a hammered-home trueness of angle and joinery and allover fit), paintings such as *Metal Fatigue* (1976), the bridge-like *Persons Unknown* (1985), or the brilliant, mask-like *Critical Mass* (1982), which might well have been called *Critical Mask*, but missed its chance by one consonant; and you will sense in them a sort of spatial resolution and stasis. Go where he’s added those momentary diagonals, by contrast, and you get a destabilizing torque.



<sup>6</sup>“I was attracted to imagery that went way out on a limb”, Green told interviewer Dan Nadel in “Hairy Who’s History of the Hairy Who”, in the New York cultural magazine *The Ganzfeld*, No. 3, 2003, 129-137, “and I wanted to do things that were like that: that were odd and awkward and potentially embarrassing...”



<sup>7</sup> *Who Chicago? An Exhibition of Contemporary Imagists*, Ceolfrith Gallery/Sunderland Art Centre, 1980.

<sup>8</sup>“When I was first painting,” Green once told me, “I didn’t know what to do with frames and, for one Hairy Who show, I thought I really ought to frame my painting, so I went into a hardware store one day before the show, and found this roll of stuff you’re supposed to seal plumbing pipes with. It was black, flexible and sticky, so I fitted it around the painting and it looked just like a frame. But at the opening, because of all the hot lights, it started to smell...and then I noticed that the bottom section of it was hanging down.... Finally, a guy in a white suit backed into it and got a black stripe across his jacket. It was horrible!...”



<sup>9</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 51-53.



*Inescapable Confusion*, 1977; *Metal Fatigue*, 1976; *Persons Unknown*, 1985, *Critical Mass*, 1982.

<sup>10</sup> Gilles Deleuze in James Elkins, *Our Beautiful, Dry, and Distant Texts: Art History as Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 117.

<sup>11</sup> Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 4. The author reminds us that notion of the mirror as bodily projection [which is the way Green so often uses it in his paintings], the “representation that each person makes of his or her body in space which culminates in its recognition in the mirror, was revisited by psychoanalysis, which instead prefers the idea of a ‘libidinal structure’ of the image of the body. Psychoanalysts believe that it is desire that gives shape to the disparate details of the senses. This structure is incorporated into the famous ‘mirror stage in the developing function of the I, described by Jacques Lacan in 1949” (3-4).

<sup>12</sup> I imagined this phrase was entirely mine until, moments after I typed it, I read the same phrase in an article on Joseph Kossuth by Nancy Princenthal (“Reading Between the Lines”) in the March 2005 issue of *Art in America* (130). I’m attributing the whole thing to something we might well call cultural convergence.

<sup>13</sup> Octavio Paz, *The Monkey Grammarian* (New York: Seaver Books, 1981), 128. Remember Keat’s flash-frozen, strobe-stilled vision of the soon-to-be-kissed, never-to-be-kissed maiden living in the infinity-surface of her urn, how, in the *Ode* (on a Grecian Urn), though her fond lover — stalled forever in the art of time — cannot embrace the maiden, nevertheless she “cannot fade”? “Though thou hast not thy bliss,” Keats writes, “For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!” The poem is the protracted linguistic fallout from Keat’s momentary insight — which was as rapid and as still, as narrow and as long, as the Greek swain’s endlessly deferred kiss. The shadowy, reflected, mirrored, projected lovers, the timeless Tristan and Isolde, that fall upon the surfaces of so many of Green’s paintings are direct descendants of Keat’s antique urn-dwellers.

<sup>14</sup> E.M.Cioran, *The Fall Into Time* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 13.



**ADDITIONAL WORKS  
IN THE EXHIBITION**



*Questioning Tower, 1965; Examine the Facts, Consider the Options, Apply the Logic, 1966.*



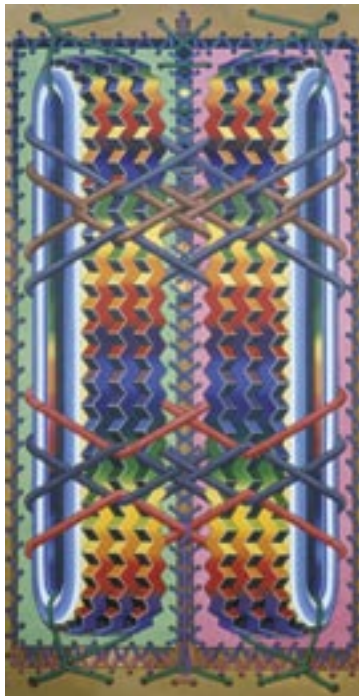
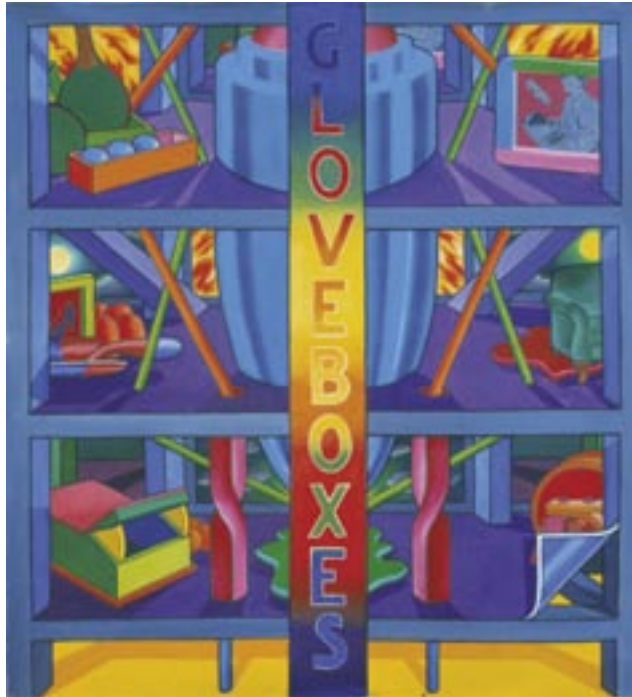
*Irresolute Security, 1967; Magnetic Reaction, 1968.*



*Advanced Dichotomy, 1968; Diclosing Enclosure, 1968.*



*Double Exposure, 1968; Florid Discomfiture, 1968.*



*Gloveboxes, 1969; Guarded Irregularities, 1971.*





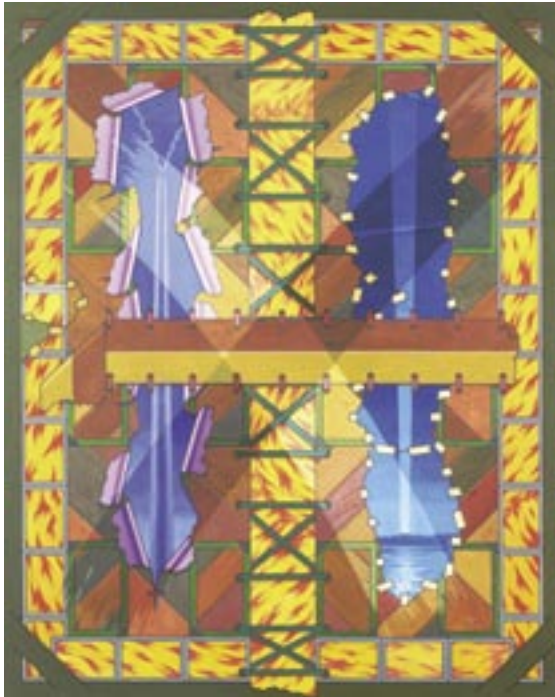
*Medium Tedium*, 1972; *Road Hazards*, 1973.



*Untimely Interruption, 1973; Unexpected Reversals, 1973.*

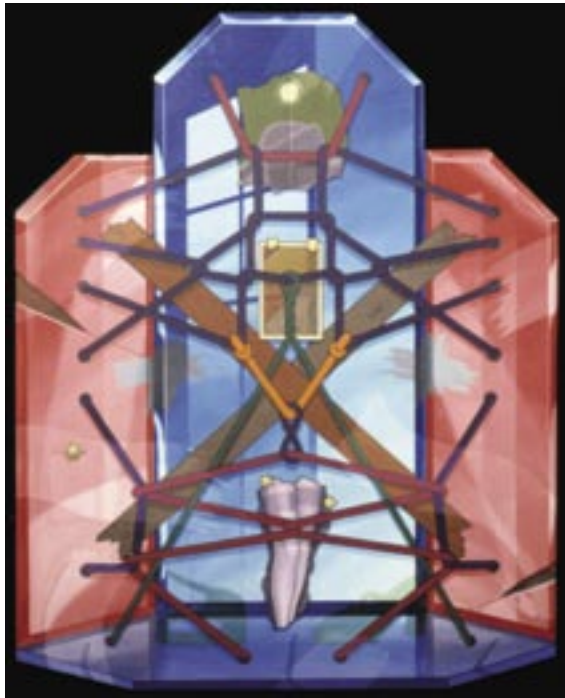


*Absolute Certainty, 1976; Allowable Deduction, 1976.*



*Circumstantial Evidence*, 1977; *Blank Slate*, 1978.





*Dire Straits, 1979; Close Shave, 1980.*



*Heavy Weather, 1983; Probable Cause, 1983.*





*Turning Point*, 1983; *Second Sight*, 1986.



*Ground Zero, 1989; Working Knowledge, 1992*



*Eavesdropper*, 1996; *Mistaken Identity*, 1997.



*Inside Out, 2000; Near Miss, 2003.*



*Chance Encounter, 2004; Indirect Object, 2004.*





*Spin Cycle*, 2005.



**Works on View at the  
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery**

***Examine the Facts, Consider the Options,***

*Apply the Logic*, 1966

Oil on canvas

89.25" x 68"

Collection: The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago; Purchase, Anonymous Gift.

Photograph ©2005 courtesy of The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago

***Irresolute Security*, 1967**

Oil on canvas

6' x 4'

Collection: Dennis Adrian, Chicago, Illinois

Photo: Art Green

***Magnetic Reaction*, 1968**

Oil on canvas

55.25" x 43.5"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

***Advanced Dichotomy*, 1968**

Oil on canvas

44" x 36"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Art Green

***Double Exposure*, 1968**

Oil on canvas

3' x 2'

Collection: Bill and Vivian Grams, New York City

Photo: Shelley Grams

***Disclosing Enclosure*, 1968**

Oil on canvas

93" x 62.5"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

***Immoderate Abstention*, 1969**

Oil on canvas

68.86" x 55.5"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

***Saturated Fat*, 1971**

Oil on canvas

6.5' x 4'

Collection: Bau-Xi Gallery

Photo courtesy of the Bau-Xi Gallery, Toronto

***Guarded Irregularities*, 1971**

Oil on canvas

8' x 4'

Collection: Cole Taylor Bank, Chicago, IL

Photo: Art Green

***Medium Tedium*, 1972**

Oil on canvas

5' x 9.5'

Collection: J.L. Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

Photo: Art Green

***Road Hazards*, 1973**

Oil on canvas

7' x 4.5'

Collection: National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Purchased 1974

Photo: Art Green

***Unexpected Reversals*, 1973**

Oil on canvas  
8' x 4"  
British Columbia Art Collection, Victoria, BC

***Absolute Certainty*, 1976**

Oil on canvas  
66" x 42.38"  
Collection: Dr. Steven and Beverly Valfer  
Photo: William Bengtson

***Metal Fatigue*, 1976**

Oil on canvas  
60" x 78"  
Collection: Marjorie Friedman Heyman  
Photo: William Bengtson

***Inescapable Confusion*, 1977**

Oil on canvas  
68" x 46"  
Collection: Gladys Nilsson and Jim Nutt,  
Wilmette, Illinois  
Photo: William Bengtson

***Blank Slate*, 1978**

Oil on canvas  
57.75 x 57.75"  
Collection: Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery

***Dire Straits*, 1979**

Oil on canvas over plywood  
36.5" x 44"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: William Bengtson

***Close Shave*, 1980**

Oil on canvas over board  
60" x 48"  
Collection: Dr. Steven and Beverly Valfer  
Photo: William Bengtson

***Risky Business*, 1980**

Oil on canvas over board  
78" x 36"  
Collection: Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York  
Photo: William Bengtson

***Trial + Error*, 1980**

Oil on wood blocks  
16" x 16" x 4"  
Collection: Lawrence and Evelyn Aronson  
Photo: William Bengtson

***Conflicting Signals*, 1981**

Oil on canvas over board  
75.5" x 42.25"  
Collection: Lesley and Jim Anixter  
Photo: William Bengtson

***Critical Mass*, 1982**

Oil on canvas, oil on wood  
54" x 96" x 24"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

***Heavy Weather*, 1983**

Oil on canvas over board  
41.5" x 27" x 12"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

***Hit or Miss*, 1984**

Oil on wood blocks, oil on board  
12" x 12" x 4"  
Private collection

***Persons Unknown*, 1985**

Oil on canvas over board, oil on wood  
48" x 96" x 16"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

***Second Sight*, 1986**

Oil on canvas over board, oil on wood panel,  
metal screws  
25.75" x 22.75"  
Collection: Dorothy Novotny-Brandenburg,  
Stratford, Ontario  
Photo: Robert McNair

***Blockbuster*, 1987**

Oil on canvas over fiberboard, oil on wood block  
painted wooden block

63" x 50" x 5" with 3 3/4" x 3 3/4"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

***Ground Zero*, 1989**

Oil on canvas over board

45" x 45"

Collection: R. Glick, Chicago, Illinois

Photo: William Bengtson

***Closed Quotes*, 1991**

Oil on canvas over board, metal frame

25" x 20"

Collection: Barbara Klawans, Munster, Indiana

Photo: William Bengtson

***Centrifugal Force*, 1992**

Oil on canvas over board, oil on board

48" x 48"

Collection: Ralph and Eileen Mandarino,  
Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan

Photo: William Bengtson

***Working Knowledge*, 1992**

Oil on board with meccano elements

48.5" x 12.75"

Collection: Ruth Horwich

Photo: William Bengtson

***Mistaken Identity*, 1997**

36.5" x 36.5"

Oil on canvas over board, oil on board

Collection: Janet and Brian Priesz,

Crystal Lake, Illinois

Photo: Art Green

**Works on View at the  
University of Waterloo Art Gallery**

**Recent Works**

***Circular Argument*, 1994**

Oil on canvas over fiberboard

29" x 29.5"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

***Seen and Unseen*, 1999**

Oil on masonite panels, metal screws

76" x 122"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

***Inside-Out*, 2000**

Oil on canvas

58.63" x 36.25"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

***Near Miss*, 2003**

Oil on canvas over fiberboard

44" x 44.5"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

***Indirect Object*, 2004**

Oil on canvas over fiberboard, oil on masonite  
panel, metal screws

42.5" x 42.5" x 0.63"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

***Dark Matter*, 2004**

Oil on canvas over fiberboard, oil on masonite  
panel, metal screws

29.13" x 29.13"

Collection of the artist

Photo: Robert McNair

*Chance Encounter*, 2004  
Oil on canvas  
34.63" x 34.25"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

*Spin Cycle*, 2005  
Oil on canvas  
41" x 35"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

### **Timeline Component**

*Questioning Tower*, circa 1965  
Oil on canvas  
33.5" x 30"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Art Green

*Florid Discomfiture*, 1968  
Oil on canvas  
42.75" x 40.25"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Art Green

*Gloveboxes*, 1969  
Oil on canvas  
36.25" x 32.5"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Art Green

*Untimely Interruption*, 1973  
Oil on canvas  
95" x 54"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

*Allowable Deduction*, 1976  
Oil on canvas  
45.63" x 54"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

*Circumstantial Evidence*, 1977  
Oil on canvas  
64" x 51"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: William Bengtson

*Turning Point*, 1983  
Oil on canvas  
60" x 35"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

*Probable Cause*, 1983  
Oil on canvas over board  
37.63" x 27.5"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

*Double Crosser*, 1992  
Oil on canvas over wood, oil on wood panel,  
metal screws  
48" x 48"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

*Eavesdropper*, 1996  
Oil on canvas over fiberboard  
48.63" x 33.25"  
Collection of the artist  
Photo: Robert McNair

## ARTIST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful for the rare and terrifying opportunity afforded by this retrospective exhibition: to see my work — represented by key works from the past four decades — as a whole.

I wish to thank Alf Bogusky, Director General of the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery and Carol Podedworny, Director of the University of Waterloo Art Gallery for jointly committing their institutions to this project. I also thank Robert Kerton, Dean of Arts of the University of Waterloo for his generous support. I wish to particularly thank Allan MacKay, Curator of the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery and Carol Podedworny (in her other role as the UWAG Curator) for their timely advice, support and curatorial input. Thank you to the KW|AG Staff who have worked so diligently and effectively to bring the show into existence: Zhe Gu, Tiffanie Ting, Lynnette Torok, Douglas Scott and Robert Steven.

I am much indebted to Gary Michael Dault for his eloquent and insightful essay, and for his other important contributions towards planning the show.

The exhibition could not have happened without the willingness of collectors, public and private, to temporarily part with their paintings. I appreciate their generosity in loaning the work, and I thank Dennis Adrian, Larry Aronson, William Bengtson and Karen Lennox for their great help in tracking down specific works in Chicago collections.

The Staff and Faculty of the Fine Arts Department have contended with my obsession with this event for some time, and have responded with good humour and good advice, for which I thank them all.

In preparing for this show, I have been strongly reminded of the many and varied ways in which family, friends, fellow artists, teachers and my own students have influenced my thinking and the path of my work, for this I am very grateful.

Finally, I must thank my family: my wife Natalie for her continuing inspiration, loving support and advice; and our children Catherine and Nicholas for their support and for so generously tolerating my various enthusiasms over the years.

**Art Green**



Art Green received his BFA degree at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1965. He immigrated to Canada to teach at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1969. He has taught at the University of Waterloo since 1977, and has served two terms as chair of the Fine Arts Department from 1988-1991 and from 2000-2002.

Some of the institutions that have collected his work include: The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON; The Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna, Austria; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; The New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; The National Museum of American Art (Smithsonian Institution), Washington, DC; The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; Northwestern University, Chicago, IL; Dalhousie University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS; The Province of British Columbia; and The Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, ON. He is also included in the collections of the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery and the University of Waterloo Art Gallery.

His work has been the subject of 20 solo exhibitions, including nine (from 1974-1987) at the Phyllis Kind Gallery in Chicago and New York City, and three (from 1974-1983) at the Bau-Xi Gallery in Toronto and Vancouver. Others include two shows at the Gallery Stratford, Stratford, ON (1979, 1992); one show at the Cambridge Public Library and Gallery, Cambridge, ON (1991), a 1973 show at Owens Art Gallery, Mt. Allison University, Sackville, NB; and a 1999 exhibition at Fassbender Gallery, Chicago, IL.

Green's work has been selected for inclusion in nearly 120 juried or curated exhibitions. These include:

- 2004** *Smart Collecting: A Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration*, The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
- 2004** *Chicago Loop*, Whitney Museum at Champion, Stamford, CT
- 1999, 2000** *Jumpin' Backflash*, Northern Indiana Arts Association, Munster, Indiana and Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL
- 1996** *Second Sight — Printmaking in Chicago*, Block Gallery, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
- 1992** *A View From the Chesterfield*, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener, ON
- 1987** *The Chicago Imagist Print*, The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, IL
- 1983** *Indiana Influence*, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, IN
- 1981** *Who Chicago* (14-person group traveling show), Camden Art Centre, London, England; Traveled to: Sunderland, UK; Glasgow, Scotland; Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh,



- Scotland; The National Gallery of Wales, Cardiff, Wales; Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston, MA; New Orleans MCA, New Orleans, LA
- 1977** *San Francisco Art Institute Annual Exhibition*, San Francisco Art Institute, CA
- 1975** *The Canadian Canvas* (traveling exhibition), opened at Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal, QC
- 1974** *Two Person Show* (with Roger Brown), Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
- 1973** *Extraordinary Realities*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City, NY
- 1973** *Pacific Vibrations*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC
- 1970** *3 Person Show*, Darthea Speyer Gallery, Paris, France
- 1969** *Chicago Needs Famous Artists*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
- 1969** *Personal Torment — Human Response*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
- 1969** *the Hairy Who*, Washington Museum of Modern Art (Corcoran), Washington, DC
- 1968** *the Hairy Who Drawing Show*, New York School of Visual Arts, New York, NY
- 1968** *the Hairy Who*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA
- 1968, 67, 66** *the Hairy Who*, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL

Awards include Cassandra Foundation Prize for Painting (1970); 3 Canada Council Arts Bursaries (1972,73,76); Distinguished Teacher Award, The University of Waterloo (1991); Elected to Membership, Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (1999); Waterloo Regional Arts Council Arts Award for Visual Art (2004).

Recent articles include:

Dan Nadel, "Hairy Who's History of the Hairy Who", *The Ganzfeld*, 2003, No. 3, 110-146.

Amanda Jernigan, "The Understander: An Interview With Art Green", *The New Quarterly*, Fall 2003, No. 88, 35-69.

A full CV is available at [www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/FINE/faculty.html](http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/FINE/faculty.html) or [www.kwag.on.ca](http://www.kwag.on.ca).

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Outside cover: *Blockbuster*, 1987; *Disclosing Enclosure*, 1968.

Inside cover: Preliminary sketch for *Blockbuster*; Snapshot of paintings in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, 1972, courtesy of the artist.

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