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## To Morrow and the day after that

OLIVER GIRLING

In a cluster of stately yellow brick industrial buildings, on Morrow Ave. in sunny north Parkdale, Olga Korper has established a beachhead. She of the Olga Korper Gallery, home of hard, unfussy visual art for the better part of 20 years, starting with Gallery 0 on Markham St., through heady days at 80 Spadina, to the present, magnificent incarnation.

She weathered the art world's early skepticism - based on the location's distance from the walk-by traffic of the Queen/Spadina strip - to attract a solid klatsch of galleries and enterprises to join her in the west end complex between the lumberyard and the railway tracks. Five recent exhibitions (three of which continue to April 5) are worth looking at.

They are in three galleries: Korper, Christopher Cutts and Linda Genereux. None feature emerging artists; rather, Cutts recently exhibited elder statesmen Tom Hodgson and Ray Mead of "Painters I I," while Korper and Genereux feature flourishing middle-career artists - Allan Harding MacKay, and Jiri Ladocha at Genereux, and Eric Snell at Korper.

Cutts has made his gallery into a headquarters of sorts for non-objective (abstract) painting, spanning three generations. Right now, it's a practice that's pretty wrung out intellectually; no one has been able to replace Newman's high moralizing or Johns' epistemological strategies with anything strongly distinctive from the inoffensive, Modernist graphics that have become a corporate mainstay. But it's surprising how good the geezers still look, people who were around when, in the words of famous art critic Patti Smith, Pollock wrecked the house, Rothko shut the door and Reinhardt turned out the fights.

For his first exhibition at Genereux, Ladocha is showing three distinct types of work: wall reliefs, which are an extension of his freestanding sculptures, syringes and test-tubes that contain substances useful (or not) to the artist, and a wall full of Voltaire's head, cast and twisted into plasticine contortions. It's amazing how that very Gallic, very merry set of features hangs on to its structural integrity in spite of the indignities the artist subjects it to. An outsized black-and-white catalogue features a dialogue between Ibor Holubizky and eye writer Gary Michael Dault on the subject.

**Allan MacKay exhibits the large portrait heads we know him for. This time, they are bathed in a twilight color, and possess a lucidity of facial expression I haven't seen in the work before. A couple are inspired by paintings by the Swiss 19th-century artist Hodler (including a "collaborative" self-portrait) currently on view at the Art Gallery of Ontario. MacKay has inspired me to look again at the Hodler show, which at first viewing feels very distant and mannered.**

Eric Snell at Korper may

indeed be a successor to Jasper Johns, though he doesn't paint and is less interested in verbal language than he is in the figural abstractions of science and mathematics. He makes "burnt wood drawings," charring umbers and drawing with them, then exhibiting both the instrument and the effect. By drawing attention to the gap between the two, the subject of the work becomes the interstice, the thing that isn't visible: fire itself and its unquantifiable energy. The work is from a series called the Phoenix Drawings, and is being exhibited simultaneously at the Glendon Galley of York University.