

Corinne Carlson  
Marc de Guerre  
Marla Hlady  
Daniel Olson  
**Blink**

curated by Sharon Brooks  
Royal LePage Gallery

The **Power Plant**  
27 June – 8 September 1997

The title *Blink*, in association with the work in this exhibition, points to the interruption of the visual field epitomized by the phrase "in the blink of an eye." Calibrating the moment and movement of blinking brings into focus the unconscious though unavoidable punctuation of the optical spread by its eclipse in darkness. It reveals how dependent the experience of visual continuity is on the assumption of a linear temporality that can, however, never be a seamless, smooth, or automatic mechanism. Rather, blinking is an irregular impulse of the body, contingent on highly variable conditions of context, both internal and external. It interrupts the flow of life's events and images while paradoxically lubricating its pretence to unity. The blink catches the observer in the impossibility of closure or completion, to which technologies of vision aspire. A disruption so fleeting or even so simple as a scratch in a record, once noticed, may become an event, either frustrating, funny, or fantastic.

One of the four speakers in Daniel Olson's *Original Soundtrack* plays a sound you will recognize as the skip produced by a scratched record. Its endless repetition describes the form of a circle. In fact, each of the four speakers in the piece plays a sound that, while distinct from the others, is clearly circular. Although ears don't blink, the audible world does hold images, not only through words (spoken or sung) or through expressive metaphors (as in music's allusions), but in the sense that a sound can be an index of the process that produced it (like footprints). In this way sounds allow us to reconstruct that process in the mind's eye. The audio world is here stripped of the narratives and codified meanings that usually fill it with representation to the point of obscuring the palpable materiality of sound and the ways in which it is generated. Placing you into the overlapping material geometries of four such soundtracks (four circular sounds produced by physical processes), Olson's piece loops you in without, however, providing a centre from which the circumference of a whole would be implied.

As in all Olson's works, he begins with found sounds, objects, texts, words, and only occasionally images. Using low-tech means, he puts things together in a manner that just crosses the line between play and experiment.

Daniel Olson

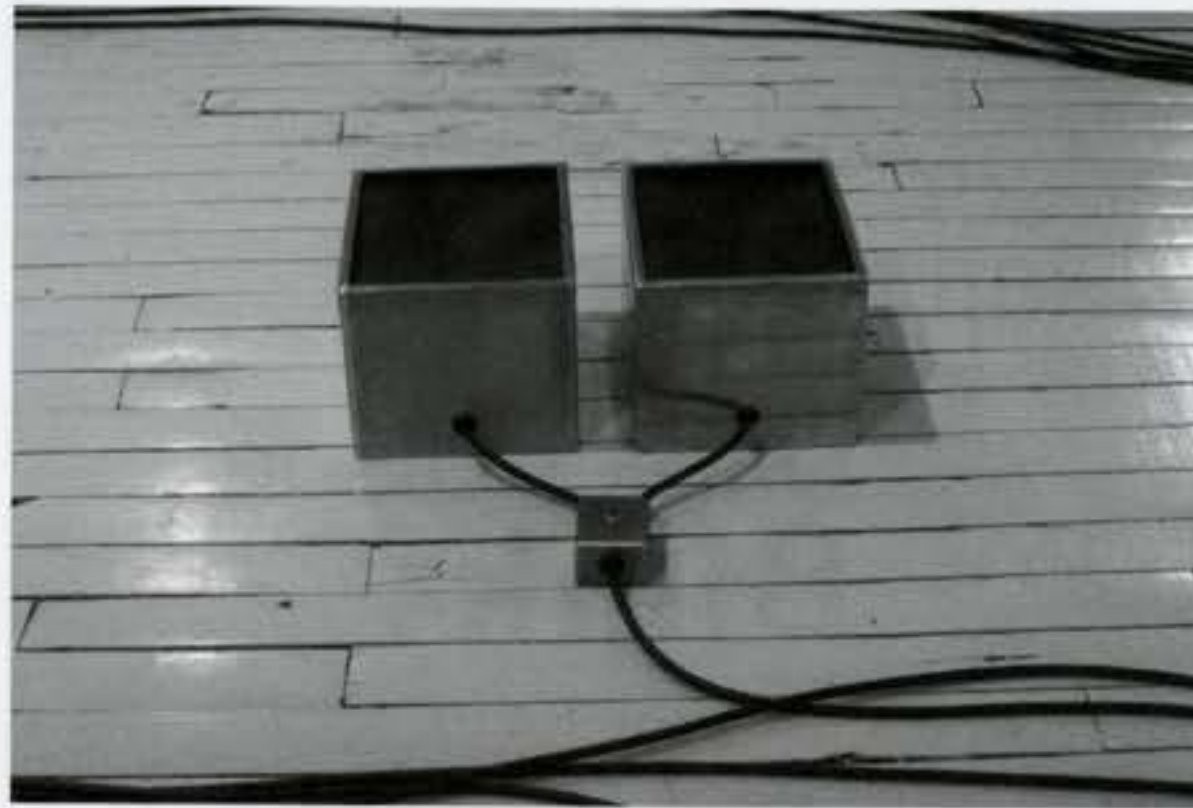
*Soundtrack 1994*  
Photo: Stacey Lancaster



## Marla Hlady

*Gut Machines* 1995

Photo: courtesy, Galerie Christiane Chassay



If you crouch down and push one of the tiny red buttons in Marla Hlady's *Gut Machines*, the opaque grey-black rubber surface set into the top of each stainless-steel box vibrates for about fifteen seconds. Once in motion, the surface becomes recognizable as flesh — formed from a mould of the solar plexus — fluttering, breathy, and spasmodic. As much as *Gut Machines* presents itself as complete and revealed it also defies delimitation. Drawing you into contact with it transforms the work from an object observed at a safe distance into a system that structures an indeterminate and tactile relationship with its onlookers — a relationship in which you become incorporated in space and time as both operator and neighbour, connective tissue and intruder. For how many buttons must be pushed and how many participants are needed to make it fully functional, working to its limit? While materially and geometrically the piece assumes a robust and reticent autonomy, this ambivalent yet constitutive relationship enacts its incompleteness, contingency, and open vulnerability. And yet we too are ultimately helpless. Unable to sustain the kind of (electric) life that appears an immanent potentiality, we are consigned, in the end, to simply watch and wait.

Like *Gut Machines*, Hlady's previous installations and sculptures involve the creation of self-contained complex systems composed of numerous variables that set out and perform their own logic to the very limit.

## Corinne Carlson

*Arizona Topaz/Topaze Brûlée*  
(work in progress)



What you see here is only a fragment of Corinne Carlson's ongoing project *Arizona Topaz/Topaze Brûlée*, a series of drawings based on the 24-pack of Laurentien Coloured Pencils, which generations of children have played with while learning to draw. The construction of Carlson's drawings remains legible: two concentric overlapping circles separated by an outline that is coloured Arizona Topaz. A Poppy Red valentine heart punctuates each at the centre. The series will be complete when every possible combination of two colours from the pack has been used. These geometric images draw your eye into a hypnotic spin whose access to the infinite is, however, weakened in its rendering and arrested by the sentimental and humorous icon. Deflected by this blockage — the heart is both inherent in the geometry of the spiral and its denial — your gaze cuts to the next image whose effect is the same, although playfully mediated by differences of colour. In succession, these images hold you in unresolved relationships and incongruities between movement and stasis, sameness and difference, pure opticality and impure tactility, art and everyday, familiarity and strangeness.

Carlson's previous work in installation, video, and painting transforms popular icons, such as images of movie stars and lyrics from pop music, in ways that foreground aspects so deeply absorbed as to be invisible.

## Marc de Guerre

video still from *John Lennon Lives in Hell Now* 1996



In his video *John Lennon Lives in Hell Now*, Marc de Guerre uses three events that coincide with the career of John Lennon over a seventeen-year period: the release of *The Birds* by Alfred Hitchcock in 1963, coincident with the beginning of Beatlemania; the murder of Sharon Tate by the Manson Family in 1969, the year the Beatles broke up; and the murder of Playboy bunny Dorothy Stratten in 1980, the year of Lennon's own death. Splicing footage of these events together with a repertoire of associated images, de Guerre's non-narrative choreography effaces the violent death of Lennon as it registers its structuring role. As the viewer sees moving images manipulated with an almost musical intensity, their potential for magical correspondences and transformation displaces conventional meanings to approach a state of direct visual cognition. The piece pushes these cultural documents into the unreal space of computer animation to overlay the transcendent on the apocalyptic, promising redemption, only to cut short its fulfilment, to blink and begin again.

Marc de Guerre has worked on the problematics and forms of representation in various media, from painting to popular music.

— Sharon Brooks

*Daniel Olson received an M.F.A. from York University in 1995, a B.F.A. from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1986, and a Bachelor of Environmental Design Studies from the School of Architecture at Technical University of Nova Scotia in 1984. His solo exhibitions include Koffler Loggia Gallery (Toronto, 1995), Art Gallery of York University (Toronto, 1995), La Chambre Blanche (Quebec City, 1994) and Eye Level Gallery (Halifax, 1989). He has participated in several group exhibitions in Toronto—most recently at Free Parking (1996) and Robert Birch Gallery (1996)—as well as in Guelph, Montreal, and Glasgow, Scotland. Olson created Barfly for Vera Frenkel's Web project The Body Missing (1995–96).*

*Marla Hlady received a B.F.A. from the University of Victoria in 1987 and an M.F.A. from York University in 1990. She has had solo exhibitions in Montreal—at Galerie Christiane Chassay (1993 and 1995)—and in Toronto at the Genereux Grunwald Gallery (1994), Koffler Loggia Gallery (1992), and Gallery 76 (1991). She has been included in group exhibitions at Oakville Galleries (1996), London Regional Art Gallery (1993), and Cold City Gallery (Toronto, 1992), among others. Her work Beauty was included in The Power Plant's 1994 Naked State exhibition.*

*A graduate of the painting program at the Emily Carr College of Art and Design, Corinne Carlson received her M.F.A. from York University in 1991. Solo exhibitions of her work include Koffler Loggia Gallery (Toronto, 1995), Linda Genereux Gallery's Sculpture Courtyard (Toronto, 1995), Stride Gallery (Calgary, 1990) and Artspeak (Vancouver, 1989). She has participated in several group exhibitions in Toronto, including Free Parking, YYZ (1995) and Genereux Grunwald Gallery (1994), Guelph, Windsor and Banff.*

*Marc de Guerre graduated from the Ontario College of Art in 1983. He has had solo exhibitions in Toronto (notably at the Carmen Lamanna Gallery, 1983–89), Montreal, Windsor, Chicago, and New York, and has shown in several group exhibitions including the S. L. Simpson Gallery (Toronto, 1995), Gordon Snelgrove Gallery (Saskatchewan, 1991), and Downtown Community Television Center (New York, 1989). He is the editor of two upcoming publications, Crime and Ornament, Essays on the Haunting of Decoration (YYZ Books/University of Toronto Press), and Public 14 "The Aesthetics of Privilege."*