

By Alison Gillmor
Free Press Correspondent

THE NEW WORKS by Winnipeg artist Gisele Beaupre are startling — they have a large-scale emphatic presence not usually associated with the print medium.

Instead of being politely contained by frames, they are lashed to copper tubing and formed into trampolines or see-sawing beds. Some are slanted precariously against the walls; one is suspended into a trough.

The physicality of the objects is echoed by the subject matter. Beaupre is concerned with the body — swelling, pregnant torsos, strong, earth-bound legs, seen from odd angles or suddenly cut off.

Some of the works, with their tumbling bodies and masked faces, suggest the inversions and subversions of carnivals and circuses, where the conventions of everyday life are toppled with disguises, low comedy and bearded ladies.

Other pieces feature row boats, zoomed in on from above, with those strangely amputated legs and midribs.

Surf and Turf #1, #2 and #3 are three works that include the same row-boat image, but the colors shift and the frames change from piece to piece.

Like a lot of art that deals with water, there is an "oceanic" feeling — bodies (and perhaps memories and thought) merge and float in the alien and primal element.

Beaupre's work explores the complicated issue of identity — the ways in which people form (and deform) their public and private selves.

Being an artist, she is interested in the way art shapes this process. One piece shows a semi-naked woman, pointing a stick of charcoal towards her body. Another work echoes this image in a disembodied hand drawing onto the canvas.

Review

Double Bind: Recent Prints by Gisele Beaupre

- Ace Art, 221 McDermot
 - Until Nov. 14
 - Admission free
- ★★★ out of 5

Beaupre seems to suggest that we constantly picture ourselves, figuratively and literally.

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In contrast to Beaupre's brash art, April Hickox's show (on view at the Floating Gallery until Nov. 14) has a dreamy, elegiac quality.

Far-flung

She groups together large black-and-white photos, sometimes blurred or fragmentary. The relationships among the far-flung images are poetic and ambiguous rather than immediate.

Sometimes the link is visual — a spiral of rope is repeated in the threatening coil of a snake. At other times it is thematic — the possibly predatory and sexual relationship between an old man and a beautiful youth in an academic oil painting is echoed by lions eyeing motionless zebra in a nature shot.

Hickox returns to certain kinds of images — museum exhibits, historical art works, objects of natural history, and enigmatic, and purely personal memories of rooms, gardens, faces.

The subjective, sometimes mysterious connections among the photographic groupings suggests that Hickox is trying to reconstruct the wayward and unpredictable paths of the human mind.

Some of the works suggest the wandering of memory, touched off by a shape or a blurred landscape. Others point to the difficulty of ordering things in the dry, logical way of the museum exhibits, without human subjectivity creeping in.

B6 Winnipeg Free Press, Saturday, November 7, 1992



Some Beaupre works are slanted precariously.

Beaupre works prove startling