

# Outside The Box

## SPASM FESTIVAL TAKES ART TO THE STREETS

by Bart Gazzola



Street Art Over 15 artists will be participating in this year's SPASM Public Art Festival.

### SPASM II Festival Of Offsite Art II

#### Various Locations

#### Friday 28 – Sunday 6

This summer, the SPASM Festival of Offsite Art will make its appearance in Saskatoon once again, highlighting the question of "public spaces" through a series of performances, installations, and even interventions into the so-called "public" sphere. Saskatoon will have its public sites tickled, taunted and perhaps tainted by artists who have no interest in the clean, safe, gallery space.

It's a relevant time for a discussion around "public spaces". Not only has Saskatoon witnessed how fluid the notion of public space can be in the ongoing debate regarding the Gathercole and the South Downtown, a strong argument could be made that "public spaces" are often neither "public" or actual spaces. After all, one must always define which public is being referred to, and who is included or excluded from that group. Also, "spaces" are as much perceived as physical, and concerns of ownership and investment of those spaces are always at play.

Presented through Paved Art + New Media, the Mendel Art Gallery and AKA Gallery, this year's SPASM will not just restage the original, but expand upon it. The first SPASM, held in 2002, saw a variety of local artists produce and

exhibit multimedia works designed for such diverse spaces as the abandoned storefronts of the bus mall, the ad spaces in city buses, or video screenings onto the front of suburban houses (to name a few sites). Some works were staged on specific nights and others were presented for the entire 10 days of the project, the ideas expressed were as diverse as the mediums at play. A few were vandalized, and several were vilified: but often the works were pleasantly "stumbled" across by people who would never consider entering a gallery space.

This time around, SPASM has grown somewhat, adding artists from across Canada and the United States to this year's lineup. This year's theme is "The Couture of Contemporaneity", a loaded phrase that speaks to the life/style of fashion and how our society constructs identity. Fashion has become more than just a set of accoutrements. Fashion choices determine our public face; questions of identity fuel our choices within a world saturated with advertising, shopping malls, big box stores, corporate branding, civic by-laws and technological hype. SPASM aims to be more than a prick on the surface of the City.

### OUTSIDE THE BOX

A variety of different artistic styles will be on display at this year's festival. Some of the works making appearances in the city land within the more "traditional" notions of public art: Lois Andison from Toronto will be installing an interactive installation at Bema

Autosport BMW that speaks to notions of the female body and voyeurism, while Hamilton's Simon Frank will be engaging in his unique *Concrete Poetry* project —chalking text fragments and directional arrows on sidewalks around an urban center, inviting the viewer to engage with his texts, either following his 'plan', or following their own. This work will begin in the downtown, and will be extremely organic in its interventions as the work takes the viewer/participant for a walk.

Other works will challenge the idea of 'public' and public space and art: Stéphane Lauzon's work, *The Wallet*, begins with a series of functional wallets complete with money, ID, and miscellaneous personal detritus, left (lost?) at various locales in the City, and each will contain enough information to allow for the 'finder' to locate the fictitious person.

Other works are simply fun: Tor Lukasik-Poss (aka tiny bill cody) is a musical performer who will present *Yodelling Is The Next Big Thing*, a series of unlikely concerts performed by this contemporary yodeller (and his alter ego) "tiny bill cody". All of his performances will happen in impromptu places, sometimes on the spur of the moment.

But, as with the last SPASM, there will also be works that scratch at the surface of the City's veneer to reveal more serious issues: Liz Canner, a NYC-based video artist, will be doing a residency at Paved

Art + New Media, and will be engaging in SPASM to add another layer to her intercultural media project. Her project will have "high profile" public figures in the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal communities using wearcam technology as they explore the perspective and positions of the wearer's first person point of view and challenge the boundaries of documentary video making at the same time. The video will be projected onto the outside of the Saskatoon Police Service building in a one-night

screening.

The festival has a website ([www.spasmpublicart.ca](http://www.spasmpublicart.ca)) that will give you more information. As well, CFMR FM 90.5 will be doing constant updates, coverage and other exciting things that coincide with SPASM II: The Couture of Contemporaneity. So, come out and attend, observe and engage in the different aspects of SPASM that will be coming to Saskatoon this spring.

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### Friday 28

Gennifer Hirano performing at AKA Gallery, 8 pm.  
Bus Tour to sites meets at SWA Warehouse, 9 pm.

### Saturday 29

Gennifer Hirano speaking on *It's Not About Sex, It's About Power* at AKA Gallery, 2 pm.  
Liz Canner performing her Video Projection piece at the Saskatoon Police Service Building, 9 pm.

### Sunday 30

Liz Canner speaking and giving a Wearcam Demo at paved Art + New Media, 2 pm.

### Monday 31

Jackson 2Bears Opening Reception for *Mimetic Space* at the Saskatoon Bus Depot, 7 pm.

### Wednesday 2

Video Screening at SCYAP (253 3rd Ave S), 9 pm.

### Thursday 3

Andrew Forster & Michael Fernandes performing their collaborative performance *Reading* at Phonographique (226 Pacific Ave), 6 pm.  
Tor Lukasik-Foss performing his *Unlikely Concerts* at the AKA Gallery stairwell, 8 pm.  
Jillian McDonald with her *Advice Lounge* installation at Tonic (122 2nd Ave N) 11 am – 6 pm.

### Friday 4

Andrew Forster and Michael Fernandes at Phonographique, 6 pm.  
Tor Lukasik-Foss at a bus shelter, somewhere downtown, 2 pm and the Mendel Gallery's Men's Washroom, 8:45 pm.  
Jillian McDonald at Tonic, 11 am – 6 pm.

Skateboarders vs. Godzilla Closing Reception at the Mendel Art Gallery, 8 pm.

### Saturday 5

Andrew Forster and Michael Fernandes at Phonographique, 6 pm.  
Tor Lukasik-Foss at the Victoria Bridge, 2 pm and near the east exit of MacDonald Bridge, 10 pm.  
Jillian McDonald at Tonic, 11 am – 6 pm.  
Keynote Speaker Hal Niedzviecki speaking on *Art Not Special: Community and Creativity in the Age of the Quasi-Individual* at the Mendel Art Gallery auditorium, 8 pm.

### Sunday 6

Sandee Moore and Hal Niedzviecki speaking on *Godzilla Dead or Alive? Counter Culture Meets the Institution* at the Mendel Gallery, 1 pm.  
Skatmania performance, demos and displays at the Mendel Gallery, 2-4 pm.  
Rap-Up Feedback and Kickback at Paved Art + New Media, 5 pm.

### Continuing Installations

Lois Andison: *Iris* at Bema Autosport BMW (607 Brand Court)  
Jonathan Busch: *Celebrity Sleuths* at The Centre at Circle and 8th Art Gallery (3510 8th St. E)  
Simon Frank: *Concrete Poetry* starts at the SWA Building (12 23rd St. E)  
Rachelle Knowles and Kathleen Irwin: *The Bus Project* at the Robin's Denuts in the Saskatoon Bus Depot.  
Stephane Lauzon: *The Lost Wallet* at various locations around Saskatoon.  
Diana Savage: *All Aboard Are Well Downloadable Ringtone* at [www.spasmpublicart.ca/2004/ringtone.htm](http://www.spasmpublicart.ca/2004/ringtone.htm)  
Jackson 2Bears: *Mimetic Space* at the Saskatoon Bus Depot.

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