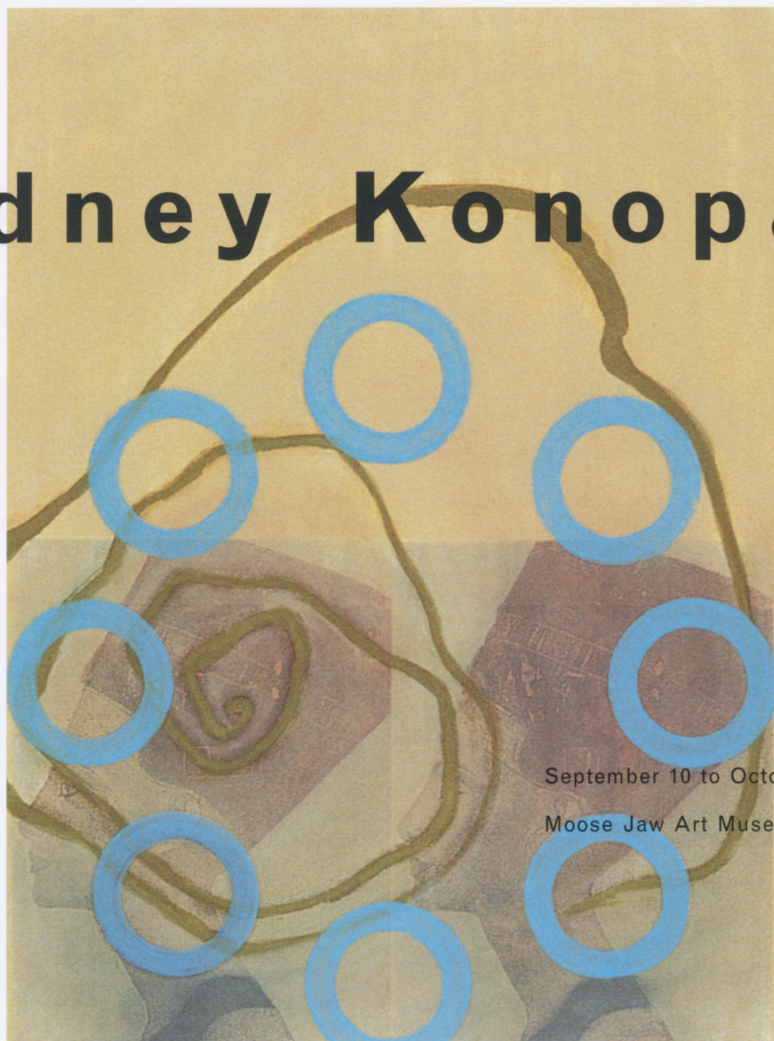


Rodney Konopaki



September 10 to October 31, 1999

Moose Jaw Art Museum

Hot to the Eye

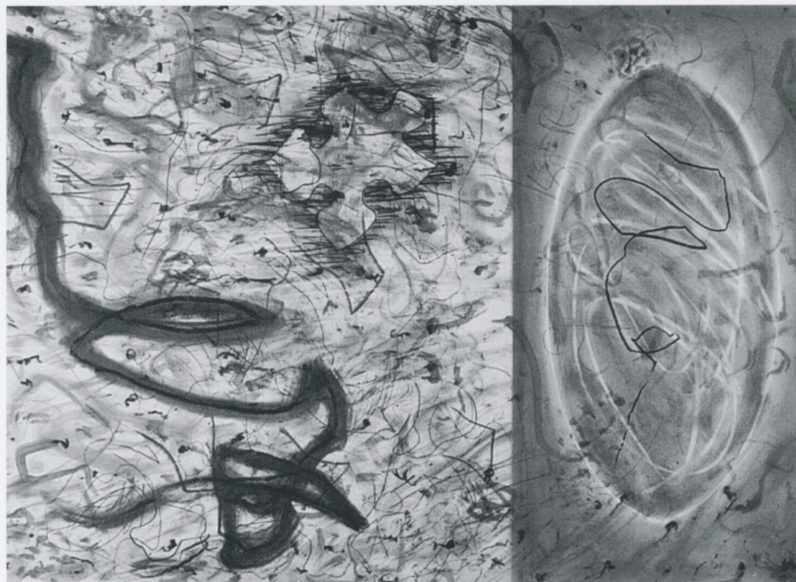
Art with its vastness for an endless possibility of human expression was the place where I first met this artist. In a frozen parking lot with a polite introduction and a tour of a small art department at a college in northern Alberta, we became friends. In my mind, I probably wondered if it was possible for the creative spirit to survive so far away from its urban heart.

"My recent work combines a concern for drawing with aspects of layered and juxtaposed collage information.

The images I have been using are culled from a variety of sources. In many instances the material is taken from mass media and "remnants" from the work of other artists I have been collaborating with in the print studio."

In listening to the artist speak about his casual approach to collecting images from magazines one can easily relate to the experience of thumbing through pages seeking images that are "hot to the eye". His choice and placement of images is based on a "strong graphic and organizational ability". This artist is aware of our ability to surf the ocean of the media image. He makes use of our trained eye and creates collage works that appeal to our desire for the sensual.

Konopaki's collage work conjures a world seduced by the endless gloss created by a mass media machine. With skill, the artist reprocesses his selected images. Their altered image "arrives at its own speed with



Planet in Peril, 1992 graphite/paper, 31" x 43"

unique logic intact". The collage titled Skull and Hipbones traces the delicate line of hip to thigh on a young perfect body and cuts away a surface in the shape of a skull and crossbones. The beauty and promise of youth offered by this work is marred by a symbol of death hidden in the energy of vertical lines.

The energetic line is key to his drawings. This is clearly articulated in the work titled Grinding Graphite. Quick-made marks to the paper reveal the surface beneath. A portion of the drawing recalls the texture of corrugated paper while another locates the uniform placement of small punctures of a sheet of pegboard. Tracing everyday materials to make this drawing he places at its core a shape in form of a puzzle piece, playfully questioning the act of drawing itself.

Death and Glory — Study is a drawing strikingly possessed by a clarity of expressed openness. A delicate rose is rendered like the broken lines on the palm of your hand. A ghost image of skull and crossbones hovers in close proximity. With an economy of drawing technique, skeletal lines and softly blurred shapes, he maps out a vast unknown distance, the length of line between life and death.

Rodney Konopaki and I spent much of our time together talking about other places. Making art in a geographically isolated place is as challenging as anywhere else.



Death and Glory - Study, 1992 graphite/paper, 31" x 43"

The distance from the urban centres of art perhaps serves to make one acutely aware of the energy and commitment necessary to sustain an art practice. While viewing the work for this exhibition in the artist's basement he spoke of the work as being not unlike keeping a secret. "Each artist picks up tools, faces the void and launches on a journey of discovery". The work of Konopaki reveals that there is no secret to the making of art .

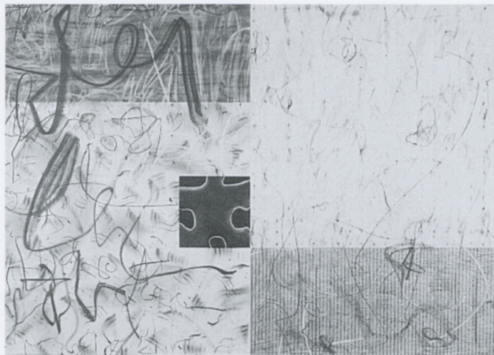
Rebecca Belmore

Biography

Rodney Konopaki was born in Moose Jaw and completed a BFA at the University of Saskatchewan in 1972. He began studying printmaking at the University of Regina and the Vancouver School of Art eventually becoming a Print Fellow at the Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Tamarind is renowned as the location of the revival of lithography in North America. They also resurrected the concept of the Master Printer; an individual that assists artists in the production of a series of prints.

For eleven years Konopaki served as Master Printer at Tyler Graphics in New York, one of the most prestigious and innovative printshops in the world. While at Tyler, Konopaki collaborated with internationally recognized artists such as Frank Stella, Helen Frankenthaler, David Hockney, Anthony Caro and Nancy Graves.

In 1987, he returned to Canada, completing an MFA at the University of Saskatchewan in 1989. Since 1990 Konopaki has been teaching in the visual art program at Keyano College in Fort McMurray, Alberta. He has continued collaborating to make prints with artists including David Alexander, Renée VanHalm, Joe Fafard, and Alex Janvier.



Grinding Graphite, 1992, graphite/paper, 31" x 43"

Konopaki has had solo exhibitions at Art Placement, A.K.A. Gallery, Estevan National Exhibition Centre, Little Gallery, Rosemont Gallery and Gordon Snelgrove Gallery as well as contributing works to numerous group exhibitions. His work is included in the collections of the University of Lethbridge, University of Saskatchewan, Canada Council Art Bank, Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Moose Jaw Art Museum.

List of Works

Planet in Peril, 1992
graphite/paper, 31" x 43"

Man in the Mirror, 1992
graphite/paper, 31" x 43"

Death and Glory - Study, 1992
graphite/paper, 31" x 43"

Grinding Graphite, 1992
graphite/paper, 31" x 43"

Mickey's Monkey, 1992
graphite/paper, 31" x 43"

Helicoid Dispatch, 1993
lino-cut, colour copy, collage, pochoir
edition: 10, 19" x 20"

O.a.l., 1995,
relief and screen printing, colour copy, collage
edition: 14, 17" x 15"

His, 1995
relief and screen print, colour copy, collage
edition: 10, 15" x 15"

Hers, 1995
relief and screen print, colour copy, collage
edition: 15, 15" x 15"

Skull and Hipbones, 1995
relief and screen printing, colour copy, collage
edition: 12, 17" x 20"

The Juggler, 1995
xerox transfer, mixed media, 30" x 22"

The Assassin, 1995
xerox transfer, mixed media, 30" x 22"

The Esthetician, 1995
xerox transfer, mixed media, 30" x 22"

The Lamplighter, 1995
xerox transfer, mixed media, 30" x 22"

The Locksmith, 1995
xerox transfer, mixed media, 30" x 22"

The Locksmith, 1995

xerox transfer, mixed media, 30" x 22"



Skull and Hipbones, 1995

relief and screen printing, colour copy, collage

edition: 12, 17" x 20"



The Moose Jaw Art Museum gratefully acknowledges funding assistance from Operations Assistance for Art Museums and Public Galleries Program of Canada Council for the Arts, the City of Moose Jaw, the Saskatchewan Arts Boards, Saskatchewan Lotteries and SaskCulture Inc. through the Museums Association of Saskatchewan, and the Museums Assistance Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Sunday 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. Tuesday - Thursday 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Cover Image: **The Juggler**, 1995 xerox transfer, mixed media, 30" x 22"