

**Selected Reviews**  
***Metamorphosis***  
**Ontario Society of Artists, Aird Gallery, Toronto**  
**by Patrick Donahue**

The trouble with edgy, "out-there" art is that it often feels as though you're not part of the conversation. Like, these hip artists are having this really cool dialogue with each other but you just don't get it. But I think you should always give it a try because, like, where would we be if we didn't have artists to do crazy things that, left to ourselves, we might not think of doing?

Which brings us to *Metamorphosis* the Ontario Society of Artists 131st annual juried show. First of all – the relief. Some of the stuff's not that hard to get at all. Like Ottawa artist Sheryl Luxenburg's large acrylic painting of stacks of squashed cans ready for recycling. It's great to have an artist pointing out beauty for us where we might have overlooked it: all those shimmering, shiny metal surfaces in myriad shapes, interspersed with bright, pop art colours and the occasional dark mysterious gap. While it's intricately executed in terms of detail, the overall impression is nearly abstract. So it's quite different from the photo realism for which Ms. Luxenburg is becoming famous. (Check out the feature article on her in the May issue of the prestigious magazine *American Artist*.)

**Ottawa Jewish Bulletin - February 7, 2005, page 17**  
**Luxenburg: Painting her way around the world**  
**by Sharon Abron Drache**

The 79th annual juried exhibition of The Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour (CSPWC) has announced that Sheryl Luxenburg's painting "A Shady Lunch in Rome, Italy" has won admission to its "Open Water" Exhibition.

The Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour was founded in 1925 out of the commitment of 12 influential artists, including Fred Brigden and Group of Seven members Franklin Carmichael and A.J. Casson. The society's mandate is "to encourage and nurture watercolour excellence."

Luxenburg is reaping the rewards of hard work doing what she loves - painting outside with a sketchbook, capturing shades of illusive light and shadow, while preserving architectural realism.

With an airbrush, Luxenburg can make people in the foreground look as if they are moving, while the backdrop remains stationary. "Using an airbrush is one of my distinctive techniques which is atypical for a watercolourist", she says. The other technique she employs is "grainy watercolour."

"I use a granulating medium which splits open the pigment, and it makes the image appear grainy, creating a textural effect."

"A Shady Lunch in Rome" is part of a series of eight different piazza situations. This particular piece took Luxenburg a month to paint, much less time than her wondrous centerpiece contribution called "Diversity" for the Jewish Community's Intergenerational Millennium Mural, which took her eight months, and permanently hangs prominently in the reception area of the Soloway JCC."

"Diversity" is a painting made up of six canvases which feature 39 portraits of people living in Ottawa's Jewish community in the year 2000. "Despite the participants' common heritage, each of the six constellations of figures pays tribute to individual communities who do not regularly interact with one another. "Within Judaism, we are all one, and to have 'one people' as my theme meant a lot to me as a painter. I feel really privileged to have been part of the project."

Eight of Luxenburg's paintings are part of the permanent collection of the Montreal Memorial Holocaust Centre - two from her 1997 exhibition, "Children on route to Auschwitz," and six from her 1999 exhibition called, "The Streets of Warsaw, Pre- 1939." Of the latter, she says, "It was important for me to paint the streets of Warsaw before Jews lost their civil rights. I tried to capture how life was so prosperous and thriving before World War Two and Jews had everything and a political regime came along and destroyed everything they had."

Luxenburg has recently done a series of streetscapes set in her own neighbourhood. They feature Bank Street's shops in the Glebe. Her works were featured in the October 2004 issue of *The Glebe Report*.

**December 2004**  
**Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour**  
***Etobicoke Civic Centre Art Gallery***  
**by Patrick Donahue**

As usual with the CSPWC annual show, many of the pictures here show meticulously detailed, almost photographic realism. A notable example is Karen Wilson's painting of a dory as seen from above, the winner of the A.

J. Casson medal for the best in show. Among many other outstanding pictures in this style are Phyllis Ljuden-Edlerkin's magnificent still life of African violets in a window and Breen Robison's close-up of glowing green moss on tree branches. One gets the impression that many of these artists are, or could be, top-flight commercial illustrators. If you want perfection of detail, I'd say you couldn't do any better than Sheryl Luxenburg's "Shady Lunch" which shows some of the best figure painting I've ever seen in watercolour.

**The Glebe Report, October 15, 2004, page 25**  
**Local Artist Sheryl Luxenburg**  
**by Elaine Marlin**

Neighbourhood resident Sheryl Luxenburg, known as Sher to her friends, is a photorealistic painter who has produced ten fascinating paintings of shop windows on Bank Street. She was out last winter in punishingly cold weather working on this project while most of us were scuttling like crabs to get inside the warm shops. In her Bank Street paintings, the windows of each shop reflects the window on the other side of the street and also what is going by on the street itself. Looking at this wealth of juxtaposed images, it is often hard to remember that these are paintings and not arty photographs. The ten storefronts in the Bank Street series are: J.D. Adam, Glebe Side Kids, Snapdragon, Davidson's Jewellers, Aveda Spa, Arbour Environmental Shoppe, and the Antique Shoppe from three different angles.

Sheryl has degrees in both fine art and psychology. She became captivated with the photorealist style of painting when she studied under Tom Blackwell of Keene State College in New Hampshire. "Photorealism" she explains "specializes in imagery which centers on the vibrancy of the urban street. Part of the objective of photorealism is the suggested casualness, and my subjects are found rather than arranged. My goal is to paint frozen moments in time with freshness and the immediacy of the moment. Although I paint from photographs, working from life is a major part of my creative process."

Because the paintings look so much like photos at first glance, people are sometimes curious to find out the techniques she uses. She begins with a detailed under painting using an enlargement with a grid and employs watercolours to build up thin translucent layers, enhance luminosity and promote rich saturation of colour. Using a granulating medium throughout the surface and distilled water to thin the paint under a magnifying glass,

she drops the paint from a tiny dropper onto the section being painted and uses an airbrush to fix the paint in place. This technique creates the mottled and granulated look she is after and helps to control bleeding. An airbrush is also employed to blur figures in order to suggest motion and for fading images into the background.

Sheryl Luxenburg's work has been exhibited in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and the U.S. Sheryl's next exhibit will feature her Rome Piazza watercolour paintings in The Society of Canadian Artists' National Exhibition, 1307 St. Catherine Street West in Montreal from October 15 to 24.

**The Fulcrum, October 25, 2002, page 12**  
**Feeling The Knead, Enriched Bread Artists Toast Ninth Open House**  
**by Noora Sagarwala**

"Photorealistic painter, Sheryl Luxenburg is using a familiar medium in extraordinary ways. Having pledged her allegiance to watercolours and acrylics, Luxenburg spends countless hours preparing canvases with an acrylic textured medium to prevent her paints from bleeding. The painting process is equally painstaking, if not more complicated, as Luxenburg endeavours to recreate extremely complex cityscapes.

I'm exhibiting my paintings of city streets, imagery of the innocent rhythms of people moving through daily life. I continue to challenge myself by investing my attention with the complicated and sensory overload in these images, said Luxenburg".

**The Charlatan, October 26, 2000, page 17**  
**Why Bother With A Camera When You Can Paint Like Sheryl Luxenburg**  
**by Michael Olson**

"Sheryl Luxenburg's meticulous watercolours focus on the urban environment. She creates almost photo-realistic works that convey the congestion and vitality of Manhattan's Chinatown."

**Ottawa X Press, October 19, 2000 page 48**  
**Visarts Cameo of Enriched Bread Artists Eighth Annual Open Studio**  
**by M. Shinat**

“Sheryl Luxenburg’s essays in photo realism of New York’s Chinatown are magnificent; they look like paintings photographed in the rain”.

**The Ottawa Citizen, October 19, 2000 page G3**  
**Artists Share Their Studios, Secrets With Public**  
**by Paul Gessel**

“Sheryl Luxenburg is a highly skilled Montreal import who paints super-realistic street scenes of Chinatown in New York. Stare at her paintings for just a few seconds and you can hear the busy traffic and smell the fresh food being sold from the sidewalk stalls.”