

kolaj

#13 A MAGAZINE ABOUT
CONTEMPORARY
COLLAGE



MIXED GRILL

A Group Show at Espace Robert Poulin in Montreal, Quebec

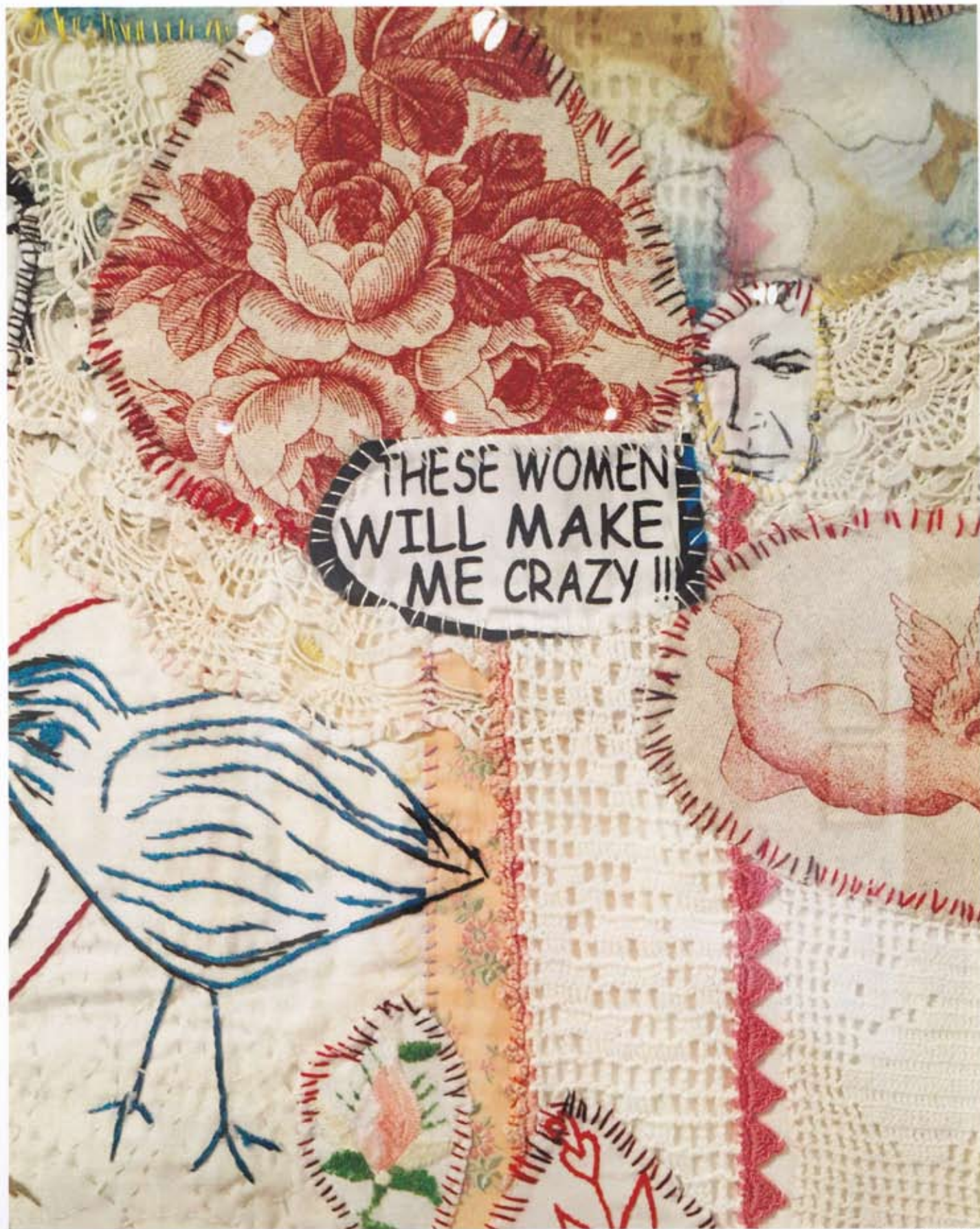
Since arriving on the scene a few years ago, Espace Robert Poulin has put forth a consistent collection of contemporary art with a strong focus on art brut, outsider art, and other art that finds beauty in the brutality of the human condition. While art on view trades in the gothic, the melancholic, and the deranged, Gallery Director Robert Poulin routinely assembles collections of work that is expertly made, technically proficient, intently expressive and colourful. There's not much slack to be found. Quality reigns. Through participation in art fairs and membership in dealer associations, Poulin has cultivated a reputation that allows him to introduce his particular interests to established collectors and institutions. He is an ardent champion of artists and inclusion in his gallery means artists who may otherwise be marginalized have a true partner and ally in the industry.

For the past few years, Poulin has hosted a group exhibition during the summer called "Mixed Grill". The gallery recently moved from its downtown Montreal location in the Belgo Building to the up-and-coming gallery scene in Little Italy. The tradition of "Mixed Grill" continued this year with an exceptionally strong representation of collage among the twenty-five artists included in the exhibition.

One of the few traditional collage works in the exhibition is a haunting piece by Jacinthe Loranger. From Montreal, Loranger engages themes of violence, sexuality, and family in a variety of media. The collage *Rest Well My Dear* shows a cast of semi-human figures in a room. The work is made with rough paper cuts. Two of the figures stand over three others who are laying their hands on a body on the floor. (On the artist's Tumblr, she titles this piece *You became a puddle*.) *Rest Well My Dear* recounts the artist's experience coming home one day to discover her boyfriend dead on the floor. The primitiveness of the piece reinforces the rawness of the narrative as if the memory is exists only as a horrific children's book.

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Metamorphosis (detail) by Anna Torma
 diptych: each panel, 63"x39.4";
 mixed media on canvas; 2008



This echo of child-like nostalgia, the tension of remembering innocence in a way that underscores our maturity as adults, carries over into the work of Shaun Morin. From Winnipeg, Manitoba, Morin's work combines drawing, painting, and collage in cacophonous works that read like a teenager's journal. In *Once Upon A Time*, paper fragments with images from children's books, drawing, painting, and doodles one would expect to find in a bathroom stall combine into a symphonic work. Underneath a collaged image of a boy crying, Morin writes, "A young boy learning a valuable lesson, that you don't always get what you want." Below that, "THRASH" is written in graffiti-inspired letters. As the title suggests, *Once Upon A Time* is rich with narrative, and this is typical of Morin's other work in the exhibition where works trade on an illusion of primitiveness.

Anna Torma's *Metamorphosis*, for example, is two large pieces of fabric and embroidery that presents as a collage of sewn patchwork. Torma combines lace and patches and

pieces of printed fabric with embroidered images of birds, flowers, figures, and faces. In many ways, Torma is doing in fabric what Morin is do-

"Mixed Grill III" ran from 20 June to 8 August 2015. Espace Robert Poulin, in Montreal's Little Italy, is online at espacerobertpoulin.com.

ing with paper and paint: presenting the viewer a rich and complex narrative that trades on an illusion of simplicity. Now living in Baie Verte, New Brunswick, but originally from Hungary, Torma studied textile art at the Hungarian University of Applied Arts in Budapest before immigrating to Canada in 1988. A member of Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and a recipient of the Lieutenant-Governor's Award for High Achievement in Visual Arts, Torma is one of Canada's most renowned artists.

Sophistication masquerading as primitive does not characterize all of the collage work on the exhibition. The collage of Henriette Valium, while explosive and edgy, operates within the boundaries of traditional contemporary art and design. The brutish style of Jim Sanders presents with a formal composition. In *Equating the New with the Good*, a creepy figure rides a cat or dog-like horse, both made of thick cardboard and paint. Behind the subjects, a visual play of pasted images and spray paint create a background reminiscent of graffiti and wheat-pasted walls. The collage work

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of Adrian Williams is a study in marking. In *The Perspiring Philosopher*, Williams combines strips of paper marked with rubber stamps of numbers and shapes that read like hieroglyphics. The black ink patterns and foxed brown paper harmonize into a work that invokes text, but reads as a mysterious document, an abstract labyrinth for the eye. These works round out the collection of collage in "Mixed Grill III" and offer an academic counterbalance to the more raw work on view.

A final particular note with regards to how the exhibition was installed: In spite of operating in a traditional cement-slabbed white cube, Poulin presented the art in "Mixed Grill III" in clusters, choosing to mix work by different artists rather than the more traditional presentation of collections. The effect is to see the works in community with each other. Pieces that would otherwise never meet were able to converse, and viewers are able to imagine a collection of art on their wall. Stripped of the artist's ego, one sees the works for what they are: powerful objects.

Once Upon a Time by Shaun Morin (aka The Slomotion)
25.5"x19.6"; mixed media on paper; 2006



LIFE'S TOO SHORT GUYS!

Once upon a Time

VISCIOUS KISSES



BIG SHOT



YOUR GARDEN IS TOO CLOSE TO THE HOUSE TO LIVE IN



WHERE THE ACTION IS!



BINGO				
10	26	33	51	75
4	24	43	47	
14				



ILL



"Tick-tock," Says the clock.



"I did it for love"



BROKEN



Blue

THRASH



The clown looks sad.

