

# Art in a moment in time

New exhibition showcases  
the latest acquisitions  
of the municipal gallery



PETER SIMPSON  
BIG BEAT

Sometimes a work of art perfectly captures a moment in time, and none more literally than Theo Pelmus's self-portraits at the Ottawa city hall art gallery.

They are photographs of sculptures, each a bust of Pelmus's own head carved in ice cream — lemon or passion fruit, your choice. Each head is melting, as is the head of everyone who has one in Ottawa these days, with the temperature hovering around 35 C for what

seems like 35 days now. I stood before *Lemon Self-Portrait* and thought I was looking in a mirror. The two works are inspired and — timeliness aside — are witty. The temporary sculpture is complemented by the permanent photograph, and the two come together like contrasting flavours in a frozen dessert. (I really must get out of this heat.)

The melting heads are among dozens of recent additions to the city's art collection, brought together in the exhibition *Close to Home*, open to Sept. 9 at the gallery. The rest of the works are a hodgepodge of styles and media, and they include plenty of artists who are, says Jonathan Browns, the cultural planner who manages the city's art collection, in the "emerging" part of their careers.

"What's interesting this year is the number of new artists that are in the collection," Browns says. "About half the works that were purchased are artists that have never been in the collection before."

One of the newbies is Anyse Ducharme, who opened the code of a digital photo and inserted into that code the text of comments about the photo that had been made by others on the internet. The result looks like a heat-sensitive scan of a passing storm. It's an insightful and fitting representation of the



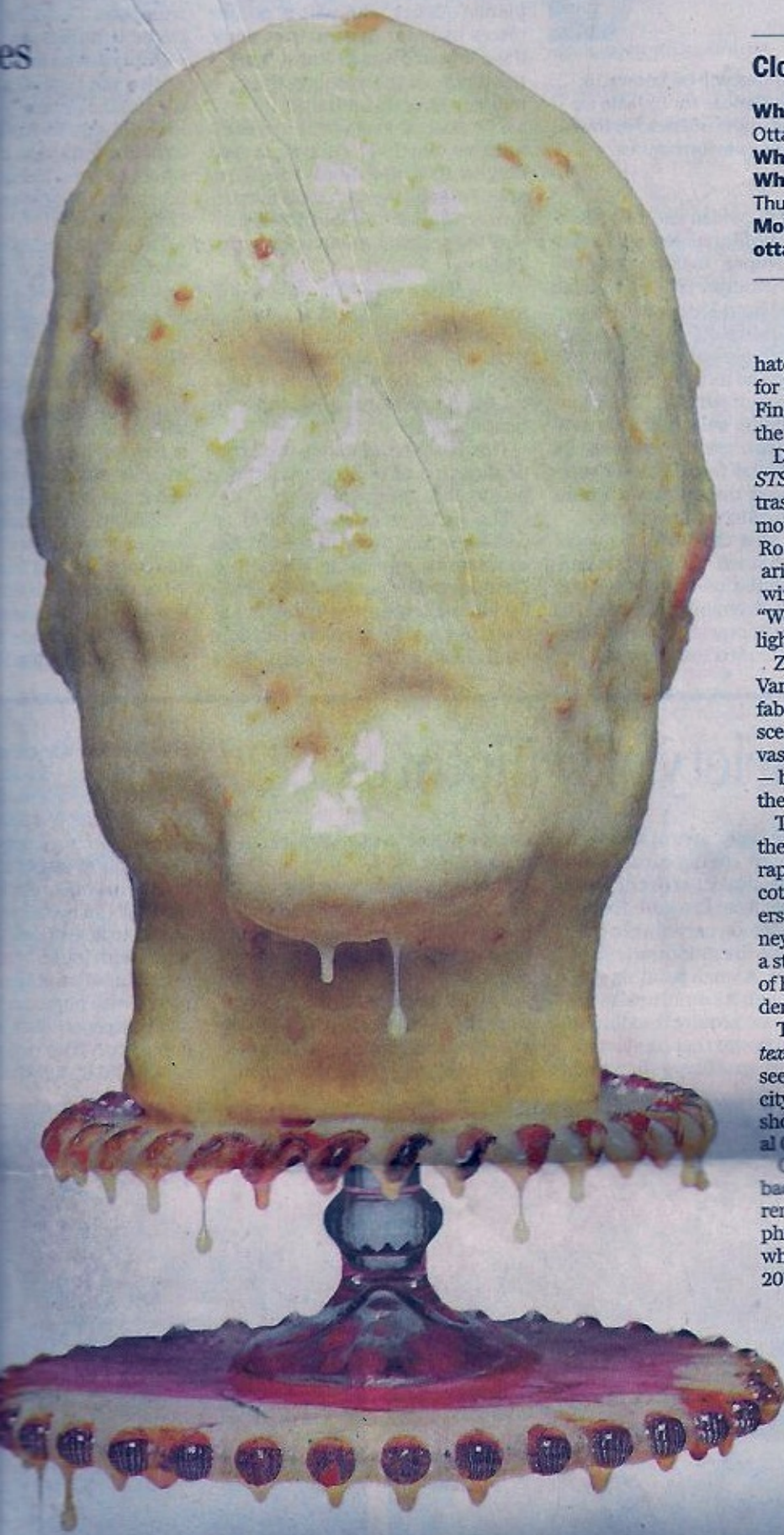
Close to Home

What: New  
Ottawa  
Where: City  
When: Open  
Thursday, Aug.  
More: See  
ottawacitizen

hateful and  
for commu-  
Finally, was  
the swamp  
Ducharme  
STILL Low  
trast next  
more tradi-  
Road. Wh  
aries of a  
winter to  
"We like t  
light," Bro  
Zippy  
Vant En  
fabric pa  
scene ma  
vases on  
— but th  
the need  
There  
the exhibi  
rappers  
cott, Jen  
ers such  
ney Lew  
a stuffe  
of her r  
dernity  
The  
textile  
seems  
city th  
shows  
at Gall  
Ch  
hally  
men  
photo  
which  
2010



# ment in time



## Close to Home

**What:** New acquisitions by the City of Ottawa

**Where:** City Hall art gallery

**When:** Official opening 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Thursday, July 19. Show runs to Sept. 9.

**More:** See more images at [ottawacitizen.com/bigbeat](http://ottawacitizen.com/bigbeat)

hateful and ignorant remarks that pass for commentary on too many websites. Finally, something beautiful comes from the swamp of anonymous debate online.

Ducharme's work, titled *Space Shuttle STS117 Launch*, hangs in deliberate contrast next to Shannon Whittle's much more traditional painting of Montreal Road. Whittle isn't pushing the boundaries of art, but the bustling street in the winter twilight is immediately pleasing. "We like the zippy line of movement and light," Browns says.

Zippy is a good word for Margaret Vant Erve's *Summer Blessing*, which is fabric paint and embroidery on silk. The scene may be prosaic — flowers in vases overlooking rolling farmlands — but the colours are electric and the needlework is exquisite.

There's a lot of photography in the exhibition, from established photographers — Tony Fohse, Justin Wonnacott, Jennifer Dickson — to up-and-comers such as Remi Theriault and Whitney Lewis-Smith. The latter's photo is of a stuffed fox, and it was perhaps the best of her memorable 2010 series of taxidermy portraits.

There's a large photograph titled *Geotextile-Sumacs*, by Lorraine Gilbert, who seems to be in every exhibition in the city this summer. (Gilbert is also a part of shows at SAW Gallery and at the National Gallery.)

Chelsea Delorme's photo of a decrepit backyard in central Ottawa immediately reminded me of Greg Gerard's brilliant photos of a Shanghai in tense transition, which were part of the National Gallery's 2010 biennial of new acquisitions.

See ART on page D9

Passion Fruit Self-Portrait,  
2010 photograph on paper, by  
Theo Pelmus from the City of  
Ottawa's art collection.



film director Christopher Nupen, Ottawa-based painter Pamela Cockroft Lasserre, and a jazz trio featuring Peter Hum on piano with saxophonist Nathan Cepilinski and John Geggie on bass.

There will be a concert that mar-

from three different disciplines.

In 1873, after the death of a popular artist named Viktor Hartman, a major exhibition of his work was held in St. Petersburg, Russia. His friend, the composer Modest Musorgsky, attended the show and out

The performers should also be well-known to many in the Ottawa community. Appearing along with Desmarais are bass-baritone Philip Holmes, sopranos Isabelle Lacroix and Janelle Lapalme, baritone Denis Lawlor, tenors Jean-Philippe

Under the Pines concludes the following weekend with concerts Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

For information about tickets, see [www.under-the-pines.com](http://www.under-the-pines.com) or call 819-647-2547. Some are also available at The Leading Note in Ottawa.

last great Who album.

The band will also play at the closing ceremonies of the 2012 London Olympic Games.

Peter Simpson listened in on the conference call. Check out the Big Beat blog online for more.

## Art: Wide variety of sculptures

Continued from page D10

There's a different sort of decrepitude in Michelle Wilson's photo of an abandoned amusement park in Taiwan. The elevated curves of a water slide (I think) are being consumed by forest, and Wilson casts the scene in greyish tones that create a post-apocalyptic feel. It's a striking image.

There are sculptures of a wide variety. Danny Hussey carved a vintage console television out of wood, with a scene from *Creature From the Black Lagoon* carved onto the screen, while the soundtrack plays from within. A small painting goes with it, though it's unfortunate the city didn't also acquire the vibrantly coloured poster that completed the set. (Perhaps Hussey didn't sub-

mit the poster to the jury for consideration.)

There's a piece in metal by Eric Walker, who has a delightfully workmanlike container ship cut from several dozen bits of coloured metal.

A metal piece by Jinny Yu, meanwhile, has a single sheet of aluminum, twisted and banged into shape and lightly brushed with oil.

I don't know what it means, but it is compelling. I felt like the apes drawn to the enigmatic monolith at the end of *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

There's no such mystery to Tim desClouds' creation *The Voyage of Theresa of Cartier Ville* (Otherness). It's an homage to his mother, and as typical of desCloud's work it brims with life and action. It's a sort of combination ship and car and piano, with horns and ferris wheels and tiny people clambering all over everything. It's a riot of colour and detail, and it's a joyful thing.

There's too much in *Close to Home* to give a full picture of it all here, and it's too eclectic to reduce it to any easy summary. There are all the new faces, and works by familiar artists such as Rosalie Pavell, Diana Thorneycroft and even the late Gerald Trottier. Indeed, there's so much to be seen that I find it difficult to imagine any visitor to the gallery could leave unsatisfied

[psimpson@ottawacitizen.com](mailto:psimpson@ottawacitizen.com)  
facebook, Google +: Peter Simpson  
Twitter: bigbeatottawa