

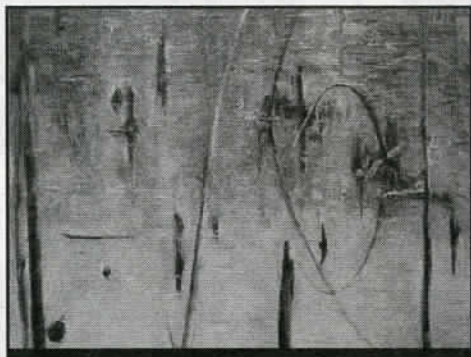
Fenwick Exhibit Surveys Landscapes with a Shrewd Eye

Roly Fenwick's latest exhibit eloquently investigates the terrain of northern Ontario. **Inner Icon: Landscape and Memory** transmits landscapes that resonate and disorient.

The collection offers watercolour and oil paintings referencing the Bruce Peninsula and Georgian Bay area. Fenwick, now in his seventies, grew up in the area and continues to visit a cottage he owns there to paint the surrounding landscape.

Within the exhibit, one series of paintings examines a beaver lodge from varied points of view.

"I like the mass of it, the density of it, the sense that it's floating on water so it gives it that polarity, the heaviness balanced by the water," says Fenwick.



"Wetland Script" Oil on canvas, 2003

The beaver lodge images progress from obscure to slightly more transparent, providing a sense of the artist's creative process. Other paintings show trees, swamps and lakes, presenting viewers with refined slivers of landscape. The absence of a horizon line in many of the works is simultaneously dislocating and absorbing. Rich textures and distinctive angles

impart images that provoke both recognition and mystification.

During production of works for the Inner Icon, Fenwick decided to explore different methods.

"You have to push edges because otherwise you fall into a formula. And I see things now in generally a more abstract fashion. I haven't got the patience to go into the details as much as I used to. I suppose I'm focusing more on mass and shapes, and simplifying," says Fenwick.

Along with avoiding formulas, he also aims to shun fixed narratives in his paintings.

"I tried not to get too literal with this stuff. I'm not a storyteller," he says.

While he enjoys the liberating aspects of painting more abstract forms, Fenwick also expresses concern over the approach and the potential lack of direction it can convey.

"You have to be careful because it can be a lazy way out so you have to really make it work."

Throughout all its paintings, Inner Icon strikes a strong equilibrium between experimentation and authenticity.

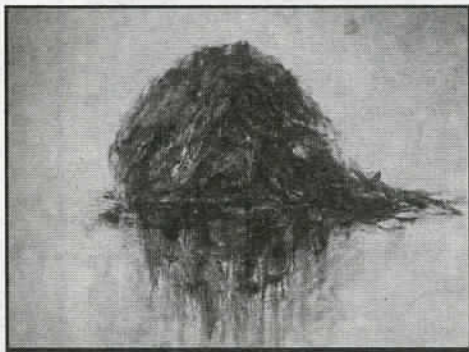
The gallery's director, Michael Gibson, suggests Fenwick's paintings capture a sense of a wider environment, rather than reflecting simplistic scenes.

"He's not reproducing what you see. He's reproducing more of what you feel," Gibson says.

Gibson has a solid familiarity with Fenwick's catalogue of artwork, which stretches back for decades. He expresses admiration for the new direction Fenwick has taken for Inner Icon.

"He almost seems to be reaching levels that are new highs for him. He's taking bigger risks," says Gibson.

— Rob Nay



"Morning Icon" Oil on linen, 2004