

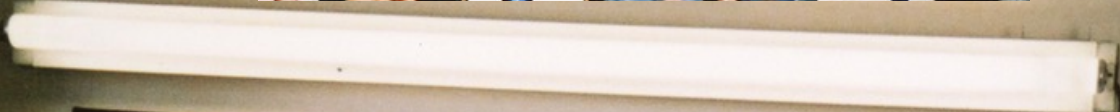
The Story of Christl Bergstrom's



RED GALLERY



By year 2000, I was starting to think about moving out of my home studio. I wanted a less-isolated place to work and I hoped that it might also be a public place to exhibit my paintings.



At the time I was painting a series of portraits of my family and friends,
and I was having fun doing them.



I had produced a lot of paintings in the 1980s and 1990s that would be exhibited in the new gallery.

At the time, I was inspired by the critical writings of art historian Kirk Vanadoc, chief curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2001. I was following his many essays on the history of modern art. “I came to think that art is exactly not what religion is. It is not about absolutes. That it has to do with the condition of being human which is not ever to be able to deal with absolutes. That we deal in a world of doubts, a world of uncertainties, a world of ironies. It’s true that art transports you, that it gives you the sense that you can find other worlds than the ones you know are inside you. There are so many imagined worlds. Each artist creates a world with its own logic and its own set of rules that you can move and inhabit.... Art transmutes itself into a form of spirituality.” to which I respond very strongly.

Transcribed from a video lecture by Kirk Vanadoc in 2001



2001

While walking along Whyte Avenue, I happened to pass this little building, under renovation. The owner, Al Balanko, had just posted a sign “For Sale or Rent”. I walked in to see if he was serious and it was then that I said I would buy the building. We hadn’t even discussed the price.



2001

Little did I know at the time of the purchase how important the rear yard would become as an extension of the building – an empty canvas for a patio and landscaping.



This is the earliest photo of the building that we have found – 1958

Edmonton Archives



June 2001
Preparing for the first exhibition



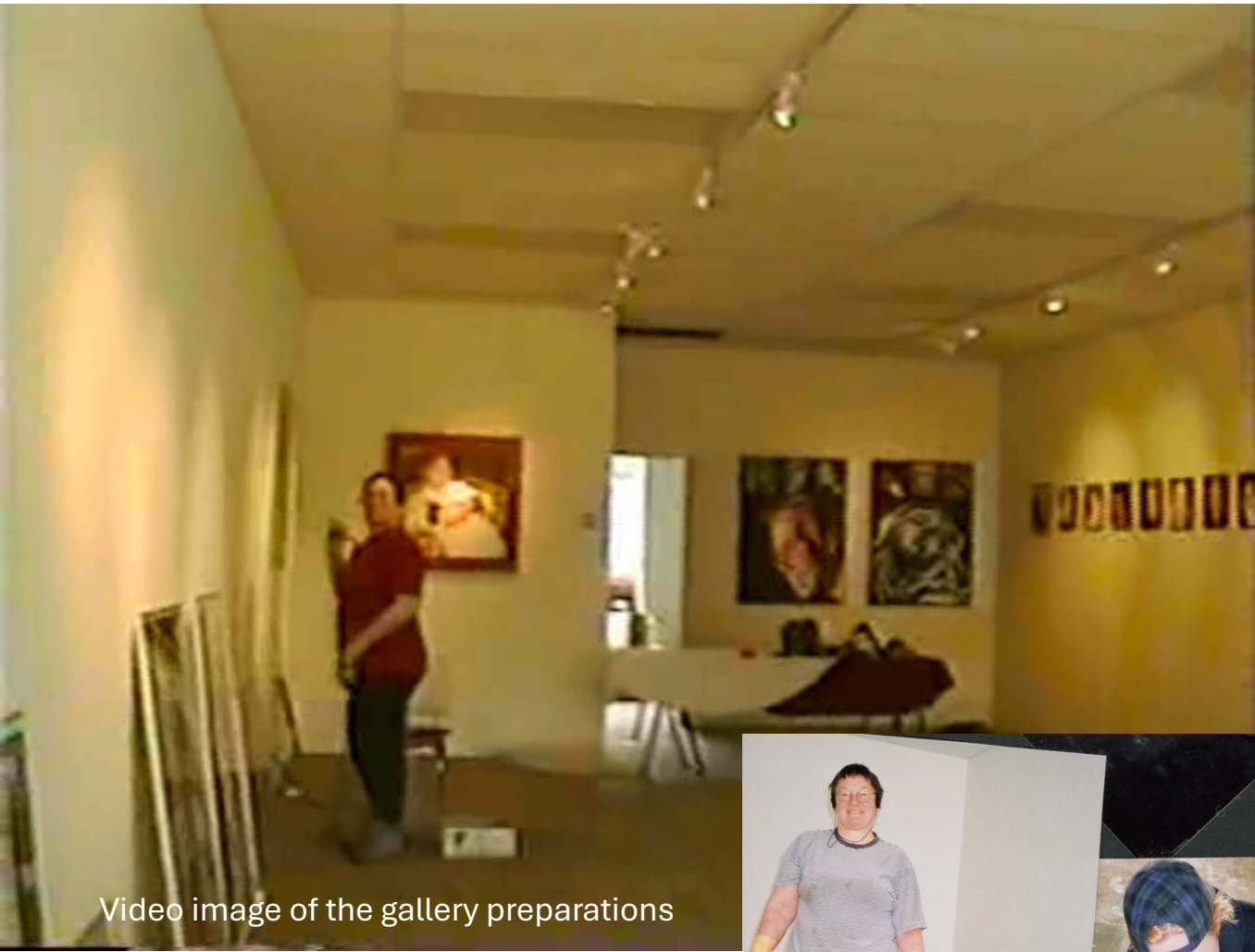


DED

This is the elegant type face I wanted for the Red Gallery logo, which I saw on a visit to Amsterdam.



The first step in the renovations was the messy process of exposing the concrete floor by removing the old VA tiles and adhesive.



Video image of the gallery preparations

We painted the walls and installed track lighting as I prepared for the first exhibition.



Summer 2001

NEW MOON OPENINGS AT

DED

GALLERY
9621 Whyte Avenue Edmonton



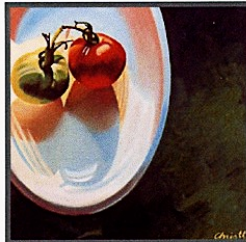
PORTRAITS

Opening Thursday June 21, 5:00 - 9:00 pm



LANDSCAPES

Opening Friday July 20, 5:00 - 9:00 pm



VESSELS

Opening Sunday August 19, 1:00 - 5:00 pm



NOSTALGIA

Opening Monday September 17, 5:00 - 9:00 pm

Gallery Hours 11:00 - 5:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday

Christl Blegård

2001 Exhibitions



PORTRAITS

June 22 to July 18, 2001 Tuesday through Saturday 11:00-5:00 pm

RED
GALLERY
9621 Whyte Avenue

Cheryl Buehler

The first exhibition at the **RED** Gallery



PORTRAITS

June 22, 2001

LANDSCAPES



July 20, 2001



LANDSCAPES

Someone said "Art makes thoughts visible" and I think that is what I do.



Water #201



Earth #202



Fire #203



Air #204



Ether #231

Element Series



#081



#087



#090



#091



#082

LANDSCAPES



Warning: Some Visual Content



VESSELS

August 19, 2001



#084



#143



#163



#170a



#138



#139



#170



#162



#150



#140

VESSELS



#210



#206

VESSELS



#218



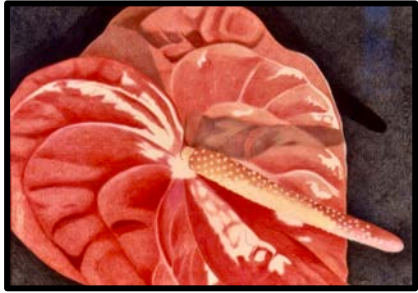
#213



The world changed on September 11, 2001



NOSTALGIA September 17, 2001
Paintings and drawings from the past and present



#017



#017



#063



#109



#120



#122



#123



#132



#158

NOSTALGIA

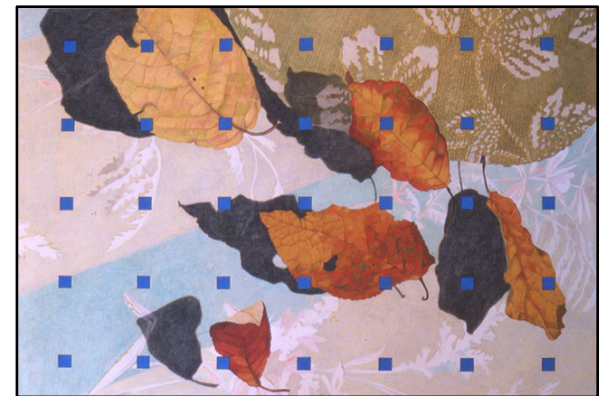
old and new



#046



#045



#504



NOSTALGIA



#222

2001 ended with this portrait of David and me.
It was taken from a slide that David arranged and sent to his family
depicting the end of our first year in 1970. It is hopeful
and ambiguous at the same time.

The Story of the Red Gallery – Part 2...

E6 EDMONTON JOURNAL **THE VISUAL ARTS** FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2002

Passionate about art

Idiosyncratic still lifes, urbane landscape the stuff of passion for Christl Bergstrom

It's a huge understatement to say that Christl Bergstrom values personal freedom. This dedicated Edmonton painter proudly marches to her own drummer in every conceivable way, be it style, subject matter, a unique approach to marketing, and, of course, her personal life.

"The real stuff is always my life," says the high-energy artist who took the unprecedented step of opening her own gallery last year to sell her idiosyncratic still lifes, portraits and deeply urbane landscapes.

The cheery, hyper-modern Mill Creek storefront allows her the freedom to devote herself full time to painting in the back room studio area, while also displaying and selling her works.

"It's all about the doing, the little touches, the layers, the drop-like strokes. It all adds up," she says, talking about her own take on personal process as much as her approach with oils.

For example, why the Red Gallery? "I called it that because red is all about passion, about blood and life. That and it was a corporate name that I owned," she says with a wry smile.

Bergstrom, a longtime area resident, gestures to the vacant lot across the street where she once considered building a place she planned to dub the Red Café.

As for her subject matter, Bergstrom describes her hyper-personal work "art for people

who don't buy art," adding that she doesn't really winnow her subject matter with commercial goals in mind. If she feels like painting it, she does, endlessly trusting that an audience will follow her passion.

At the moment, the 55-year-old artist is working on a series of paintings based on family photographs.

The large canvas on her work table at the moment is as delightfully light as it is stylistically post-modern: a large oil painting of herself and her husband (architect David Murray) from the early '70s posed *à la* Grant Wood's *American Gothic*.

She seems to enjoy exploring the layers of irony, personal meaning and art history embedded in the work, especially deconstructing the original decision to ape this famous pose.

Despite her current attraction to near-historical work and the fact she bases her pieces on static photographs, Bergstrom is equally dedicated to living and working deeply in the moment.

Other landscapes on display, both big and smaller works, are equally transient and highly intimate.

Many are small vistas, backyard scenes, flowers and the occasional field.

In part that's her desire to paint only that which intersects with the human hand, but also to mark place, the passing of time—even if that passing is only relevant in hindsight.



Gilbert Bouchard
Visual Arts



Christl Bergstrom describes her work as "art for people who don't buy art." This is her still life *Dragon & Herbs*.

SUPPLIED

PREVIEW

Christl Bergstrom's Red Gallery

Showing: 9621 Whyte Ave.
When: until Feb. 15

"I've studied Buddhism and I'm fascinated with the idea of becoming, and of being really aware of the moment," she says. "But then, as soon as you're aware of the moment, it's done. Art's like that, as soon as you paint something, it's gone."

It's that contradiction that seemingly fuels much of her art, and her near-religious devotion to working on the cusp of that dilemma.

This is a woman who has fearlessly planted herself on the



SUPPLIED

Grape Hyacinths, by Christl Bergstrom



SUPPLIED

Wieners, by Christl Bergstrom

roadbed of the High Level Bridge, camera firing away, just to catch that fleeting perfect glimpse of a bike half obscured by a support beam.

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