

2005 YEAR IN REVIEW /// VISUAL ARTS

Standout sightings

Raw chicken, a giant banana blimp plot and other art highlights



CWAZY: Nathalie Claude's *Lapin-moi*

by **CHRISTINE REDFERN**
So much to choose from, so little time... when I look back over the past year, the following are a few of the works made by local artists that particularly caught my eye.

Ondulation by Thomas McIntosh, with Mikko Hynninen and Emmanuel Madan, was a mesmerizing installation composed of water, sound and light at the Musée d'art contemporain. **Isabelle Hayeur**—whose video installation last year for *Champ Libre* I picked as my favourite piece of art in 2004—didn't rest on her laurels. This year she was back with her fictional landscapes that make us think about the environmental transformations we're making as a society. Her photographs were at *Thérèse Dion Art Contemporain* and also at the *Urban Territories* exhibition, still on at the Mac. *Urban Territories* also includes a funny five-channel video installation *Guardia, resguárdeme* by Emmanuelle Léonard, in which she filmed Mexican security guards with a camera hidden in her hat. A nice twist where, for once, the watched watch the watchers.

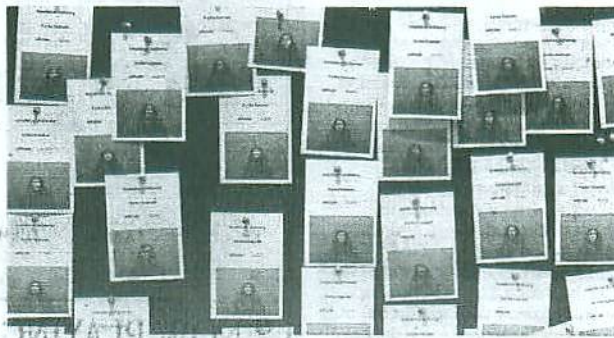
The best festival this year was Studio 303's *Edgy Women*, which, miraculously for a festival, did not include one stinker evening. The opening-night cabaret included my personal highlight of this year, **Nathalie Claude's** over-the-top brilliant performance *Lapin-moi*. Also inspirational was South African artist **William Kentridge's** retrospective at the Mac and Chicago-based **Sabrina Raaf's** works at Oboro. The 1964 video *Meat Joy* by **Carolee Schneemann**, shown at Articule, illustrated how much time can alter our interpretation of a

piece. No longer are the writhing, underwear-clad bodies shocking, but when they put the raw chickens into their mouths, that did get me shrieking. Another standout work at Articule was **Reframing** by **Fariba Samsami**. In it, Samsami showed a video of a demonstration of veiled women in Iran and confronted the viewer with a new imposed identity. The photo booth installation produced for everyone



FRUIT FLIES: *Geostationary Banana Over Texas*

a shot of themselves wearing a veil. The end of the year is also a time for redemption, a time to cleanse my spirit and apologize to all the hard-working artists whose exhibi-



VEILS FOR EVERYONE! Fariba Samsami's "Reframed"

tions I wasn't able to write about when they were on, such as the excellent *Lacs* by **Catherine Bodmer** and *Weather Report* by **Julie André T**, both at Skol. Then there were a few bad events I previewed. If anyone bought a ticket because of me to *Immanence* by **Susan Kozel** at the Monument-National, I apologize. The show was especially galling because, despite the lack of funds in the arts, Kozel actually had a decent budget to work with and still only came up with something incredibly boring.

GOING BANANA

This year brought some big news to the local arts scene. **César Saëz** unveiled his plans and prototypes for the *Geostationary Banana Over Texas*. This project will result in the biggest blimp ever made: a 300-metre inflatable banana that will float over Texas in June 2007. Follow its development at www.geostationarybananaovertexas.com.

Marc Mayer, director of the Musée d'art contemporain, presented a proposal that has been selected as one of three finalists in the competition to revamp the Old Port's grain elevator. The Mac's project, *Silo #5: Musée d'art moderne*, includes new museum space to exhibit more of their extensive art collection from 1939 to the present. This proposal is the only one that includes a cultural component, so let the Montreal Port Authority know if this is important to you. Lastly, in September it was announced that **Wayne Baerwaldt** is the new curator of the CIAC's *Bienale de Montréal* in 2007. Baerwaldt's past work at Winnipeg's *Plug-in*, Toronto's *Power Plant* and as an internationally renowned curator makes me believe the next biennial is going to put Montreal more on the international art radar—exactly 40 years after Expo '67.

It's always a little depressing to read about what you missed in these year-end wrap-ups. But there are some '05 highlights that you can still see: *Pardon Me* at the Saïdye, **Alexandre Castonguay's** *Elements* at the Mac, the *Nanook Flakes* by the *Najuqsivik Sewing Circle* at la Centrale and **George Zimbel's** *Les Femmes* at Thérèse Dion. May you all be blessed, find inner peace and see/make great art in 2006. ■