

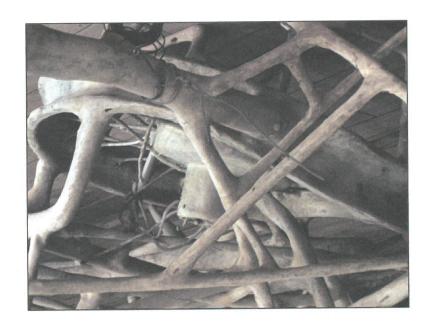
### Foreword

Walter Redinger is in a place that seems ever so slightly beyond a normal existence. He lives in a place that is abundantly spiritual yet grounded in earthly affects. From this chair, this special place, arm leaning on cane, he seems everywhere. He observes and records the inhabitants of his ongoing Garden Party series. He marks and tears and patches his 'visions' of beauty and wildness into a multitude of bulging workbooks. He orchestrates the ongoing evolution of a room that is slowly but magnificently evolving into an ultimate auto-biographical statement; a container of explosive gesture and movement abbreviated by areas of peace and total self-assurance. It is a dramatic and collective documentation of everything past and present filtered essentially into a black and white surround experience that is awe-inspiring and primal in its passion and scope. Compulsively and within minutes he moves from a last minute alteration of a sketch-book drawing to analyzing a 3 x 4 foot freshly emerged multi-colour image from a state of the art commercial printer.

Redinger talks about dreams both literally and figuratively. To him they have equal relevance in his tireless quest to reveal that the creative process is somehow eternal, truth-seeking and sometimes even revelatory. With this timely and important installation of *Apparition* he has brought a long-harbored dream to life. The CASO dining hall is perfect as a symbolic yet temporal host for travelers and in its own current transitional state toward renewal and rebirth. Within the aged grandeur of the dining room the skeletal 'beings' have finally found a home; a point of entry and a point of departure. The 'white room', effortlessly grounded in this historic space, claims a sacred domain for their clustering and hovering and continuing

communication in silence. There is stillness yet surprisingly no rest. For transitional beings there is never rest; the past defines and determines the present; the present is fleeting; the future is hidden in shadows and apparitions. In *Apparition* we face the dilemma of the skeletal beings, of all beings; the ultimate search for insight into the phenomena of birth, life and death, the meaning of our existence. In many cultures it is the role of the shaman, the elder, the sage, the master to divine the hidden, to give clarity to the uncertain and unclear and to try to make tangible the unknown. The dream of and for *Apparition* is fulfilled; the sage's quest, however, for divining and experiencing the hidden, continues.

David Bobier Executive Director St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre February 2007



# work. Acutely observing, listening and moving through life, he considers himself in the third person, grafting sights and sounds that resonate with his earthy, oddly psychedelic sensibility onto a personal mythology so multifaceted that it takes all that he's got to make it real.

Growing up one of six children of an immigrant German tobacco farmer imprinted on Redinger an instinct for process of a certain nature, namely, one that is subject to external forces, is cyclical, and it is slow, it could, he says, "be measured in billions of years." He works with complete trust in the relevance of his intuition because it is connected with the ground beneath his feet. Not the clay soil of Collingwood, but the sandy soil of Elgin County. His motivations and his materials are fixed to the thin strip of communities along the North shore of Lake Erie and the cycles of life there. This is where Redinger learned viscerally Schopenhauer's description of reality: "This world that appears to the senses has no true being, but only a ceaseless becoming." For Redinger this lack of certainty in the realness

# The Centrifugal and Other Forces of

Walter Redinger

"He was wasting ideas all day", wrote Walter Redinger in a song for his slightly trippy sometimes grinding *Walter Band*, and he was obviously not writing biographically as Redinger has probably never wasted an idea in his whole life.

This is not to deny though, the presence of Walter Redinger as the subject, the hero, the villain, or the lover in his various media which, not incidentally, includes drawing, painting, poetry, music making in general, and of course the form which began his international career in the 1960s, sculpture. In fact, Redinger has a remarkable relationship to his life and his

of things is not a cause for self deprivation but rather a source of wonder to be explored.

Always one to address the vast questions of life with the solid foundation of common experience, Redinger has framed two of his most recent works in specially constructed rooms. "Rooms are interesting to artists" Redinger pronounces with such authority that it seems indisputable. Certainly Louise Bourgeois is fascinated with rooms configuring her *Cells* with the same strong sense of intuition that is at once deeply personal and universal as Redinger. As vessels, if the elements within are as deftly calibrated as Redinger's, rooms can be crucibles of galactic reactions.

Fifteen minutes south of Hwy 401 between woodlot and tobacco field in West Lorne Ontario, Redinger's cinder block studio barely contains one of these rooms. It is so thoroughly paint laden it reads as if it is constructed out of its black and white pigments slapped on with the unerring expediency of a carpenter driving in nails. The room has a primitive musicality to it. It visually pulses in time with imagined ancestral drum beats – despite the fact that Redinger plays guitar – but both the imagined music and the music he makes with the *Walter Band* are punctuated with occasional screams from deep within the "Redinger Melancholy", which he says his father brought with him on The Boat from Germany.

In this mindscape of a room one senses the genetic matter for bones with which his driftwood and fiberglass sculptures, *God Seekers*, the *Ghost Ship* and the *Formes*, may be constructed. On the painted walls is the dot and line that he will marginally civilize into drawings and prints. In its three dimensions it is the acoustic chamber for his *Walter Band* experiments, and in its texture is the mix of "Redinger Melancholy" and piss 'n' vinegar that would be his oeuvres' primordial soup – if it had come first. But that is part of the distinction of the artist hitting

full stride. Forty years of experiences arc in his mind to chase down the new thoughts and, in the resulting swarm of ideas, energy of such centrifugal force is generated that work fires out of his will in all forms of media. It appears that these spawn of Redinger's form a cast of characters recognizably connected to Redinger's maelstrom that have the potential of engaging in a single far out narrative.

Redinger's grand scale installation in St. Thomas Ontario, Apparition, if not dependent on, is certainly enhanced by its location in the historic Italianate Canada Southern Railway Station. As the hallmark of placements and displacements, the origin and terminus of journeys the location couldn't be more sympathetic to Redinger's revelations. Within the station is a freestanding open topped room which provides context for the creatures, the Formes. Looking like the remains of some genetically modified beings in a David Cronenberg film - not surprisingly, Cronenberg was a regular at Redinger's openings at Isaacs Gallery in Toronto in the 1960s, the Formes hang perilously about the space. Like phantoms from the ether, they seem eerily familiar from those moments when we seem to partake in the collective subconscious like the dreams you have when you're half awake or the foggy moments before you yield to anesthetic before surgery; and yet they are unconditional discoveries.

One look at the *Formes* and you sense that when they had the guts for digestion some were carnivorous, while others were herbivorous. Some have been bleached by the sun, others ravaged upon reentry to our atmosphere after mythic space treks, while others still have been wrenched from the time of early human history. No longer bound by flesh, their souls gone to wherever souls gather, what is left of their bodies persist, carrying the stories of their lives in their hobbled skeletons. Who are the *Formes* and why do they persist? Surely one expects the sole consolation of death to be freedom from the relentless search

for meaning that is life – but, to consider that this pursuit may be eternal is to cast everyone in the role of Sisyphus, doomed to repeat the same impossible task for eternity.

In this place of chance meetings Redinger defines the line between telling his own story and provoking us enough to discover our own. Transitions of place and of state are more pertinent here than pinning down absolutes. This is part of the quest to understand what it is to be born and to live and to die in this world – an unhinging of the door to these mysteries of life where the specifics of time and space are irrelevant. It is a spiritual endeavour that has taken hold of Redinger since his *Caucasian Totems* and *Sarcophagus #1* of the 1970s. That he does so with a sense of wonderment that never attempts to triumph over the mysteries of life exposes the erudition of his exploration.

Like Susan Rothenburg who wondered what the colour of breath is, and understood almost simultaneously that it was pale lavender<sup>2</sup>, Walter Redinger knows the structures of the incorporeal world with similarly impossible confidence. If there are colours to such things as birth, decay, cancer, hope, anger and sex, the question is moot, because by the time Redinger meets his subjects they have been reduced to their quintessence. Redinger has discovered that these accounts can be embedded in the bones.

Connected to *Apparition* but as if part of the same story told in a different voice, there are the cellular cum neo psychedelic prints that have undergone as much process as qualifies to be classified evolutionary. In them are the gasses, fluids, nutrients, hiding places, hunting sites and breeding grounds to be the territory of the *Formes*, the *God Seekers*, and maybe even the *Ghost Ship*.

Redinger's work appears technically impossible to achieve, and yet he doesn't insinuate any sense of his conquest. It is as if, as many artists claim, he has liberated his forms – merely taking away that which obscures the sculpture within. But Redinger's forms are constructions and there is nothing to remove except space itself. All these mythic beasts exist in this apparent contradiction, the most tantalizing of places to be, in suspension between the definitive solidity of the earth and the limitlessness of space, equally ephemeral, equally eternal.

Redinger's process here is as organic as his early sculptural forms were. Not only has he probably never wasted an idea in his whole life, but he keeps re-pollinating them. That explains why Redinger is exhausting and exhilarating company and is in every sense of the word the last man standing. And why we're still blown away.

By Sylvia Curtis-Norcross

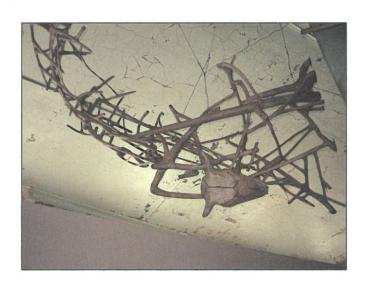
<sup>1.</sup> Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation* Vol 1 appendix, as cited in Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory\_of\_the\_cave

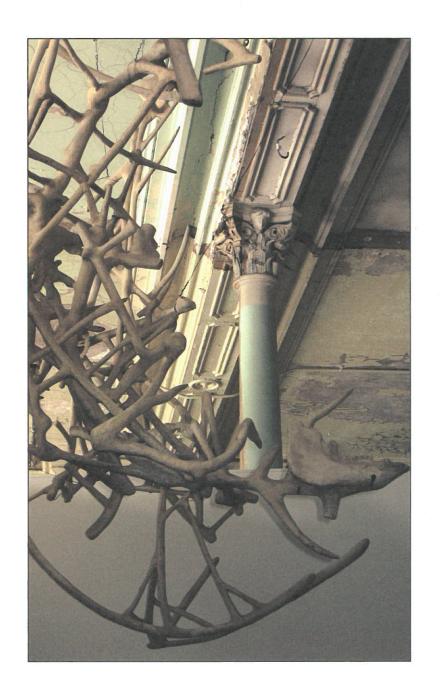
<sup>2.</sup> Enright, Robert. *The Humanizer: an interview with Susan Rothenberg,* Border Crossings issue no. 95, p27. Pub. By Arts Manitoba Publications Inc.



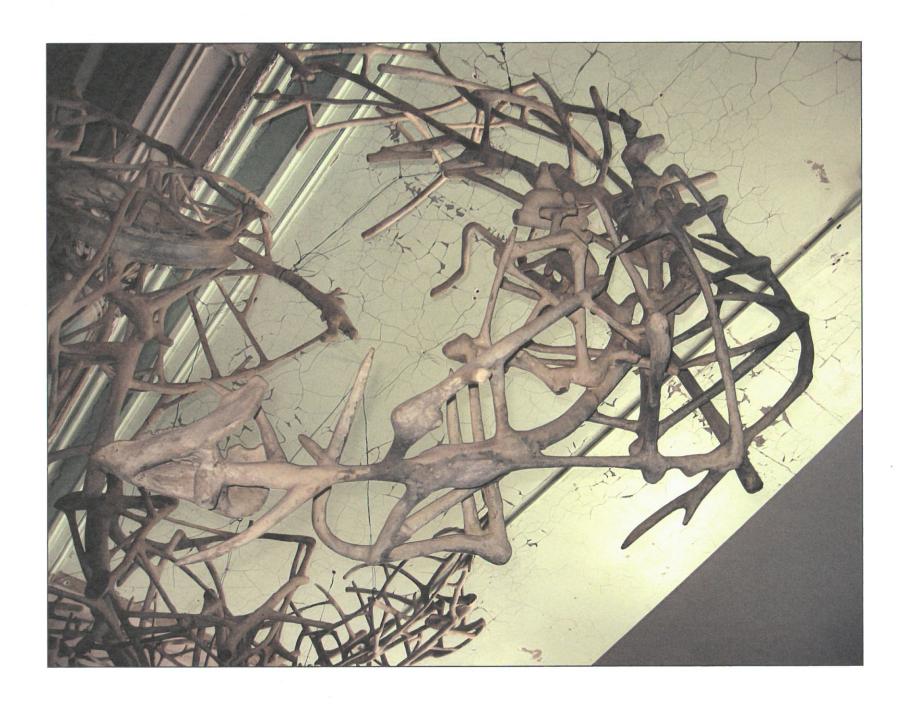


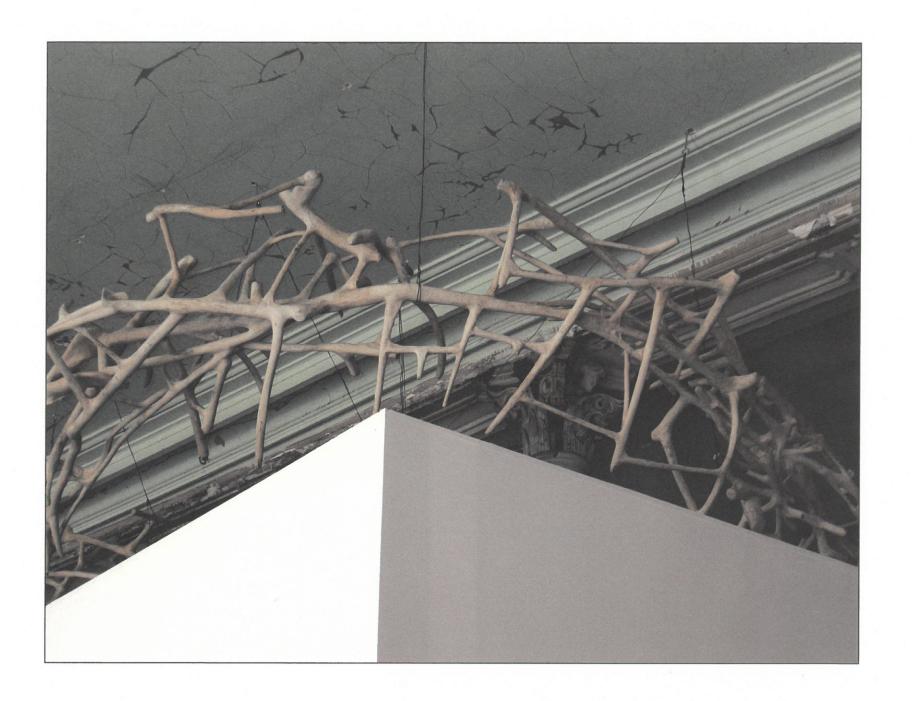






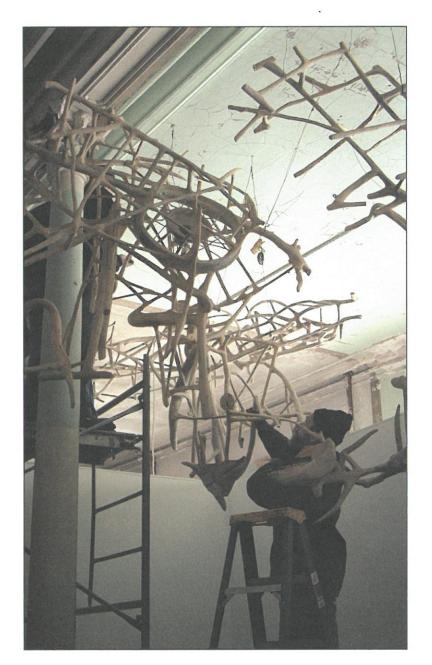














### biggest question

sometimes you think you have made your last picture you have drawn your last drawing and to yourself, it must be over

as in the stillness of the night you think, you might not ever play again, with the wooden blocks, that your father had left

but you remember that time down the hall, the mother's scream and the child's first cry

> and you realize the biggest question might not have yet come

> > Walter Redinger

## Walter Redinger

Beal Technical School in London, ON Ontario College of Art (OCAD), Toronto, ON Miensinger School of Art, Detroit, MI

In 1999, *The Walter Band* formed with members, Brodie Lodge, Jeff Redinger, Durie Lodge, Walter Redinger & Phil Ross.

#### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2007	Walter Redingerl Return To The Void: The Ghost Ship and Other Tales From The Ether Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, ON Apparition CASO Train Station, St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON
2005	The Sixties in Canada, group exhibition National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON Walter Redinger & Banks Violette Mitchell Algus Art Gallery, New York, NY
2004	Organic Works on Paper St. Thomas Public Art Centre, St. Thomas, ON Group Exhibition Mitchell Algus Art Gallery, New York, NY
2002	New York Art Fair, New York, NY
2001	Solo Exhibition Mitchell Algus Art Gallery, New York, NY
1998	Walter Redinger & Paterson Ewen Michael Gibson Gallery, London, ON Souvenirs of the Unknown McIntosh Art Gallery, University of Western Ontario, London, ON

1997	Solo Exhibition Mitchell Algus Art Gallery, New York, NY
1995	Solo Exhibition Mitchell Algus Art Gallery, New York, NY
1994	Beyond Survival London Regional Art & Historical Museum, London, ON Solo Exhibition Christopher Cutts Gallery, Toronto, ON
1993	Hart of London London Regional Art & Historical Museums, London, ON
1992	Three Elgin County Artists The Art Gallery of St. Thomas-Elgin, St. Thomas, ON
1990	Solo Exhibition Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON Oakville Galleries, Oakville, ON
1989	McIntosh Art Gallery, University of Western Ontario, London, ON
1985	Owens Art Gallery, Mt. Allison University, NB
1984	The Regional Revisited London Regional Art Gallery, London, ON Mini-Retrospective The Art Gallery of St. Thomas-Elgin, St. Thomas, ON Solo Exhibition The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON
1979	Solo Exhibition The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON The Birmingham Festival of Arts, Birmingham, AL

1978	The Power Plant, Contemporary Art Gallery, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, ON	1970	Solo Exhibition Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON
1977	London Regional Art Gallery, London, ON  Solo Exhibition  Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON		Sensory Perceptions Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, ON Monuments Hart House, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON
1976	Ontario Now Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, ON		3D's into the 70's Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, ON
	McIntosh Art Gallery, The University of Western Ontario, London, ON	1969	York University Art Gallery, Toronto, ON Solo Exhibition
1975	Solo Exhibition Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON		Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON 20/20 Gallery, London, ON <i>London SW 17</i>
1974	Owens Art Gallery, Mt. Allison University, NB  Solo Exhibition  New York Cultural Centre, New York, NY  Sculpture Today  Scarborough College, Scarborough, ON		Rothman's Art Gallery, Stratford, ON  Canada Tendences Actuelles  Galerie de France, Paris, France  Plastic Presence  Milwaukee Art Centre, Milwaukee, WI
1973	Solo Exhibition Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON		Plastics San Franciso Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA
	Saidye Bronfman Centre, Montreal, QC	1968	Solo Exhibition Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON
1972	Canada's Representative for Sculpture 36th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy Diversity East		Survey 68 Montreal, Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, QC Ontario Centennial Exhibition
	Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, AB Solo Exhibition		Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, ON Group Exhibition
	Isaacs Gallery, Toronto, ON Trent University, Peterbourgh, ON		Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, QC  The Hart of London
1971	Canadian Cross Section Rothmans Art Gallery, Stratford, ON		National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON  Canadian Artists 68  Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, ON
	Man and His World Montreal, QC	1967	McIntosh Art Gallery, The University of Western Ontario, London, ON

1964 Rothmans Art Gallery, Stratford, ON Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, QC

1963 20/20 Gallery, London, ON

Solo Exhibition
Isaacs Art Gallery, Toronto, ON

#### **AWARDS**

Pollock-Krasner Foundation Inc.
Drawing Award, Meinsinger School of Art, Detroit, MI
Sculpture Prize, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, QC
Canada Council Awards Junior
Canada Council Awards Senior
Victor Lynch Staunton Award
Various Ontario Arts Council Awards

#### COMMISSIONS (Major)

1988	Gairloch Gardens, Oakville, ON
1982	Dr. R.N. Redinger, Louisville, KY
1979	Por and Associates, London, ON
1978	National Parks Commission, Ottawa, ON
1977	Les Ballet Jazz, Montreal, QC
1976	KOPEC - Kingston, ON
1974	University of Guelph, Guelph, ON
	Provincial Court House, London, ON
	Pinetree Development, Toronto, ON
1973	The Art Gallery of St. Thomas-Elgin, St. Thomas, ON
	Canadian Jewish Congress, Montreal, QC
1972	Het National Ballet, Holland
	Rothman's Art Gallery, Stratford, ON
1970	Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Ottawa, ON
	Centennial Celebrations

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

1995	Michael Greer, "Beyond Survival"
1982	Phil Ross and Walter Redinger, "Landscape Vision & Dreams"
1976	Peter Crass, film on Walter Redinger
1973	Peter and Fran Melon, film on Walter Redinger
	Educational Television, film on Walter Redinger
1971	E.Bromfield, film on Walter Redinger

#### COLLECTIONS (Major)

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, ON National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, ON National Arts Centre, Ottawa, ON London Regional Art Gallery & Historical Museum, London, ON Government of Canada, External Affairs, Ottawa, ON The Gallery/Stratford, Stratford, ON Art Gallery St. Thomas-Elgin, St. Thomas, ON La Presse, Montreal, QC Northern & Central Gas Corp, Toronto, ON Canadian Jewish Congress, Montreal, QC Sarnia Lambton College, Sarnia, ON McIntosh Art Gallery, London, ON University of Edmonton, AB University of Saskatchewan, SK University of Guelph, Guelph, ON University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor, ON

Numerous private and smaller collections.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the City of St. Thomas and the County of Elgin for their ongoing financial support. Sustained support and funding from our Women's Committee and the Gordon and Jessie Wimbush Foundation is essential and deeply appreciated.

Special thanks to Natasha Pedros for her patience and for her skillful and insightful design in the creation of the *Apparition* catalogue. Our appreciation is also expressed to Jan Row for her photographic contributions.

To the Board and wonderfully supportive staff of the North American Railway Hall of Fame we offer our sincere appreciation for endorsing the vision of this project and embracing a critical partnership toward the realization of this significant community and national endeavour.

To the crew of Elgin Contracting & Restoration Ltd. our deepest thanks for their enthusiastic and expert contributions and for their critical role in manifesting Redinger's vision for *Apparition*.

Sylvia Curtis-Norcross has written the catalogue essay with a grace, poignancy and insightfulness that contributes significantly to our appreciation and understanding of the scope and interconnectedness of Redinger's work and life. We are most grateful for her contribution.

Finally, we want to state our sincere appreciation to Gerald Pedros for sharing his professional knowledge and experience and for his deep and meticulous commitment to raising awareness of the important artistic work and undeniable contributions of Walter Redinger as a significant Canadian artist. Truly, for the realization of this exhibition, his personal commitment has been vital.







Walter directing the installation of Apparition



Gerald Pedros, David Bobier, Walter Redinger, 2007