



Vincent van Gogh is the 20th century's stereotype of an artist; suffering in poverty and obscurity, creating work nobody will buy until after he's dead and yet refusing to compromise, to sell-out. This same dedication and refusal to compromise artistic vision are the themes of the "Howling In The Darkness" group exhibition at the Seymour Art Gallery.

The show highlights the work of seven Canadian artists, all of whom have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to their art throughout their lives, regardless of how that work was received by the art-buying public. Twenty-three artists from Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland were invited to submit samples and the respondents were juried down to the current seven.

Part of the eligibility for artists was being over 30 years old and having made sacrifices for their art. Curator Carole Badgley says the reason for the age restriction is she felt anyone under that age would not necessarily have proven their seriousness and dedication. Essentially, they would not have had enough chances to not compromise.

The idea for the show began when Badgley was talking with Gordon Finlay, a North Vancouver painter and one of the featured artists, about a photo exhibition she saw in Ottawa. Finlay suggested the title, *Howling In The Darkness* and Badgley immediately agreed it was perfect.

The title refers to a couple of different concepts. One is the primal need people sometimes feel to scream

in either joy or despair. The other is the fact that, in order to make it into the show, the artists have chosen to give up an established career to pursue their work or have managed to eke out a living from their artwork.

A number of the artists work at "no-think" jobs says Badgley. One is employed as a janitor for the *Vancouver Sun*, another is a single father, divorced, who does cabin clean-up for Canadian Airlines to the pay the bills. A third, Ken Flett, is an ex-social worker who lives as a recluse on Vancouver Island. Finlay left behind a career as an award-winning graphic designer to paint and teach art.

The only woman in the group, installation artist Haruko Okano, is also the only one who works hard at the other traditional method for artists to make a living: tracking down and getting government and private grants.

Although Badgley is reluctant to connect the dots and say who does what for a living, each artist will be interviewed by an independent writer and these biographies, together with photos, will be mounted at the exhibition. Despite the secrecy, all of the artists have their jobs which they do for their daily bread and their work which they do for their daily meaning.

As Finlay says, "Canadian culture is not very sympathetic to painting. I have to accept, as most artists come to do, that unless you do 'wall paper paintings,' you probably need to do something else to pay the bills."

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*A portion of an eight ft. canvas by Charles Malinsky which will be in the Howling in the Darkness show.*

Malinsky is featured in the spring issue of *Artichoke* magazine where Yvonne Owen writes, "to an amazing degree, the common reaction to these 'forbidden' visual texts has been a kind of hushed reverence. ... Malinsky's allegories are heated, passionate, tactile, accessible and convey concern and involvement with subject and viewer. His figures express emotion in face and gesture."

Owen concludes, "The immediacy and sincerity of Malinsky's heresy has the timbre and clarity of a heraldic bell."