

# Traversée des feux: Autour de l'œuvre de Khosro

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Texts by José Acquelin, Martine Audet, Paul Bélanger, Yadolah Royai, Bahman Sadighi and Hossein Sharang. 76 pages, illustrated. \$27. Published by Éditions de Noroît, Montreal, Canada, 2012. ISBN 978-2-89018-734-4

Persian art is particularly imbued with antiquity and ancient culture. Poetry is the basis for other art forms, from music and song, to the visual arts. So it is with the intricate drawings of Iranian-born Khosro Berahmandi, influenced by Persian miniatures and yes, poetry. But in a creative twist, the artist has become the inspiration for several contemporary poets, resulting in this compilation of verse born "around the work of Khosro".

Now living and working in Montreal, he has mastered his own unique style and technique, exhibiting his work across Canada, the US and Europe. Khosro's mixed media on board drawings are a sensuous pleasure to behold. Detailed like jewels, his compositions are rich in detail and colour,



combined in a manner verging on meditation. The board is laid on the floor, and the artist works on each piece with tantric dedication. Stylized, elegant, they are impossible to describe, other than with a gasp of delight.

Animal and human forms appear amidst dense mosaic of abstracted and geometric shapes, each composition resembling a page from a fairy tale. The verses inspired by Khosro's visual universe read like an ode to the artist, each with a kernel of reference to his aesthetic and spirit. Some have been translated from Persian, others written in the poets' native French, and each like a literary echo of the Khosro's mythical dimension.

This slim volume is the artist's third publication, and a valuable addition to the collection. The quality of the printing is of high caliber, giving justice to the finesse of the artwork.

**Dorota Kozinska**



*Spilling Horizon*, 2011  
mixed media on wood  
60 x 120 cm

# Laurel Woodcock

## LAUREL WOODCOCK BY LAUREL WOODCOCK

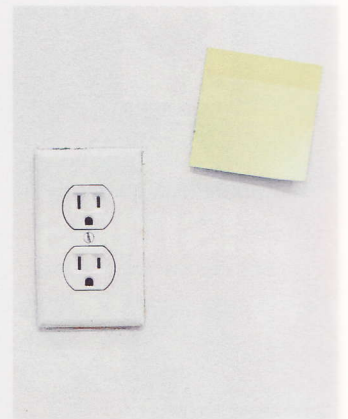
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The difficulty with much conceptual art is that it draws too frequently upon established cultural reserves of arid wit and empty forms of clever, mediated mischief. Laurel Woodcock, who is unarguably tintured by the classically established procedures and atmospheres of Conceptual art, is not, however, wholly co-opted by them, moving authoritatively, inventively and joyously within its purview, all the while bringing to Conceptual art a larger sense of the game than is conventional.

Conceptual art has sometimes been called Idea Art—as if it traded in ideas so profoundly there were none left over to animate other genres. I remember that whenever I had to phone Marshall McLuhan's secretary (I was a graduate student of his), she would always answer the phone with a jolly but preemptory "Culture and Technology here!" It was as if there weren't any to be found anywhere else. Conceptual Art always felt like that.

But Laurel Woodcock's practice differs from the work of most toilers of the Conceptual ground by virtue of the axis of a large and genuine humour (not wit) running through her work (humour is vital, revelatory and life-enhancing, compared to wit's barbed, acerbic and usually diminishing ambitions). And Woodcock's humour is a humour, furthermore, that takes as its province, the stuff of which a kind of tender metaphysics is made.

Her bright ideas—as, for example when, for *wish you were here*, 2003, she chartered a plane to pull through the sky big red letters spelling out the normally threadbare, sentimental postcard sign-off—tend to seem amusing at first,



poignant after that, and touching, even moving in the end (what kinder, more generous wish could there be, when you cut through the bromide, than wishing someone else could share your present joy?).

Woodcock recently produced a handsome monograph of her work, a self-published demi-retrospective of her production from 1990 to 2011. Appearing close in time to both her mid-career survey, *Jump Cuts*, at the University of Waterloo Art Gallery and a solo exhibition called *note to self* at Michael Klein's MGK127—both were in 2011—but not offered specifically as a catalogue for either exhibition, the new book, which seems to bear no other title but "Laura Woodcock," is a compact but graphically luxurious overview of the various modalities of—as AGO curator Michelle Jacques puts it in the book's Forward—"the dexterous ways in which Woodcock explores the elasticity of language...."

She brings her explorations of language incisively to bear upon such matters as linguistic self-consciousness (in her virtuoso work with quotation marks, the perplexing joy of abbreviations, the mechanisms of directed attention (with her funny-demonic, wall-mounted, steel "sticky notes"), her architectural interventions and, perhaps most brilliantly, her investigations into the intersections of cinema and everyday life.

Woodcock's great gift as an artist is to feel the oddness, the perplexity of much of what we see, hear, read and write and to drag those endless ambiguities into the light of her patient, amused recalibrations of cultural attention. It is greatly to her credit that where most conceptual art closes culture down, hers opens it up.

**Gary Michael Dault**