

“The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth – it is the truth which conceals that there is none.”

Jean Baudrillard (after Ecclesiastes)

JEF BOURGEOU'S LEGERDEMAIN



Pink Nude 1970, felt marker on board.

An aspiring artist coming of age in the 1970's is more likely to paint with ironic distance employing chance methods or outright subversion than with patiently acquired skill, Messianic conviction and respect for pictorial tradition. Those who lived through it consciously will agree that the 70's were experienced as a tediously prolonged hangover from the exuberant decade preceding it. Rapid production, seasonally changing fashion and escalating demand slowed down and were replaced by stocktaking, retrenchment and self-flagellation. Broad-stroke pursuits became narrow-gauged, and once fresh ideas were recycled. In a pinched economy, art as concept stood in for art as object and art as idea for art as reality. Even as it raised the volume and level of critical writing, the white cube suffered from empty walls. The interconnectedness of media and their spatial merger abolished their one-time hierarchical order. Pressing everything and the kitchen sink into the service of art had the blessings of Rauschenberg and Johns. Appropriating subject matter as well as style had become, in the world of Warhol, Lichtenstein, Rosenquist and Wesselmann, an artist's bill of rights. With the very concepts of authenticity and originality at stake, was it any wonder that collectors of 1960's art took a pass and new ones took fright?

The 'end of painting' was declared from many lecterns and it echoed in artists' studios. Jef Bourgeois ignored or avoided the issue by focusing on the power of narrative and the magic of the moving image, separately or in combination. He did not endear himself to creative writing and film history teachers by submitting term papers in the form of 8mm loops composed of the opening credits for a feature



An Object like a Painting 1998, mixed media on paper. Private Collection.

film, or discarded leaders of several films combined. He shot linear collages of up to two thousand thematically organized photo-illustrations from books and magazines and then presented them as a form of *cinéma vérité*. The themes Bourgeau tackled in those sequentially mounted stills, verging on anima-

tion, were the rising tide of Nazism in Germany, the annihilation of the Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to the gas chambers of Auschwitz; racial struggle in America and the brutality of war whether at Guernica or before Stalingrad, in the streets of Algiers or the rice paddies of Vietnam. Those student essays presaged this budding artist's proclivity for themes of violence and destruction and for subjects considered politically incorrect or socially off-limits.



Yellow Christ (Yawning) 1978, oil and wax on paper.

In those years Bourgeau experimented with film's formal properties as well. He boiled down a standard length feature to just two minutes and reduced his own 30 minute narrative film to seven small frames mounted over the opening credits while giving each credit loop a different tonal soundtrack. In 2006, he took on 1996 Turner Prize winner Douglas Gordon and his slowed-down video presentation of Hitchcock's thriller, *24 Hour Psycho*, with the premiere screening at the Museum of New Art (MONA) of an alleged remake titled *One-Minute Psycho*. A news release full of spin and praise credited the original appropriatist but Douglas Gordon's dealer was not amused calling it a 'spooft'. In response, Bourgeau's alter ego, Cesar Marzetti, admitted having

made a total fake as he revisited a work that had already been revisited: "Fast motion is for Keystone Kops, not a murder in a shower. I wanted it to become more terrifying as you laugh." Whether Marzetti is conscious of his successors or not, film makers like R. Luke Dubois have gained public attention just this year for digitally

compressing Academy Award movies down to a minute's duration.

For students of film in the 70's, theory ruled and the filter of semiology was *de rigueur*. Bourgeau was not enamored with Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, Derrida or Lacan, but tempted by the aphoristic Roland Barthes and, in particular, by the provocative Jean Baudrillard. Conveniently, Baudrillard had drawn upon all of the above to distill his own more applicable notions of simulation, virtual reality and hyper reality. "The idea of simulacrum," he argues, "was a conceptual weapon against reality, but it has been stolen. Not that it has been pillaged, vulgarized, or has become commonplace, but because simulacra have been absorbed by reality which has swallowed them and which, from now on, is clad with all the rhetoric of simulation. And to cap it all, simulacra have become reality!"¹ Simulation, to Baudrillard, is now the dominant form of culture. It is not difficult to see that Baudrillard's thinking permeates Bourgeau's every idea and action.



The artist filming on the Oakland University campus, 1969.

As sound is now an incontestable component of film and as a student of the history of film needs acoustical as well as visual anchorage, Bourgeau favored electronic music with a special preference for Karlheinz Stockhausen. He liked the fact that in this composer's works elements are played off against one another simultaneously and successively to create a sound that moves from isolated notes to a textured blanket of notes and from punctuation and differentiation to uniformity. In his *Kontakte* (1958-60) for electronic sounds, Stockhausen achieved for the first time an isomorphism or a one-to-one correspondence between the parameters of pitch, duration, dynamics and timbre. In mixing the sounds that accompany his films and videos, Bourgeau has taken a lead from the German composer's operational methodology rather than from the ends achieved. While electronic music, by definition, borrows sound not necessarily made by musical instruments, so Bourgeau, on occasion, borrows parts of sound tracks much as he lifts images off of the Internet or utilizes found objects – all that's fair in war, love and art.

Family responsibilities and the unanticipated vogue of neo-expressionist painting during the Reagan years, robbed

¹ *Le Crime Parfait*, Paris 1995, p. 146

Bourgeau of a timely opportunity to test his peculiar form of hyperrealism in the crucible of the market place. He was, and still is, the least aggressive of human beings in a city with an abysmal record of nurturing the arts. But, when Ivan Karp's Birmingham franchise, O.K. Harris Works of Art, beckoned, the 41 year old artist treated himself to a retrospective of unseen work, *Art Until Now*; a title re-used eight years hence for his ill-fated exhibition at the Detroit Institute of Arts. David Klein, the gallery's director, encouraged Bourgeau to transform his space into a rough-and-tumble environment that echoed the improvisational, part bohemian, part anthropological installations at the old Trocadero – themselves inspired by the one time mixing of tribal and Surreal artifacts at the Galerie Charles Ratton in Paris.

It is noteworthy that Bourgeau, forever cognizant of history, opted for this simile complete with some faux dismantling of walls and ceiling, because the objects on display hinted at Dogon architecture and African face-masks mixed in with found and altered objects reminiscent of Dada and Duchamp, and the lot of it given a sprinkling of Picasso. If that were not enough, Bourgeau drafted a declaration (mandatory accompaniment of a vanguard manifestation) which read *Manifesto for an Anachronistic Futurism* and was signed by Cesar Marzetti, the artist's first in a series of fictitious personae. This *manifesto* at the gallery was accompanied by reprints of a vicious and *ad hominem* attack on the exhibition by



The Bait 1991, head from dime-store Venus statue nested in antique bait box and resting on a papercutter. Collection of Ann and Frank Edwards.

Kay Burdell in *Slam*, as well as an interview with the manifesto's author by Peter Krug in *Smart Art*. "Brilliant," was Ivan Karp's comment, "but there is no need to give copies to our customers." Why was Bourgeau at once promoting and shouting down his own exhibition? Because, true to the early twentieth century model, the buzz thus created was an inalienable part of the art, raising it to the status of event. With the help of David Klein who gave him four programmatically organized exhibitions in four consecutive years, Bourgeau's *objects cum video* found collectors in the Detroit area and gallerists from Chicago to New York and from Seattle to San Diego, anxious to exhibit them.

In setting up 'strawmen' discussing or attacking his art, Bourgeau opened a vein soon to be mined for material that allowed him to address and criticize

the very underpinnings of the art gallery and the museum of contemporary art. As for years he had questioned religious pieties, racial stereotypes, sexual taboos, political correctness and societal norms, so in his concept-oriented enterprises following object-centered ones. Bourgeau kicked the tires of the social vehicles meant to propel art. Klein moved into a smaller space just as Bourgeau felt the need to expand the parameters of his activity and to engage his actual and potential audience in ways and with means inappropriate for a commercial gallery. This politicizing of art by taking the mask off its institutions goes back to Courbet and has received periodic reinforcements in the intervening century-and-a-half, particularly during the reign of Dada and the generational watershed of the 1960's. Bourgeau is uniquely political because rather than storming the ramparts, he attacks (and reforms) from within.



Blue Judith 1998, mixed media. Private Collection.



Art as Logo 1994, exhibition view at O.K Harris Works of Art. Photo by Tim Thayer.

As art-as-concept-as-art goes, the one work this artist admits to be proudest of is that of having created a virtual gallery followed by a virtual museum which morphed into an actual museum for new art (MONA). It is a matter of speculation whether Bourgeau's participation, along with dozens of his

colleagues, in the 1995 exhibition *Interventions* at the Detroit Institute of Arts (each artist claiming squatter's rights in a gallery of his or her choosing) encouraged him to intervene in the established order on a larger scale. After keeping an open studio in a Pontiac walk-up space, Bourgeau moved into a storefront on Lawrence Street and called his new gallery *Jane Speaks Modern Art*.

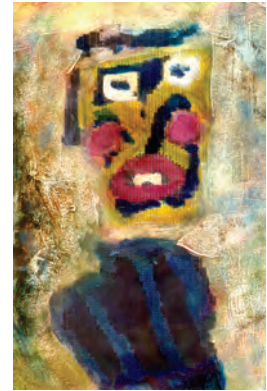


A History of Black People (After Basquiat) 1984-85, mixed media. Private Collection.

Eschewing Perrier and canapés in favor of punch and cookies, *Jane Speaks Modern Art* opened its single-panel storefront door in September 1996. Visitors could pick up a printed interview with Jane Speaks by Richard Mann headed by her picture. The interview with Jane never changed, but her picture showed a different woman from one week to another. They also met Jef Bourgeau welcoming them on Jane's behalf and willing to show them (and explain, if necessary) his works on exhibition. Where and, more importantly, who was the no-show host and owner? Bourgeau claimed to have patterned her on a celebrated Manhattan dealer. A well-connected gallery owner has a better survival rate than any artist in her stable and captures as many lines in print, so why not shine the spotlight on her? The name on the shingle reassures collectors even if the art within does not. To artists who feel manipulated or marginalized by their dealers, Bourgeau demonstrates that the shoe can be put on the other foot. An unstable identity allows Jane Speaks to become a medium for the artist to conflate the traditional distinction between maker and promoter. It also upends the conventional wisdom that business deals with reality and art with fiction. Walk-in customers who expect to meet the dealer are perform unsettled when greeted by the artist.

Prompted by the necessity of making a living, not just as a lark, Bourgeau deconstructed the artist-dealer relationship,

as later he would do for the museum and its constituents. As a rogue operator in a tightly coded world he has tweaked, confused, challenged and offended those who stand guard over the proper functioning of art institutions. A gallery or museum so singularly focused, however tiny and remote, is liable to cast its negative shadow over the 'real thing'. Bourgeau believes that he or she who owns the gallery today has usurped the power and authority, innovation and panache that once was the artist's. Jane was more idealistic than hard-bitten though: "I only presume to offer my visitors the chance to see again with all five senses, so that the installations here both shout and whisper, laugh and cry, bleed and heal."



Frida in Detroit 1983, mixed media on paper. Private Collection.

Just three months after her gallery's opening, Speaks was involved in a boating mishap off the Cape Verde Islands. Although her body had not been recovered, she was presumed dead. An obituary that ran in *The Oakland Press* prompted one local gallery owner to chime in with what a horrible loss it was for the Detroit art community. As it turned out, she had never met Jane nor had she ever bothered to set foot in her dead colleague's gallery. When Jane's estate was settled, a generous endowment became the rationale for converting the gallery into a museum of contemporary art. Few people knew that Richard Mann had been her husband. Now a widower, he assumed leadership of the Jane Speaks Foundation and in 1997 took the helm of the Museum of Contemporary Art. Cesar Marzetti joined his pal Richard as chief curator and Peggy Kerr was appointed assistant director. Unafraid to stake out their position with regard to vandalism



The Shroud (after Yves Klein) 1994, oil, acrylic, and tape on paper with antique wringer.

and art, these two officials engaged in a polemic with the Editor of *Flash Art*, Giancarlo Politi. Poor Peggy is blasted in print: "I shall leave it up to you then, sweet innocent art bureaucrat, to defend a condition of art and culture that has only ever existed in romantic fiction and within your assistant director mentality in Detroit. The true artist has always been in the front line, ready to be sacrificed for her ideas, not sat behind a desk preparing biographies and critical notes on works locked in store rooms." Two months later, a letter from Peter Krug, President of the Board of the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, appears in *Flash Art* reporting that Peggy Kerr, crushed by the Editor's

enigma: how can a hoax claim its bonafides? Perhaps Baudrillard will come to the rescue, so it may be useful to re-read his essay *The Illusion of the End*: "On the eve of the 1990s, in the midst of some unexpected events and with an eye to others just as unpredictable, there formed, among a number of friends, the idea of an agency which would itself be invisible, anonymous and clandestine: the Stealth Agency...for gathering news of unreal events in order to disinform the public of them."³ We are in the era of the first Gulf War, the one that "did not take place," as Baudrillard has claimed elsewhere,⁴ for it was entirely a media event staged for television. "Simulation," according to the author, "is precisely this irresistible unfolding, this sequencing of things as though they had a meaning, when they are governed only by artificial *montage* and non-meaning." Baudrillard admired Alfred Jarry, belonged to the Collegium Pataphysicum (over which his friend Enrico Baj presided as the Grand Satrap) and doubtless took his inspiration from Dr. Faustroll's science of imaginary solutions. In his *Exploits and Opinions of Dr. Faustroll*, Jarry argues: "Instead of formulating the law of the fall of a body towards a center, why not give preference to that of the ascent of a vacuum towards a periphery?"⁵ A similar paradox energizes *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* by Jorge Luis Borges, relating the story of the author's search for the missing four-page signature in volume XLVI of the *Anglo-American Cyclopaedia* that deals with the country of Uqbar, not on any map, its language Tlön, apparently extinct, and a yet to be written survey of an illusory world tentatively titled *Orbis Tertius*.⁶ Are we falling down the rabbit hole with Alice?



Installation view of *Hatrack* 1991 (child mannequin with wood hat mold and dropped panties) and *Origin of the World* 1992 (plywood, drywall, fluorescent lights, wool stockings, tacks, and darning egg).

bewildering response to her letter had resigned her position, reevaluated her life behind a museum desk, and decided to step out onto the front line as a radio Shock Jock in Escanaba. This letter written by the museum's highest authority was essentially pooh-poohed by the Editor who in his equally wordy response concluded that, "a good DJ is more useful than any art critic with blinders on."²

Remarkable about this bizarre exchange not only is that *Flash Art* fell for it but that the Editor sounded more like Jef Bourgeois than his fictional hirelings. Here is the real

Is it any wonder that the Detroit Institute of Arts bought trouble when, innocently enough, its curator of modern and contemporary art wishing to mark the end of the century, invited the Museum of Contemporary Art to present a series of installations in twelve one-week installments from November 20, 1999 until February 13, 2000. The one gallery made available was small, hence the idea of rotating these thematic exhibitions and punctuating their Wednesday through Sunday duration with a reception each Saturday aimed



Bathtub Jesus 1995, detail.

² *Flash Art*, March-April & May-June, 1999, "Letters to the Editor"

³ *Selected Writings*, Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 254

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 231

⁵ Roger Shattuck, "What is Pataphysics?" *Evergreen Review*, no. 13, Grove Press, New York, 1960

⁶ *Collected Fictions*, Penguin Books 1999, p. 68

at attracting artists and their friends. Starting with *Van Gogh's Ear* (coinciding with *Van Gogh: Face to Face*, the blockbuster featured in the museum's main galleries), Bourgeau had laid out a series of thematic exhibitions, each with title and description, but just short of actual content listings. All pertinent information reached the Modern and Contemporary Art Department through normal channels but there was nary a review or response. Individual titles such as *The Wrong Show*, *Naked in the Nineties* and *Closet Art* might have raised red flags but since none were raised, the artist, who for this occasion was recycling themes tested on his own turf, assumed that the museum's curator already had viewed those works in Pontiac. A warning sign not perceived by either party was the forced removal, at the request of the Friends of African-American Art, of Kara Walker's five-panel silhouette of an ante-bellum plantation scene, just months before, and four years after its original acquisition.

In a highly polarized city where what is perceived to be a racial slur is just as inflammatory as the semblance of blasphemy, Graham Beal, the new director who had just moved there, was caught between an artist whose work he did not know and a member of his staff who should have done her homework, i.e. set the bar for what the institution could permit itself to show and then negotiate entries and labels accordingly. *Van Gogh's Ear* exposed the cult of personality with allusions to and similes of the works of Andres Serrano, Piero Manzoni, Vanessa Beecroft, Janine Antoni, Yves Klein, Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst, among others. Ninety percent of the works were bought within a five-mile radius of the artist's home at dime stores, gag-and-gift stores and even a fruit market. A lack of signage, the public being unfamiliar with vanguard spin, apple cider vinegar looking like urine, red corn syrup being mistaken for menstrual blood, and a banker's rubber thumb protector for a condom, all added up to the hue and cry of obscenity and not from the mouth of those who had seen the exhibition, but from those who had heard about it from others who had heard about it. The decision to close the exhibition and cancel its eleven-part follow-up was unfortunate but understandable. The director was on the spot because it looked like censorship. The artist was disappointed so with his work barred from

view, the closing and the alleged censorship, bouncing back and forth in the press for at least two months, turned show into event. Neither party deserved much blame. On the positive side, Bourgeau was rewarded as a guest curator with a honorarium, which he subsequently invested in keeping his Pontiac operation going for another few months. What could not be seen in Detroit was exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art in various guises and installments.



American Beauty (Sleeping) 1997, mixed media. Private collection. Photo by R.H. Hensleigh.

There is no denying that Jef Bourgeau has presented us with some wickedly entertaining assemblages that are difficult to erase from memory: *Hatrack*, *Picasso's Baggage*, *Push me, Daddy*, *A History of Black People (after Basquiat)*, *American Beauty (Sleeping)*, *Bathtub Jesus* and *Blue Judith*, to name a few. Similarly, he has distilled other artists' favored subjects to their schematic essence, presenting them as readily recognizable black and white 'logos': a screw, Mickey Mouse and clothespin for Claes Oldenburg, a cactus for Georgia O'Keefe, a pipe for René Magritte, etc. Since Bourgeau believes that

proper 'branding' is elemental to the promotion, sale and recognition of art, he posits and proves that an artist's name is more recognizable when set in the type his or her dealer prefers. For one of his exhibitions he printed up black and white panels, each with the name of a famous artist set in the type in use by that artist's gallery. A little twist made the point: Baselitz, who favors feet up and head down portraiture, stood out because his name was exhibited upside down. He evokes *Chappaquiddick* with a red and black take-off on a SLIPPERY WHEN WET road



Adam and Eve (triptych) 1993, mixed media on canvas and paper.

sign, and Picasso's *Guernica* with the silhouettes of four men in suits and fedoras beating each other up.

Good fun as all this is, there is little doubt that Bourgeau has made his greatest contributions on the conceptual and ideational levels. Shrewdly having figured out what makes art people, art institutions and art markets tick, he exposes with the right indirection, chicanery and befuddlement, double talk and arrogance, manipulation and profiteering in the guise and with the voice of characters of his own invention. He challenged reviewers to write instant articles with the museum's help by leaving easy-to-complete forms at the reception desk. He invited people he admired to assume directorships of museums-without-walls and published their names and the cities in which they live in *Art in America's* gallery guide. When an exhibition fell through and 10,000 square feet of space stood empty, Bourgeau organized *Shoot!* with an invitation to ten photographers to train their cameras on the visiting public. He accompanied this with a promise that the results would be exhibited, giving the subjects of *Shoot!* an opportunity to purchase their portraits and the photographers publicity and potential sales. In what could be seen as a parody of 'networking,' the artist has insinuated himself into the Internet under different or pseudo-identities and with fictive art news that tended to take on a life of its own.

These times seem to be rife with rumor and speculation and artists tend to pick up on that. On January 16, 2007, the *New York Times* ran an article about an unrecognized, influential and extremely elusive Minimalist showing his work at *White Columns* in Chelsea. There was only one problem: this brilliant African-American artist, forgotten since the 1960's, did not actually exist and had been invented by *Triple Candle*, an alternative space in Harlem.



Stig Eklund: *Standing on the Point* 2004, photograph.

The Wall Street Journal, on January 1, 2006, tackled the issue of the invisible artist. Not, however, in this case, the artist who labors in obscurity, but, the one who adopts a pseudonym, joins a collective or takes another's identity. One artist mentioned in this context, was the Norwegian photographer Stig Eklund who is none other than Jef Bourgeau, director of the Museum of New Art (MONA) in Pontiac. Later in January, that museum would unveil

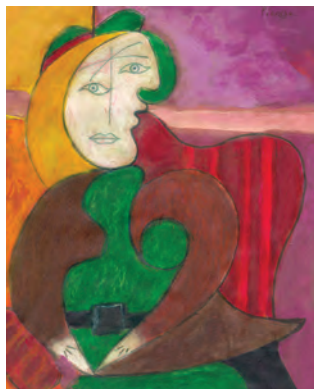
Picasso's Camera featuring not only the box camera, an alleged present from his friend Severini, but prints from a roll found in that camera and restored with the help of sophisticated computers. It was discovered that the lens already had been cracked when the photographs were taken sometime after 1906, the date of a vintage picture showing Picasso and an unidentified man sitting behind a table with the camera in plain view. The story of its retrieval is worth telling. After Picasso's death, André Malraux was asked by his widow Jacqueline to take a look at some of the late artist's 'junk'. In his memoirs, the writer mentioned having seen a box with an old camera and some glass plates, 'diversions', as he called them, and not worth keeping. Subsequently discarded, they were saved by a ragpicker who sold them at the Mougins flea market to photographer Lucien Clergue. Eventually they ended up with the well-known Swedish photography collector Per Hallstrom who paid for the reconstitution of this invaluable trove now on exhibit at MONA. From all the evidence, this was a scoop of momentous proportions.



Pablo Picasso: *Portrait of Antonina Valentin* c. 1906, reconstructed, 2006.

The point of this exhibition was to prove the importance of the camera, not only in Picasso's own work but to the birth of cubism. The examples are compelling. They included a photograph of Manuel Pallares, presumably taken in May 1909 when the artist passed through Barcelona on his way to Horta de Ebro. The portrait Picasso painted of his friend is now in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts. MONA made reams of supporting material available to reporters. *The Detroit News'* Joy Hakanson Colby was onto Jef Bourgeau's game: "It took real chutzpah to come up with *Picasso's Camera*. This risky project is packed with edgy humor, and it swiped at scared cows and offers commentary on art world quirks... Bourgeau demonstrates once more why his one man museum is celebrating its tenth anniversary..." It is worth mentioning, as a footnote, that this exhibition predates by more than a year, the one Arnold Glimcher and Bernice Rose just recently presented at Pace/Wildenstein in New York titled *Picasso, Braque and Early Film in Cubism*. Coincidentally, the portrait of Manuel Pallares was one of many early Picassos the gallery had borrowed.

Resisting the temptation to mention and describe the many exhibitions that made Bourgeau's admirers trek to Pontiac, to the Book Building in Detroit and then again to Pontiac, I must limit myself instead to stating, without reservation, that the Museum of New Art, now in its tenth year, is Jef Bourgeau's finest work. [Disclosure: for a brief period this writer served as a MONA trustee.] It may not look like a work of art, but it was conceived as one; suffered pain at birth, traversed its awkward stages, needed all the help it could get, has had a steady father, friends and plenty of attention from the press. Meant to fill a void, MONA began as an artist's concept and evolved into an everyday reality that has kept the artist tethered. How could he run a



Woman Sitting in a Chair 1934-1996, reconstructed print after Picasso. Private Collection.



Stig Eklund: *The Factory* 2005, photograph.

museum without an income stream? How could he operate rent-free and not give his landlord something? A percentage of the sales seemed a good idea, but whose sales? Showing and selling his own work in a not-for-profit, tax-exempt institution had the makings of a conflict of interest. Thus entered the *doppelgänger*. In some form or other, Jef Bourgeau always has been hiding behind fictitious characters: the pamphleteer Cesar Marzetti as early as 1991, Jane Speaks in 1996, the president of his board in 1999, and Billy Conklin in 2006, to name a few. Or, putting it more correctly, for the better part of two decades

the artist's principal working strategy has been to invent personae, figments of his imagination, yet believable because they were given faces and biographies to match. Such alchemic talent was too good, or so it seemed to Bourgeau, to waste on playing games. Faced with the need to continue working as an artist, showing what he made and bringing it to market, and realizing to what degree MONA had him trapped, Bourgeau secretly tested the waters with photographs, taken by him and altered in the computer, or borrowed from the Internet and modified by him. These photographs favored landscapes and isolated figures; because of their moody character, somewhat reminiscent of Northern light, he invented a likely 'auteur' by the name of Stig Eklund. In the three years since the Norwegian photographer has been launched, his photographs have appeared on the Internet, in group exhibitions and in more than one local gallery. Those who call them fabrications should be reminded that all art is a fabrication. The press acknowledges the existence of Stig Eklund as Jef Bourgeau's *doppelgänger*. Stig Eklund collectors are let in on the secret, which has not dampened their eagerness to own a print. The story does not end there. This catalogue includes examples of the work of no fewer than seven *doppelgängers*, all with their distinct identities and life stories. They are clearly distinguishable, one from the other. They range from the figurative to the abstract. Who says an artist cannot create in one or the other style simultaneously? If the photographer does not exist, what then bars that photographer from shooting the likenesses of famous artists, some dead some alive, who never sat or stood for those portraits? In his latest incarnation as juggler of identities, Bourgeau, like the juggler of balls and pins, stands poised for boos when he drops them or cheers when they remain aloft. We root for the latter and wish he 'break a leg.'



Hanne Bloot: *Motel Room* 2006, photograph.