

Wonderland artists look at womanhood

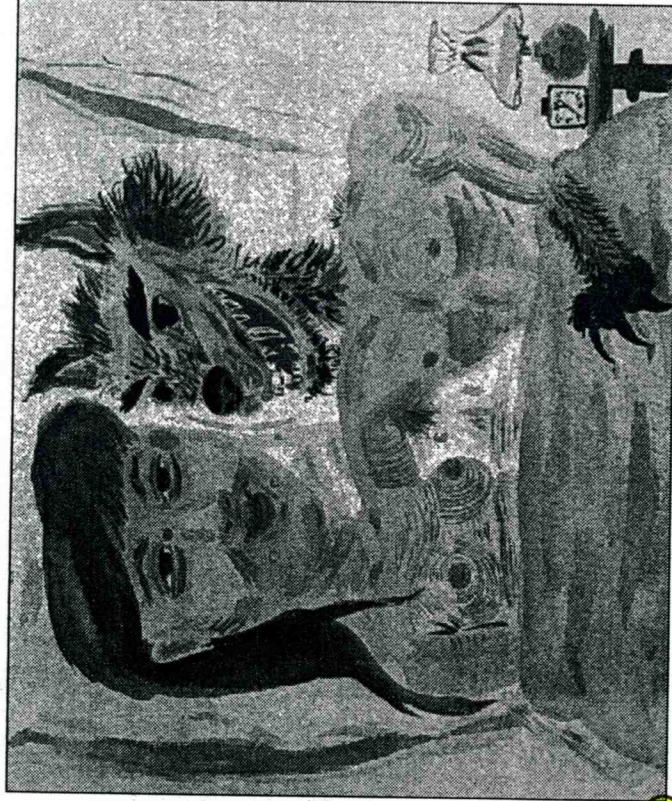
Three artists have contributed to Wonderland, the latest show at Paul Petro Contemporary Art. Cathy Daley has perfected sexy charcoal drawings of hyper-feminine clothing: her upward-glancing views of shapely female legs, enveloped by cascading can-can skirts and swirling crinolines, look like exotic night-blooming flowers. More introverted are Rae Johnson's sombre paintings,



Gallery Going

Betty Ann Jordan

including her portrayal of a nude young woman in a claustrophobic bedchamber, enigmatically surveying an airborne rat. But if Wonderland represents the realm of the imagination, then Julie Voyce is its reigning queen. Her lively watercolours depict apple-cheeked girlfriends meeting all manner of adversity — particularly economic — with good-natured aplomb. (In *Beyond Credit*, a lascivious wolf-man, having got well past the proverbial door, now shares our unfazed heroine's bed; in *Bad Sleep*, Voyce sends up the vicissitudes of daily life, with said heroine staring in a pink insomniac haze at a phallic candle burning at the foot of her bed.) You can't help but wonder, though, if these delightfully detailed little watercolours are the best outlets for Voyce's quirky vision. *Until Nov. 1. 265-A Queen St. W., Toronto. 416-979-7874.*



Voyce's *Beyond Credit* (detail): reigning queen of the imagination.

Eli Langer at Wave

Langer's 1993 debut exhibition of paintings (shut down precipitously by Toronto's finest), treated the volatile subjects of childhood sexuality and child abuse with disturbing bluntness. After a highly public legal skirmish, charges of producing child pornography were dropped. Now, four years later, Langer returns with a show that covers similar territory. Sexual tension continues to underlie Langer's small graphite vignettes: He portrays threatening physical interaction among figures of all ages and sexes. But this time his imagery is more open-ended. Executed in a furtive, compressed style reminiscent of clan-

chronicler of Toronto's urban milieu, is showing photographs of billboards and signage that capture disorienting conjunctions of shapes, images and words. Inverting the studied casualness associated with documentary photos, Mitchell's images are so preternaturally colourful they resemble photorealistic paintings. *Until Oct. 26. 333 Lonsdale Rd., Toronto. 416-487-8939.*

Sharon Lockhart at S. L. Simpson

These formal colour photographs of pubescent Japanese girls in basketball uniforms, crouching expectant and immobile with upraised faces, recall the iconography of religious paintings where saints confronted by the miraculous look heavenward, transfixed. The cryptic staginess of these photos is best appreciated in the context of Los Angeles-based Lockhart's intriguing hour-long film *Goshogoaka* (next screened at the John Spotton Theatre on Oct. 22 at 7 p.m.), documenting the highly regimented drills of this real-life team of athletic perfectionists. *Until Nov. 1. 515 Queen St. W., Toronto. 416-504-3738.*

Ric Evans at Sable-Castelli

Evans makes precise abstract paintings, combinations of rectangles and squares usually divided into three or four sections. Black establishes tonal contrast and deepens autumnal browns, greys, greens and oranges that have been mixed with wax and fastidiously applied with a palette knife. An accompanying book tells us that the artist's classifying impulse derives, in part, from "curbed desire" and from a fixation on the "point when language and sensation have to part." *Until Oct. 25. 33 Hazelton Ave., Toronto. 416-961-0011.*

destine classroom drawings, the best of these works (some of which are presented in a three-ring binder) twitch off the paper. *Until Oct. 25. 23 Morrow Ave., Toronto. 416-591-2179.*

Peter Byrne and Michael Mitchell at Lonsdale Gallery

In Byrne's sensuous encaustic works, matrices of small dots, squares or oblongs form a staticky pattern over mottled underpainting. Shimmering green-yellows, plums, greys and browns bleed through on canvases so encrusted that they buckle under the weight of the pigment. Smaller monochrome paintings are textured with ripples and fish-scale daubs. Mitchell, a respected long-time