

I flew to Vancouver from New York City for the opening of Georgiana Chappell's *Navigating*: four movements in a profoundly subjective opus of loss, death, socialization, and the life cycle. This was three weeks after my beloved companion, Ron Wolin, passed into death after a twelve-hour coma - having asked me, the previous day, to join him, and then, that last morning, in his last few words, for permission to go to sleep - Indeed I had joined Ron; I held his wasted frame close against me and fell asleep, with him, just as he was passing. The nurse awakened me; our friends had not wanted to. Life, with its losses, its deprivations, and its surging currents of experience, pleasure, struggle, and insight, was still mine. *Navigating* [the rough waters, the seas of change, the floods of memory] helped renew me, reminded me how fully art can address aspects of our most basic selves.

Some notes on the installation: Moonlight. Seven blue/water paintings lead us in along the first wall. Cop with dog against the view from Kits beach in Vancouver. Lifeboat, refugees, invasion, emigration. Puzzling perspectives. The artist has been building up an image bank for many years, doing research into the way things are. She slept restlessly for quite some time while working on the exhibition; images kept swirling Doing the show, she says, 'was like doing a symphony of images'.

Against the back wall is a small, riveting shrine to death, incorporating near and far, large and little, early memory and future confrontation. Slightly painted-upon battered wood, the only image on it an old woman in a frowzy overcoat. A tiny mirror reveals us, a painted moon, and the deep room behind us. The orange fire of a rare candelabra bulb flickers but persists.

The third wall explores in several sections, each with several components, how children and other innocents are done to in this world. Power relations, sex roles, myths. In all things the loss of naiveté. Male rites of passage, inculcation --war games, violence, child labour - the desired end being obeisance. Female rites of violation. Hands. Garage-sale putti spattered with the blue of sky/sea/sadness, toting the symbols of labour. Hints of the putti's

outlines hover behind and beneath the overlay of images of drudgery and violence. Beneath the ledge on which they stand hangs an isolated bunch of grapes. Full bursting wealth and vigorous promise, on the one hand, but so starkly placed, so cut off from life's continuum that they become almost a *memento mori*.

Then more overt manifestations of social control. (Here the degree of picture research escalates; here my hasty notes turn inadequate.) Bowing masses, Snow White, a Holocaust survivor's arm tattooed with a number, Rock Hudson and Jane Wyman locked in passion. The armour of leather gloves hiding flesh, hiding bruises and cruelty; the fist, the complacency and secrecy of power, authoritarianism, might making its own right. Other hands - holding a spoon filled with clear golden liquid, making sweet contact with the skin of another, grasping a key. This third wall ends with the breast - nourishment, *Venus Genitrix*, the many Great Goddesses of ancient eras - and a coyly arranged young mermaid surrounded by flames that overtake the blue sky above and consume the hair that so pointedly trails over her mons.

On the final wall is a single gigantic painting filled with references to the life cycle, from gas exchange in botany to spermatozoa. Notational, chaotic, crowded, a bit ugly, the painting's location almost unavoidably makes it into a summation, a plea, a warning.

Much more could be written about *Navigating* as well as about earlier works in Chappell's oeuvre. In fact, very little has been written about her work, a situation that can only begin to be redressed herein. I was lucky to have been able to get Georgiana to talk: this takes some doing. So instead of more writing by just one person, I offer the following edited version of our dialogue.

AL Tell me about the process of developing the work.

GC Many of these images are made from photographs from newspapers and magazines that I tear out and collect - I've been doing that for over twenty years. They're not methodically sorted, but they are in folders, in piles, in sections: war, soldiers, heads,

females, males, miscellaneous, police —

AL Ah, a whole category for police.

GC There are numerous photographs of them in the media. I also had a lot of images of hands. When I saw the hand and key, I had to use that one for the *Circle Series*. And the one with the hand touching part of the human body —

AL — an indeterminate part.

GC That's right, it was purposely indeterminate, although some people have said, "Well, that's a thigh, obviously," or "That's a back." To me it's tender touching.

AL And the spoon with its golden liquid. Everything is enigmatic even when it incorporates a specific image.

GC And it is to me too. For instance, the one with the key. What is the key opening? The middle circle certainly is much more specific to me. I did want to show that tender touch. And then the 'golden liquid', which is your phrase, your response to whatever that liquid might be.

AL Right, and almost everything is painted in a way that is sufficiently brushy and generalized so that there is a lot of room for us to project all kinds of stuff —

GC That's exactly what I want to do: to provide a situation for you to imagine your truths, to find your ways. Part of my intent of the *Circle Series* is to show the tragedies, to show the naiveté, to show how the media affects us: it's very indirect, it's also very personal.

AL Talk about this table in the *Circle Series*, would you?

GC The dressing table. I had to use a reflective surface in the circle covering the photo of people bowing down towards Mecca - in the looking glass on the dressing table - so that when you stood there you could see the reflection of part of yourself, part of your/our potential compliancy. It's not really about praying to Mecca, but about the dangers of group compliancy to absolute power.

AL The authoritarian imposition from above, supposedly from above.

GC I saw the photo in the paper about a year ago. It scares me. It

reminds me of Nazism and so that's why I painted this image in the circle on the right of the table - leather gloved, fisted hands in black and white. The first image painted on the table is from television - the arm. I've never seen a Nazi numbered tattoo on anyone, but I was watching a program on TV and an older woman being interviewed was speaking about her Holocaust experiences; she had resolved and understood so much. She was marvellous, alive with energy. She was wearing a cheapo short-sleeved jersey dress, the tattoo number on her arm just below the sleeve, unhidden. Her hair was flying all over, she was smiling and laughing, and she was so poignant when she talked about it. Anyway, I was so struck with the image that I quickly drew it so I wouldn't forget. The next image is of Snow White from the Disney film. My aunt took me to see the film when I was a young girl at a big theatre in downtown Chicago, and that was thrilling, special. Snow White asks the mirror, "who is the fairest one of all?" - a frightening question to ask. To me, it reveals how we're affected by the imposition of standards which can govern how we behave. It creates a cultural romanticism that's transmitted via the media and films.

AL And Rock Hudson, of course.

GC The first famous star to admit to having AIDS, not denying it. His action and courage influenced people all over the world. He publicized the fact that he had to go to France to get better medical treatment. Jane Wyman, whom he's kissing so romantically in the publicity photo from an old movie, was one of Reagan's ex-wives, which I thought was a wonderful image to use in this group. I knew I had to frame the image in a colour. I had problems deciding ... I woke up one morning and there it was: the colour of flesh, the surrounding of flesh. More than colour.

AL Which brings up a question: Do I need to recognize the identity or the specific source of these images?

GC Oh no. You have your personal responses.

AL I don't think so either. Something is communicated on a very deep, generalized, diffuse, elusive level. That's what Scott Watson

said, though not in those words; that's what Jan-Marie Martell said: that the stuff comes in very deep down. So how do you choose? How do you know when you've gotten what you want?

GC By thinking, by feeling, discarding, dreaming, looking out there, into myself.

AL In *Navigating* the sky is everywhere, water is everywhere and the water is disaster ... and life.

GC Well, water is one of the sources of the chemistry of life. We can't live without water and we can't live without light. But toxic chemicals are still being dumped in the water even though we are aware of their effects.

AL I like the presence of the egg and the sperm and also the carbon dioxide exchange in the large painting.

GC Those images were taken from a book I had just bought on life and its origins. Finally, we're more conscious of ecology and during the past year I did some planting in the garden, trying to create a little oxygen. In the painting I used an image of a lush growing green field showing the workers - exploited, backbending, gathering our food. We don't think of that when we buy it. We need to eat. And that happens to be a great pleasure.

AL There is the luxury of food - also of course the necessity of food - but the luxury of the food that so many of us actually eat.

GC That's right. That's why I used large leaves that are so plush and lush. It wasn't only survival food. But I think food will be more of a luxury for more of us with the passage of time.

AL And yet, at the same time as food is becoming a more susceptible phenomenon, we get this burgeoning and ubiquitousness of gourmet food. Fruits of all kinds from all over the world, and all these special varieties of this, that, and the other thing. In any case, I don't see this painting as the summation of the whole exhibition.

GC No, of course not, it's a part of it. Some people might, though.

AL Because of the placement and the large scale, it would be easy to see it that way.

GC Yes, several people asked me, "Is it supposed to be all one?" "Would you sell this in toto?" Yes, it's meant to be an installation obviously consisting of separate parts. For instance, the *Circle Series*, the *Blue Boys*, the *Breast Piece* ...

AL And did people volunteer what they thought it was about?

GC Yes, sometimes: navigating through all the images, navigating through life. Every one of the images I've used has been 'appropriated' and recycled from our culture: the paintings, photographs, photocopies, as well as the found objects. The development was a conscious process - an intuitive/intellectual game, on my part - playing with the post-modern idea of appropriation - re-examining, deconstructing ...

AL It gets a little more enigmatic as we move to the third long wall to the *Blue Boys* piece. Do you think of those putti as the four labours, the four seasons? Although it isn't quite right, because it would be winter/firewood, spring/flowers, summer/wheat, and autumn/grapes and the harvest.

GC I wanted to use the romanticized or classical or bourgeois idea of children - as if childhood is only a playtime. They're so perfect and sweet and gentle and happy, toiling away.

AL And vacuous.

GC And vacuous kitsch. I got them at a garage sale. They were a perfect contrast to the photocopy images I had gathered: third world children, six or seven year olds doing hard labour, Hitler and the child soldier, child coal miners and so on ... I'm a pack rat and I save things so that I can use them at some future time - like the plastic grapes hanging from the shelf.

AL As you talk, I begin to see them as a reference to maleness.

GC That's interesting. Well, I see a couple of elements. The grapes are placed below the child labourers, who are like grapes to be plucked - or a dark bacchanal - presented with the realism of the photocopy images, showing what we sometimes do to our male children. I've included a photocopy of a family photo of my own children, my two boys playing with guns before I became aware of

what that meant.

AL Let's talk about the images in the blue *Water Suite* paintings. I'm not really sure of what they are, yet I don't feel the need to ask.

GC Do you think you'll remember them two weeks from now?

AL I'm not trustworthy at this time in terms of my perceptions. But I think this thing you do of providing, not a blank slate, but something so general that we end up automatically laying ourselves all over this stuff and finding out what it is we're thinking - it becomes almost like a mirror. I am now thinking about loss and sadness, and so I see loss and sadness here. Others may find what they're thinking about. It's a very odd sort of transaction that occurs, and along these same lines there's your stance of - how did you put it yesterday? - not only are you not interested in doing artist's statements but you actually refuse to do artist's statements? Is that what you said?

GC Yeah.

AL And what do you say if someone pushes you?

GC I trust viewers to be able to see into themselves through whatever it is I provide for them. I trust the viewer.

AL So your goal is that the viewers see into themselves?

GC That's part of it.

AL Not see into you?

GC Well, they'll see into me in the sense that I am giving them something to see, something to consider. These are my selections of images combined with my use of coloured light, and other formal art elements - the process developing content ...

AL And the commitment. You have a strong commitment to the content.

GC Absolutely, oh yes. But back to the viewer. For instance, I recently talked to someone who's been teaching English at university for twenty years who came to see this exhibition. She said: "looking at what you've produced here, I feel so ignorant, as I so often do when I look at contemporary art." Avis, she's not alone in thinking you have to have an education in art in order to experience it.

I asked her, "Do I have to study literature in order to read a book? Do I have to study music in order to hear it?" It certainly helps sometimes to know the context, the background. But that's not why I read or listen to music.

In exhibitions, it's a real pleasure to see people talking, pointing, expressing themselves person to person in small groups. I want to be able to bring about this communicating, discussing, exploring ... people willing to share their experiences. Not to have it quiet —

AL And reverential.

GC Sometimes I have done works that are quiet, introspective, that are talked about afterwards. Many people remember my work ; that's one of my intentions - to initiate a physical response so that chemical changes occur in the brain. It's kind of like an LSD experience. People who have seen shows of mine four and five years ago say, "You know I still think of it sometimes." My installation work is temporary but I hope that it becomes part of people. It doesn't make sense, but that's the paradox of it. There is some kind of —

AL — persistence. (**AL** and **GC** simultaneously): *The Persistence of Memory!* Do they remember the look of it or do they remember the feeling and the ideas?

GC Probably a combination. It depends on the work. It's imaginative remembering at a deeper level.

AL Well, since you've brought up your earlier work, let's talk about it. How about starting with the UBC Fine Arts Gallery, the pure light installation you did ten years ago, in 1980. What was your goal in that one?

GC I had been working with light before 1980; I just hadn't had the exhibitions.

AL This was your chance to really go with light. The objects were already there - there were all those columns filling the space.

GC A terrible space. It has a seven foot ceiling, thirty-two structural columns and sixty spot light fixtures. Glenn Allison (the curator) proposed putting together an exhibition of my older work. I

had been showing my pieces individually in my studio for several years. But after I spent some time in the gallery to get the feel of it, I knew I needed to do something for that particular environment. It was overpowering to me, although to Glenn it wasn't. He had come to love its idiosyncrasies. When I talked with him about my ideas, he gave me an unequivocal "yes". Once I had that freedom, I took it.

I did a lot of research work in my studio, painting lightbulbs, testing various coloured light combinations. I set up model columns. It was such a pleasure to be able to work with the space in that gallery, with pure light and no objects, except for the columns, of course. As you moved through the room, some of the columns disappeared. Remember that? It became a meditative, a spiritual space. Certainly not static.

So what was my goal? I was given freedom, my goal was to give to viewers freedom too. People took advantage of that, Avis. Glenn told me that workers on campus went to the gallery regularly during that show.

AL Glenn produced some great exhibitions in that space over the years, and that was one of them.

GC Alvin Balkind did some exciting shows at UBC also. He was the curator before Glenn, I think.

AL So that was 1980, and the *October Show* - the first warehouse show - was 1983.

GC My installation was site-specific also. There was time pressure. I knew I wanted to use that space, I applied for it, but I didn't know what I was going to do until I explored the space ... investigating what was in the corner underneath some old boards and finding that what I thought was cement turned out to be water, six feet deep. At first all I knew was that there was a pile of junk and an electrical outlet in the corner, so it would be possible to use light.

AL So there you are riffling around in the corner amidst this pile of crud, but you knew that was the corner you wanted even before you had excavated under the garbage.

GC Yes, but I wanted that whole strip.

AL So then you found this water, the source of life.

GC But that water was like thick mud, because it was the sump pump of the old warehouse, water that had been collecting for a long time.

AL That piece was chilling in its transcendence. I have this image of an angel rising, a winged figure.

GC It was a figure, but not winged. Interesting that you've made it an angel.

AL A figure done almost like a little Renaissance cartoon for a fresco. It was perfect, a well-constructed figure. Why was the piece so moving? I almost cried from it.

GC Avis, only you can say what happens for you. It was called *Free Falling/Free Rising*. You had to look down into that corner to see the small figure drawing floating on the surface of the water. It was lit with blue and red-orange lights in contrast to the cool white light beaming down onto the small white mound sixty feet to the right. There was an intense blue light in the centre of the entire installation. I was setting up a situation where you had to make a choice. You could go either right or left, but you couldn't see the actual piece unless you became involved in the decision-making and went to look, to see into yourself. You were free to choose.

AL And torn in the choosing. Has most of your work since 1983 been about loss, death, metamorphosis, discovery?

GC I've been working with those ideas since high school, but especially since the '70s. Not many people have seen those pieces because I did them in my studio and invited small groups in to see them. Fortunately, there is slide documentation of these past works. But you can't experience through a slide presentation what you experience in the real space, no matter how much I talk about it. Anyway, I was dealing with those themes before.

AL I think what we need to have here, in one place, is the history of your losses. Not in my words, though you have told me some of the story, but in your words.

GC Well, going back to the loss of my son, which was a crucial

one: he died of complications arising from Guillain-Barre syndrome in 1972 at the age of sixteen. But before that I had just lost my sister, and a year before that my father, my grandfather, and so on. I can go back and think about all the deaths from when I was a little kid running around the streets, shocked at a neighbour's death, realizing the finality of it. Losing innocence.

AL That's a gain rather than a loss, wouldn't you say?

GC Yes, of course that's what I mean, loss and gain. But I think living involves loss all the time.

AL Loss more than gain? Or do we have to lose in order to gain?

GC That's something we learn from the time we are born. We lose the closed, warm safety of the womb, and for an instant our whole world is gone. I just remembered what happened to my first love, Avis. He died in a diabetic coma. He was only sixteen.

AL And so you became self-reliant from knowing loss and deprivation early.

GC Early I guess. In Chicago when I was four or five, I remember my parents were having a hard time, fighting. I saw my mother crying. I didn't understand what was going on. And I said to myself, "Gee, I'm not going to have a marriage like this. It's no good". Not in those words, right? That's a loss, isn't it? We have loss constantly in our lives; we have to deal with it all the time. If we cling to a pretty, illusionistic picture of life, it could become dangerous. But I don't think I'm alone in this recognition.

AL The thing is, you're not alone, and it isn't a solipsistic immersion in personal loss. It's a communion with the sense and the reality of loss and sadness and evanescence and metamorphosis that we all live through and that is absolutely part of being alive. Some people's losses and the destruction of their fantasies and ideals make them bitter, make them turn inward, make them pronounce negatively forever after on 'human nature', whereas other people's losses make them more humanitarian, more accepting, gentler, less judgmental, more open. I mean, there's life beyond the loss of our ideals and hopes and dreams.

GC There's no way anyone can avoid this. And we can't avoid our own death, either.

AL Which brings us to the figure on the back wall. Everyone reacted to this piece.

GC They did. It's called *Walking*.

AL I first saw this small figure as the pilgrim soul, and only later did I see, after discussing it with someone, that this was a little-old-lady. It's odd, I had seen it as a figure just wearing sackcloth. Of course it's an old woman with a hat and a coat and a cane. But it's still the pilgrim soul.

GC Yes.

AL And the flickering light of life is still in her. She is gazing at death - neither accepting nor rejecting, simply there on the threshold. This wooden fragment, from who knows where, was constructed with a threshold and she has climbed over it, so to speak; she has passed over.

GC Yes, you don't see her feet. Exactly right.

AL Georgiana, when Ron said goodbye he was already over the threshold. He saw what was there. He saw something that he was assenting to.

But to return to this figure, who is all of us, every last one of us. It's not Everyman, it's old Mrs. Jones. We don't get the chance very often to see the old woman as the universal self, and you've done it.

GC That image was from a newspaper photograph which showed a woman with a cane in that position. I did this piece just before I went to visit my mother last year. She's 84 and lives in Missouri and I hadn't seen her for three years. I was thinking about her often while trying to finish the piece before I left. I didn't know that she'd stopped colouring her hair, or that she was walking with a cane. When I got off the plane, and saw her walking towards me with white hair and a cane, I thought, this is too coincidental, it's the woman I just painted!

AL But you said earlier that the old woman is you.

GC That's first me, of course, and, as you say, it's all of us. Also,

the moon, painted on the back of the piece and reflected in the mirror, is especially important here. When I was a small child, the first *art* I saw was art above the couch: a landscape with a silhouetted tree against the full moon with clouds gathered around it. You see that cliché all the time. But that's my personal moon; I was mesmerized by that *above the couch art*.

AL And what about the light of the bulb? I experience that light as the enduring flickering of life, but some people saw it as the flickering down, the flickering out of life. Can we think of it as the eternal flame?

GC Sure, why not? It's always there, yes. And it's homage to life on the planet. There's also the reflection in the mirror. There are double or triple lenses in it. Sometimes you see yourself large and sometimes you see yourself small in front of the whole space behind you. I have no idea what it was used for originally. I got it at a thrift shop. This old battered piece of wood is part of an old gear mold from a factory in Vancouver. It's dirty and dusty, and I tried to keep it as dirty and time-gathering as possible. I hope you can see the fingerprints on it.

AL The old woman becomes part of time. But let's turn to the *Water Suite* paintings. The first one we see upon entering is the policeman with the dog and the blue aura around him.

GC That one is from a photograph that I had pinned up in my studio on Hastings over ten years ago. It depicted the first use of policemen with dogs on the New York subway system, and it was news. I found the photograph in my miscellaneous file. A photograph of Vancouver happened to be next to it ... That was the first painting I did in the *Water Suite*. I added the aura last, not knowing exactly



Water Suite : Guard (detail) 40" x 40"
from *Navigating*

why, but because he needed to have one.

AL Perhaps he needed to be separated from a naturalistic connection to the landscape. He can't be quite in the same space. It's not a straight depiction. It's like Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. It's the imminence, the possibility, the ubiquitousness of this authoritarianism that you invoke elsewhere - this violence and watchfulness and obscure danger in the name of protection. Many of these blue images, I can't quite read them; I think, hm, I'm not sure what that is. For example ... what is that splashing into the water? But I'm not actually asking you - though you can tell me if you want to. I don't feel the need to ask you.

GC That's interesting.

AL The personalness of these things, the way they enter as images and go to some

back place in the brain makes me less interested in identifying the precise subjects than in simply experiencing them. But I did find myself wondering about the third image of perhaps an aerial shot and another image which looks like a female body with a male arm. Everything is just a little bit weird.

The images look like many things, and that's okay. With your work it's okay; with someone else's work it might be really irritating and disturbing. But somehow the fact that I can't decide if something is this or that or the other thing is just part of the connection. It's the elusiveness that forces the stuff onto a different level of experience.

GC That's what I'd hoped would happen. They are painted fairly realistically.

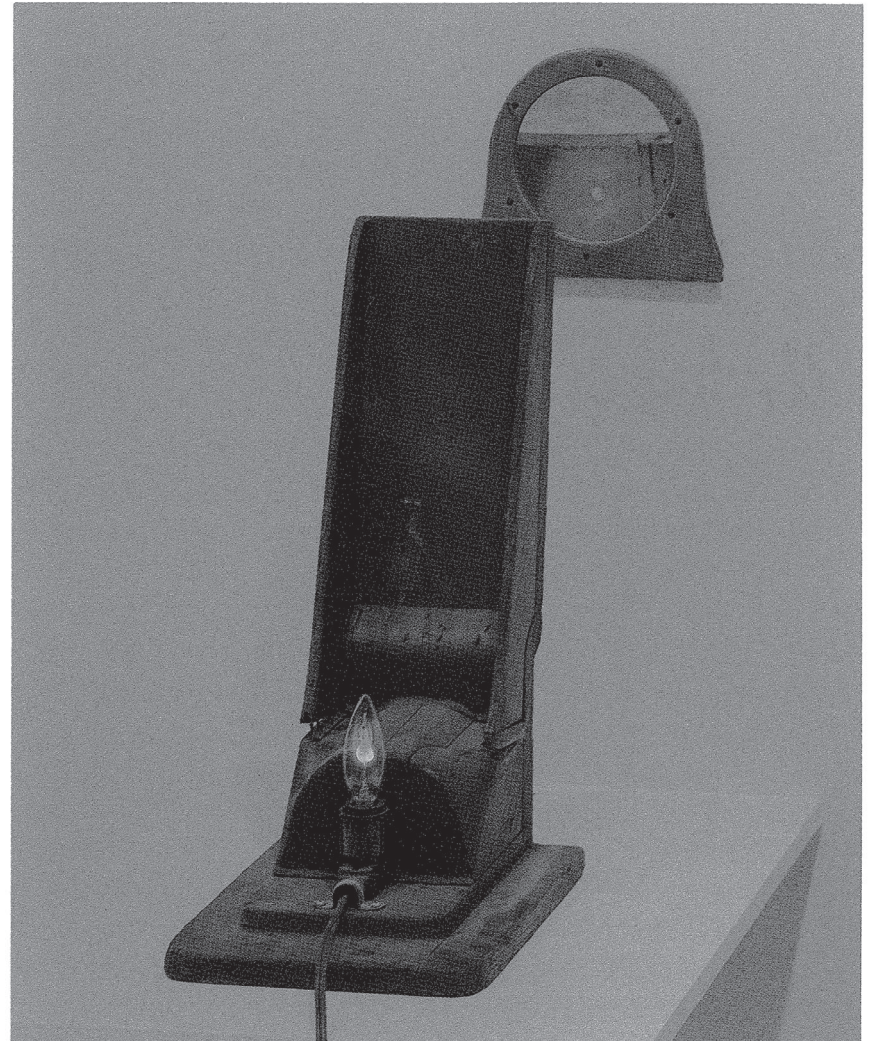
AL And it's not surrealistic, it's not some arbitrary dream fantasy, or magic realism. There's an odd and unresolved quality to so much



Walking (detail) 24" x 20" from Navigating

of this stuff, which needs us to complete it. Us and our own communing with ourselves and with one another. And there's still no answer. The answer isn't in this room.

We were also talking about your other work. I think we've talked enough about the image of death. What about after the piece in the *October Show*?



Water Suite : Wash 36" x 30" from Navigating

GC I did a piece here at the Contemporary Art Gallery called *Double Journey*. It was concerned with movement - a time continuum. It was divided into two areas, and one of them was filled with continually moving snakelike lines in space. That part had blue and green lights casting shadows on the wall and I used two small fans to create the perpetual motion in contrast to the other section. It



Voyons Voir ... / Looking Into It ... (detail: Cibachrome photograph, 4' x 6')
at Galerie Powerhouse, Montréal 1987

was an empty space, 12' x 14', that you couldn't enter because the floor was covered with white marble dust. It had mostly pink and orangey and blue lights on the walls and reflections were cast from aluminum paper on the floor along the edges of three walls. It was a peaceful, meditative space contrasting with the continual movement of the subconscious in the other. Abstract compared to most of the work I've done.

AL What are some other works that stand out in your mind?

GC Well, I had the opportunity to show at Harbourfront in the *Vancouver 6* group show curated by Alvin Balkind in the Summer of '84. It was called *Time Island*.

AL That was the piece with the guardian dog.

GC Yes, it was a plaster cast dog of the kind commonly seen in Toronto neighbourhood stores. Pure kitsch. It sat on its hind legs and had a dripping tongue. I attached it securely to a raised free-form platform in the centre of the room about a foot from the floor. The dog cast a different kind of shadow on the wall behind it, somewhat threatening, like a coyote or a hyena, perhaps. The room was dimly lit so you had to work to see. I painted the four walls and floor in



PHOTO GEORGIANA CHAPPELL

At The Stairs (installation view) 30' x 94',
Charles H. Scott Gallery 1986

billowing Baroque clouds. Another dog was set back in a corner on the floor, slowly emerging in your vision as your eyes adjusted to the dim lighting. It was a kind of spirit dog; waiting, observing.

Some viewers said that they heard barking or howling, other noises - but there was no real sound, it was imagined. Some spoke of Saskatchewan Prairies even though there was an island in the work. That's just it: it was like a personal island, one of the places in our memories that we carry with us, I suppose.

AL You're not saying each person is an island.

GC I'll respond with another cliché - We're all one with the universe, Avis.

AL Which brings to mind your image of connectedness, *If there's no dancing at the revolution, don't invite me*, in which you used all your friends as the models.

GC I did that one in '82, before the *October Show*. It's over at the University of B.C. now. I donated it to the UBC Housing Office; it's supposed to be installed in a new student housing complex. The title paraphrases a text from Emma Goldman.

AL Now that piece is not like these others.

GC Except that, as in the UBC piece and others I've done, the viewer walked into the installation becoming part of the work. The portraits of my friends - there were 11 life-sized figures made of steel plate, dancing silhouettes interspaced in a 30' X 32' room. Dimly lit. The only lighting came from windows I had built into four free-standing walls surrounding the figures and the viewers. The windows were painted landscapes on glass and lit from behind, signifying different times of day. It was a generalized environment yet people asked specific questions: 'Is that Ken Wallace? Is that a view from Cortes Island?'

AL But it's not death. It was more actively and simply an affirmation of life and movement and a little implication of struggle, but not much. We're all dancing.

GC It's the dance of life, sure.

AL Then there are all the other shows you've done.

GC Yes, in 1987 I did an installation in Montréal called *Voyons Voir ... / Looking Into It ...*. In that piece, too, the viewer was part of the work, moving through a space with continually changing coloured light. I used a slowly revolving turntable with red, yellow and blue spots. One section was blatantly autobiographical. I made a huge collage of photos of my family and friends, places, and objects; photographed it and used a four foot by six foot Cibachrome print of the collage mounted on a house-like frame. It too dealt with time and preservation and connectedness, but not only mine - people talked about how they remembered their family albums. It became their own autobiography, in a sense. But you're not familiar with that one so let's go on. In 1986 I did an installation at the Emily Carr College of Art and Design. It was called *At The Stairs* In one section I used a real baby carriage with a painted shadow of a nurturing figure on the wall behind it. I repainted the buggy in camouflage for a group show, *REPO*, in 1988 here at the Contemporary Art Gallery. The inside of the carriage was painted in blue and white clouds, and in place of a pillow I put a small mirror set in painted clay. You could see yourself reflected in it. Some people got very upset - seeing themselves as a

child for an instant, perhaps. Others weren't disturbed about that; women in particular were disturbed about the iconography of the camouflaged buggy. People wrote me letters, notes.

AL A real image of danger and vulnerability, right?

GC Yes, and inept protection. Later I found a newspaper photograph like that image, a crouching soldier with a gun next to a woman walking with a buggy with the infants facing us. I used it the *Blue Boys* piece in *Navigating*.

AL The Convertible Showroom piece and the ECCAD installation have a lot in common with *Navigating*, don't they?

GC I think so.

AL Light has become a subsidiary; it's a sort of facilitating light.

GC Yes, well, facilitating but not subsidiary. This work could be shown with ordinary white light but I think the blue lighting works better. It sets a mood, an atmosphere for perceiving, creating a need to look more deeply, more imaginatively. Surely there are similarities with my past work although I haven't done individual paintings for a long time.

AL So, to recall your comment of last night: you love painting and you love colour and you started out as a painter.

GC Yes, figures and landscapes, with the figures usually in some kind of particular environment. I love the sensuousness of blending the colours together and the way the paint spreads out on a surface. How wonderful. So sexual. The physical touching and moving with the emotional, if you know what I mean. Selecting the images for the paintings in *Navigating* was a complex process of choosing, rejecting, combining. We are barraged with cultural images, fragments from the news media, art, films, TV.

You know, people have been giving me flack about not explaining my work, but I simply don't want to do that for viewers. We experience in different ways ... we can impose our own order from chaos, or vice versa, create our own connections, whatever they may be. We live in the world with our pasts, our presents. It can be a denial or affirmation of the experience within ourselves.