

natural process. It should not cause disruption to your workplace, like that reserved for an illness.

But now, inside the quiet room, it seemed to me that these were naïve, even arrogant, notions. Segregated, isolated and in silence, I moved seamlessly and with a strange clarity through a thought process that I recognized only much later for the textbook-taught five stages of grieving.

As advertised, it was denial that found me first. Maybe I had been asked to wait in the quiet room in deference to my status as a physician, so I wouldn't have to sit with the *real* patients in the waiting room. But I knew this wasn't true. I had seen the pained sympathy under the icy exterior of the technician. Besides, she knew full well that I was a physician, that I would know that the quiet room meant bad news, grieving, loss.

Then anger set in. Anger at my employer and my peers for encouraging me to think I was invincible, that pregnancy wasn't a big deal. Anger at myself for having allowed things to get so out of control.

Then bargaining arrived, and with it a glimmer of hope. Now that I'd learned my lesson, now that I knew I shouldn't have explained away the little things that didn't seem right, that I should have been a better patient, that I should have given my own health care needs a higher priority than work, I would be able to do better. I would put all my energy into getting myself and my baby through this pregnancy unscathed; I'd be better off for having had this little scare.

Then the reality of the despairing "what-ifs." What if this was already a problem I couldn't fix? Despondence and a sense of looming failure kicked in. How could I have allowed myself to get into this position, almost six months pregnant and only now getting high-risk screening? Something was dreadfully wrong; it was already unlikely that all the dreams and hopes associated with this pregnancy and child would remain unscathed by the end of this day. Why had I ever thought I could juggle all the balls in my life? Why had I ever thought it important to juggle them all in the first place?

And then, a preliminary acceptance of

my fate — whatever it may be. It seemed that life had already placed me onto a new and unexpected path. I needed to face reality and deal with whatever revelation today would bring. I needed to make the best of the situation that faced my unborn child and me. I had to accept that being a doctor doesn't, and shouldn't, protect me from being a patient sometimes too. Whatever tomorrow would bring, today my baby was alive and kicking. Today was not a day for grieving or quiet rooms. Significant challenges and decisions likely lay ahead. The one thing I could do now was to choose to submit to that fact, to prepare to make the best of a bad situation.

I left the quiet room and returned to sit with the other patients waiting their turn to speak to the doctor.

Karen Breeck
Family Physician
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A beautiful baby boy was born and died July 18, 2002. He had a hypoplastic left heart from trisomy 18. His name was William.

Lifeworks

That 60s thing

Global Village: The 60s
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
Oct. 2, 2003 - Mar. 7, 2004
General Curator: Stéphane Aquin
Deputy Curator: Diane Charbonneau
Guest curator: Anna Detheridge

When curator Stéphane Aquin, working on the exhibition catalogue for *Global Village*, asked Captain Alan L. Bean about his Apollo 12 mission to the moon, he wasn't looking for political or cultural analysis. He asked him what it felt like to walk on the moon. No highfalutin ideas about Cold War hegemony or the grand quest: just the physical experience. Bean's response was intriguing, if a tad prosaic.

"Well it is a physical experience. ... So, for example, if I had closed my eyes and just stood there, I would have soon fallen over ... I would be leaning way

over forward, sideways, or back before I noticed that I wasn't standing up straight. ... I don't feel that my body ever really learned."

In other words, moonwalking was strange, and although Bean's body never fully adjusted, his overall account tends toward delight rather than unease. Descriptions of extraterrestrial experiences are often characterized by wonder and ecstasy. Of course, deep unfamiliarity also provokes fear, dread and nausea, which is why NASA's training was so intensive: it tried to shave off the reactive peaks of astronauts, like the effects of lithium on bipolar disorder. Disorientation and deep feelings of alienation may well characterize the radical social changes that erupted in the 1960s. Likewise, how people reacted to them tended toward the extreme.

Take Verner Panton's futuristic *Phantasy Landscape*, originally designed for a Cologne furniture fair in 1970. This soft, undulating womb of an environment, composed of upholstered



Piero Manzoni (1933–1963), *Base of the World*, 1961. Iron, bronze lettering, 82 cm x 100 cm x 100 cm. Collection of the Herning Kunstmuseum, Denmark.

foam panels, virtually dispenses with gravity. Leisure-seekers would recline across any number of organic protrusions built into modules that paid little or no attention to conventional coordinates like up or down. Pantan's immersive environments and futuristic designs of the 60s gave flesh to the dream of a blissful world free of constraints.

Predating videotape and cable, and produced at a time when television signals were controlled by a small oligarchy of giant networks, Yoko Ono's *Sky TV* (1966) used the just-released Sony Portapac to produce another picture of freedom, but without the theatrics. Typically Fluxus, this installation turns waste to riches and shows that paradise is right under our noses, here and now. A video monitor simply presents a live, closed-circuit image of the sky, taken from a camera mounted on the roof of the museum — no buildings, no people, no problem.

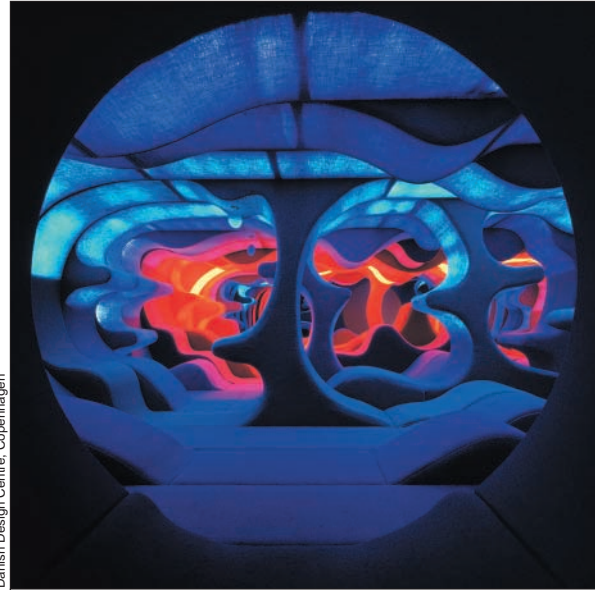
Aquin's shot-from-the-hip interview is symptomatic of his fluid approach to curating this show. Although some have dismissed the thematic structure for its lack of rigour, and the confounding juxtapositions of high art, kitsch and fashion, he nevertheless gives his audience a sweeping taste of the times without sinking into nostalgia.

The encyclopedic purview of the exhibition cries out for a bit of synthesis, and the four thematic divisions come as a welcome relief. "Space," "Media," "Disorder" and "Change" have no real pretense to scholarly insight or precision, and they shouldn't be taken too seriously. One may simply enjoy the delightful, sometimes surprising and very lateral concurrence of artifacts on offer.

Global Village is refreshing not only for its juxtapositions and mix of high and low, but also because it throws the accepted centre (New York) off balance. Displayed in Montréal, home of the fantastically successful and well-represented Expo '67, artworks and applied design from around the world attest to the fact that the 60s were indeed global. From this perspective, outside the self-proclaimed centre of the world, the American version of history is just

that: a version. Compare these two Pop artworks: Andy Warhol's monumental *Brillo Boxes* (1964) and Öyvind Fahlström's politically charged *ESSO-LSD* (1967). Or look at these two deconstructions: *Balloons* (1967–1972), a photomontage by American Martha Rosler that collages a horrific picture of Vietnamese war victims onto an image of an architect-designed domestic interior, and Iceland's Gudmundur Gudmundsson's *American Interior No. 7*: an oil painting of an otherwise typical American bedroom wallpapered with a depiction of international workers locked arm in arm, confronting the viewer in solidarity. Although Rosler's photo-mechanical, cut-and-paste method was, according to the art-cognoscenti of the day, vastly more progressive than the bourgeois-bound medium of oil paint, Gudmundsson's picture is nevertheless more complex and more powerful in how it positions the viewer. Although Rosler's picture exposes victims as the appalling result, or at least the hidden dimension of the Western way of life, Gudmundsson's lesser-known interior pits viewers against strong and upright people in a Brechtian struggle of interlocutors.

Without a doubt, intuition, licence and a gutsy curatorial purview are the ingredients that make this show so refreshing, but sometimes licence turns to recklessness. What's so upsetting about elevating Janis Joplin's psychedelic Porsche to the status of shrine with its own dimly-lit room, while Don Judd's exceedingly elegant minimalist sculpture (*untitled*, 1968) is squeezed into a corner? Nothing, if it were part of a general critique of objects and capitalist exchange-value, for example, but it's not. Why shouldn't Barbie dolls be accorded their own display case while



Danish Design Centre, Copenhagen

Verner Pantan, *Phantasy Landscape*. Exhibit at the 1970 Cologne Design Fair: Visiona 2. Upholstered foam panels, hidden lighting.

Piero Manzoni's *Base of the World* (1961) rests on the Exhibition-Designer's Formica fantasy of visual coherence? No reason, except that the designerly intervention of what is effectively a sculptural base, under a sculpture that functions itself as a sculptural base for the planet, saps the artwork's power to conceptually invert and distance the viewer. Manzoni's brilliant piece comprises an iron box with bronze letters spelling "SOCLE DU MONDE" (base of the world) emblazoned on the side — upside down. Obviously it is important that this work be in contact with the world, as it is in its permanent home in Denmark: directly on the ground.

A few stray hairs needn't spoil what is otherwise a sumptuous and revivifying banquet, and leaving its exhibition technique aside, the conceptual disorientation that Manzoni's base evokes may be the clearest artistic analogue for the upheavals of the 1960s in this exhibition. As for the relevance of *Global Village*, right now that 60s thing just looks good.

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