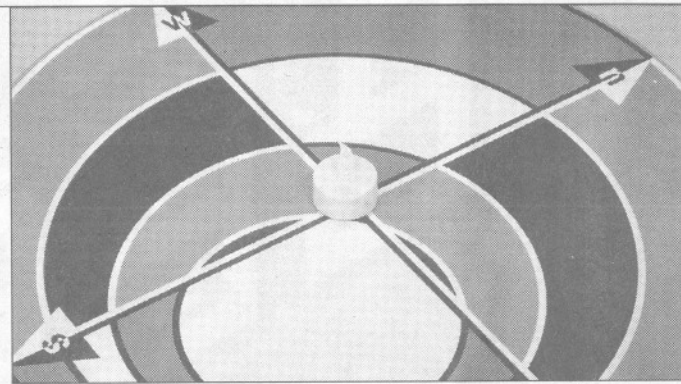


Where There's Smoke, There's Fire

Telekinesis competition an illuminating experience



The dictionary I consulted defined telekinesis as “the power to move something simply by thinking about it, without the application of physical force.” Likely you knew that already, but I wasn’t totally clear on how that applied to the visual arts prior to attending Noxious Sector’s current exhibition at Deluge Contemporary Art. The experience was illuminating.

Noxious Sector is artists Ted Hiebert, Doug Jarvis and Jackson 2Bears. They each have their own individual art practices outside of Noxious Sector, but together they describe themselves as being dedicated to the exploration of alternative cognitive function, the paranormal and the absurd. Hiebert explained recently that he thinks of their collective work as keeping things (questions surrounding the nature of telekinesis) in suspension and he calls Noxious Sector’s endeavours ones of “speculative action.”

This brings me to the heart of their show, *The 2008 World Telekinesis Competition*. Not open to professional psychics, 28 teams from Mexico, Australia, Europe, the U.S. and across

Canada responded to an open call and are now competing remotely to psychically control the direction of melting wax from a tea light candle. The gallery installation is fantastic and serious and the team banners are, at times, nonsensical in the best possible way.

To understand how it works, you need to understand that the competitive structure of the event is relatively straightforward; there are two pools and teams such as Capitalist Energy Sector, the Canadian TeleRangers and Unicorn Vengeance were randomly paired to participate in this single-knockout tournament format. The round game board is approximately 15 inches in diameter and divided into quarters. The teams each have two opposing quarters of the board. All rounds take place outside of gallery hours so that no external factors, such as mischievous visitors, influence the candles’ melting (I have to say that I wondered if game times were also kept secret so as to insure that no

telekinetic interference occurred by way of sour competitors). The winning team in each match is determined by their ability to steer the greatest amount of wax into their opponents’ quarters. The winner of each round is determined by a “photo finish,” which is then posted on their tournament website at noxioussector.net/wtc, along with the match results. The tournament’s winning team receives a trophy and bragging rights that hold true until next year’s competition.

In leaving Deluge, I couldn’t have cared less that the telekinetic powers of the tournament champion will neither be proven nor disproven by their success in this exhibition (I mean, come on, all that wax has to go somewhere!) and frankly, that truly doesn’t seem the point anyway. However, I was sad I hadn’t jumped at the chance to take part in this tournament when the call for participants initially went out. It looks like a lot of fun and after all, it’s not whether you win or lose, it’s how you play the game.

—Danielle Hogan

The 2008 World Telekinesis Competition

To June 14

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