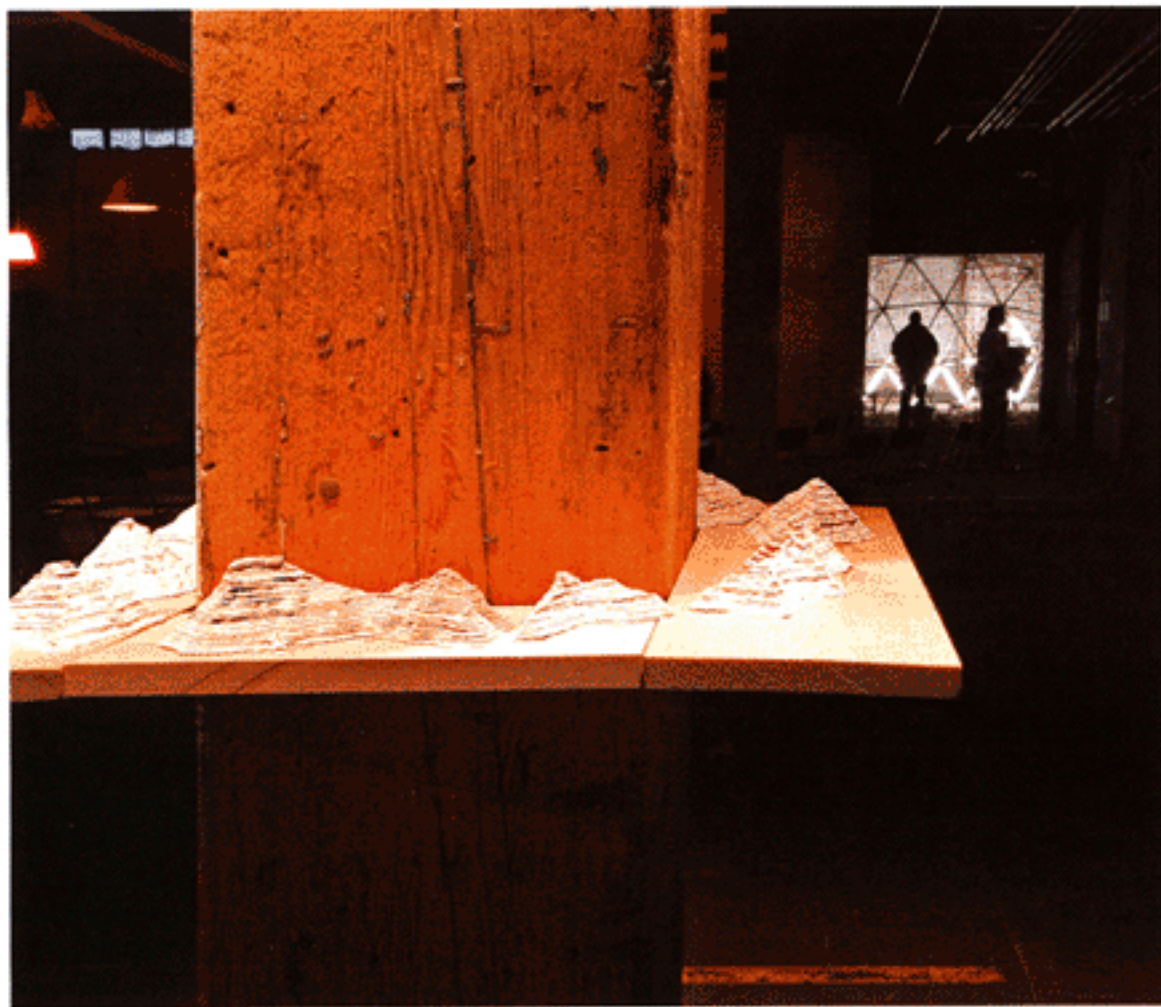


Installation view of Jenn
Sciarrino's Relief Model:
*Proposal for Future Mountain
Formation* 2006 Paper on wood
shelf 11.4 x 66 x 66 cm



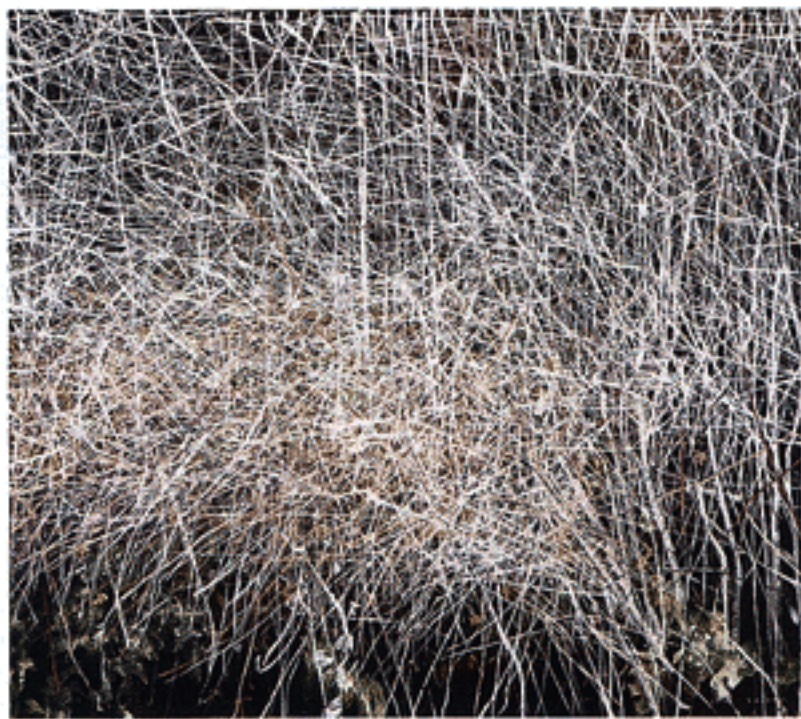
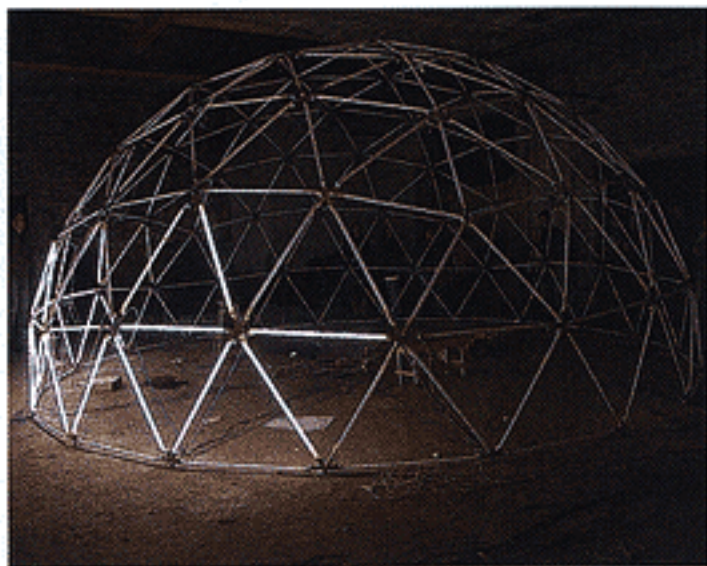
MakingRoom

224 WALLACE AVE., TORONTO

MakingRoom" can be described as an act of "extreme curating" by its organizer, the artist Heather Nicol. The exhibition was created with virtually no funding and involved around 60 artists from Canada and the U.S. It included video, installation, painting, drawing, performance, sculpture and new-media artists as well as jazz, choral and classical musicians, and occupied a borrowed and bare-bones 30,000-square-foot former sweatshop for a period of—yes, really—only two days. The participating artists were chosen for their ability to work with the space's enormous scale as well as for their attitude (the call for artists specified "no whiners"). Nicol herself supplied minimal installation assistance, lighting, electric cords and encouragement. Nearly 2,000 people attended.

On posters and press releases, the exhibition was described as "Making Room for you, making room for me...making room for Dorkbot, making room for eating and drinking beer and exchanging ideas, fan mail, phone numbers and manifestos..." At the Saturday-night opening—a noisy and packed affair where visual artists hung with musicians and theatre folks and teenagers and kids, and everybody talked, watched, ate and drank—many people said, "This doesn't feel like Toronto." It wasn't just the European-style grandeur the space afforded: it was

Installation view of Michael
Bartosik's *King Juda* 2007
Fluorescent tubes and aluminum
3.65 x 7.31 m PHOTO PAUL KUJIG



GORDON SMITH *Whytecliff
Shore* 2006 Acrylic on canvas
1.52 x 1.77 m

the show's crazy inclusiveness; young emerging sculptors could show their work next to that of a renowned sound artist, John Oswald.

With so much competition, the most successful works in "MakingRoom" responded actively to the space, playing with its scale and industrial rawness. Ed Pien's delicate, wall-sized *Big Orange Bird* cut-out, placed next to Susan Chrysler White's ephemeral "accordion" works with Nicol's own bittersweet, illuminated prom-gown sculptures nearby, made for a dramatic contrast with the warehouse grunge. Jenn Sciarrino's tiny *Relief Model: Proposal for Future Mountain Formation*, wrapped around an old wooden beam, was subtle and strangely sweet. In the back, Barbara Astman's light work from the *Clementine Suite* and Josh Avery's *Failure to Surrender* were equally poignant.

Performance works stood out as well—notably Dorkbot's demos and Oui (Becca Broughton and Andy Coppola), who drew a crowd for two days around four small holes, drilled in a wall, through which appeared copious amounts of birdseed, food and body parts like hands, mouths and a pubic mound. Two spectacular failures—Michael Bartosik's enormous geodesic dome made of fluorescent tubes, which only neared completion by the end of the second day, and Adrian Blackwell's *Monster* sculpture, made of giant tractor tubes that fully deflated just before the opening—spoke to the exhibition's ambition and nerve, and contributed to an atmosphere of anticipation that was generated by so many artists coming together just because they wanted to. JEN BUDNEY