

## M E D I A R E L E A S E



*Cup & Saucer with Pluto*, 2006, ceramic, found objects, 24.8 x 33.8 dia cm  
(Photo: Richard Milette)

## Léopold L. Foulem : Récupération

20 October – 25 November 2007

Artist's talk: Friday, 26 October 2007, 7:00 pm

Opening reception: Friday, 26 October, 8:00 pm

NeoCraft reception: Saturday, 24 November 2007, 8:00 pm

One of Canada's outstanding contemporary ceramists returns to Atlantic Canada this fall to exhibit at Saint Mary's University Art Gallery. Léopold L. Foulem divides his time between his hometown of Caraquet on New Brunswick's Acadian Peninsula, a teaching practice in Montréal and a busy international exhibition schedule. *Léopold L. Foulem : Récupération* is, however, only the artist's second solo exhibition in Atlantic Canada in nearly four decades.

Léopold L. Foulem has been honoured with both of Canada's top prizes for craft: the Jean A. Chalmers National Crafts Award in 1999 and the Saidye Bronfman Award in 2001. He was the Bronfman's first recipient from the Atlantic Provinces. In 2003, he received a prix Éloizes, the prestigious Acadian cultural award. Among the first Canadian ceramists to have his work collected by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England, he is also among the first living ceramists to be collected by the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art in Toronto. His work combines a campy playfulness and humour with a critically informed engagement of historic traditions, including classical Chinese, French and pre-Columbian ceramics. His use of decals and cheap found materials, alongside a virtuoso technique, bridges the space between popular culture and high art in a single breath-taking leap.

Teaching for many years in Montréal, at the CÉGEP du Vieux-Montréal and the CÉGEP de Saint-Laurent, Foulem single-handedly founded a distinct Canadian "school" of contemporary ceramics, often exploring themes of gay sexuality and identity. His mentorship, of the late Jeannot Blackburn, of Paul Mathieu (a Professor of ceramics at Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design in Vancouver and himself a recipient of the 2000 Chalmers Award) and of Montréal artist Richard Milette, has created a legacy beyond his own substantial body of work.

In November 1970, Saint Mary's University Art Gallery presented Foulem's solo exhibition, *Mini-Thingies and Maxi-Thingies* (circulated from the Confederation Centre Art Gallery in Charlottetown). Since then, Foulem has exhibited throughout Canada and the United States and in Denmark, China, Croatia, England, France, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden and Taiwan. During the same period, public exhibitions of his work in Atlantic Canada have been limited to one solo exhibition at the Galerie d'art de l'Université de Moncton in 2002 and a group show in Caraquet in 2006.

*Léopold L. Foulem : Récupération* will appear at Saint Mary's University Art Gallery, 20 October through 25 November 2007. Alongside the Foulem exhibition, Saint Mary's University Art Gallery is presenting *Vases, Plates and Small Heads: Ceramics from the Permanent Collection*, an exhibition of works selected by Ryan Suter, until recently the Gallery's Programme Coordinator. Both exhibitions take place in conjunction with the international NeoCraft symposium, 23-25 November, hosted by NSCAD University, at which Foulem will present a paper. The exhibition will tour through the Atlantic region and across Canada during 2008 and 2009, accompanied by a major bilingual catalogue with an essay by curator Robin Metcalfe.

“Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery has an ongoing engagement with Atlantic Canadian artists and with the Acadian community in particular,” says Metcalfe, who has Acadian ancestry. “The exhibition will bring some of the best of contemporary Acadian art back to Acadian communities in this region.” In 2004, the gallery produced Metcalfe’s acclaimed exhibition, *Étoiles : art de la Baie Sainte-Marie*, which was short-listed for a prix Éloizes, in the category of event of the year (événement de l’année).

The artist will give a public talk about his work on Friday evening, 26 October at 7:00 pm. An opening reception for the exhibition will follow at 8:00 pm. As well, the Gallery will host a gala reception for delegates to the NeoCraft symposium, on Saturday, 24 November at 8:00 pm, at which the artist will be present. All events are free of charge and open to the public, at Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery in the Loyola Building, 5865 Gorsebrook Avenue. Refreshments will be served.

*Léopold L. Foulem : Récupération* is organised by Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery and circulated by Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. This exhibition benefits from a generous grant from the Culture Division, Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage. The Canada Council for the Arts provides significant programme support for all exhibitions and associated activities at Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery.

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