

CHARLES RIVA COLLECTION

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STEVEN SHEARER

Selected works

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PRESS RELEASE

STEVEN SHEARER

23rd April 2015 – February 29th 2016

Over the years, Steven Shearer (Born in Canada in 1968) has become a figurehead in Vancouver's rich artistic scene, which includes people as diverse as Geoffrey Farmer, Brian Jungen, Tim Lee and, from another generation, Rodney Graham and Stanley Douglas. In 2006, the MUHKA (Antwerp) dedicated an exhibition entitled *Intertidal* to the community, in which Shearer, of course, took centre stage, with about ten works. In 2011, the artist was selected to represent Canada at the *Biennale di Venezia*: his appearance, which did not go unnoticed, gave meaning to work inspired both by the "grand" history of art and the so often discredited subculture of the heavy metal music scene, whose origins go back to the early '70s. Shearer expresses himself in a wide variety of ways – painting, drawing, sculpture, photocopying, digital imaging -, not to mention writing: in Venice, this was brought to life in a poem which adorned the nine-metre-high wall obscuring the façade of the Canadian building.

The artist is a bulimic collector of pictures, which he tracks down in old fanzines or on the Internet. Appropriation of pictures taken from popular culture, and their re-use for fine arts, is clearly not a million miles from Andy Warhol: it is a fully-fledged relationship, even going as far as loud colours, such as, for example, *NRG*. Both for his subject and his technique (acrylic on canvas), the work could almost pass for a literal quote from *Car Crashes*. But unlike Warhol, Steven Shearer always refers to certain figures from a particular popular culture, rather than "the" popular culture. The crashed car belonged to Les McKeown, a member of the Bay City Rollers, whom art lovers likely to be interested in Shearer's work would be forgiven for having largely forgotten them. All that is needed is for photographs to bear the group's name as their legend: what is important is not so much their fame as the idea that people are copying them. The installations *Clownin'* (2014) and *Bunching & Shading* (2014) work in the same way: the identity of the groups or musicians is not important, so much as the aesthetics associated with recognising them.

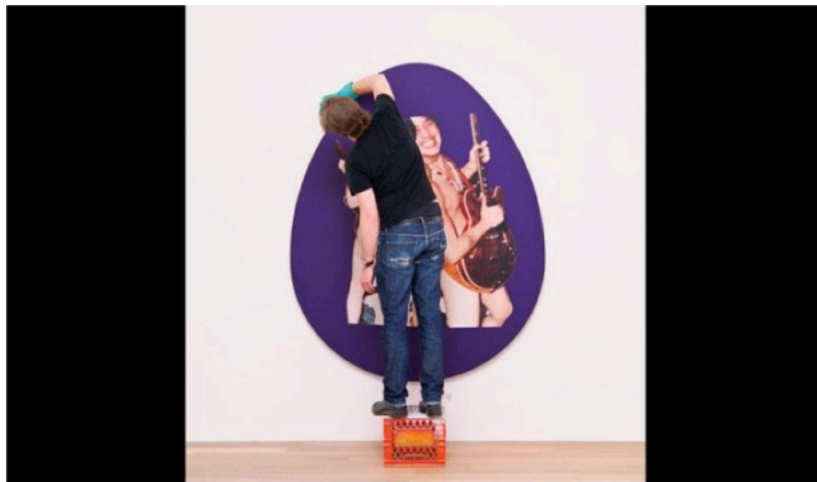
Shearer's attraction towards the rock scene typifies a more general interest in the theme of youth and adolescence, more specifically sexual identity as forged at that stage of development. A time of predilection for the artist, the '70s epitomised the figure of the androgynous rock star, a sense of the era brought to us a few decades later by Marilyn Manson. *Randy* (2007) summarises elements of the stereotype in artwork which is both grotesque and humorous, whilst *Guys & Dolls* (2006) incorporates them in a composition which evokes both Bonnard and Munch or Toulouse-Lautrec.

Shearer's adoption of a style inspired by the avant-gardes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries evoking contemporary subjects is probably one of the most acknowledged aspects of his work. *Geometric Heading no. 7* (2004) demonstrates a more conceptual approach to the history of modern art: the artist has transposed reproductions of drawings of children, who have been asked,

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Here, Shearer questions the use of art as a way of re-balancing an individual. *Conduit Cell for the Elevation of Harmonic Alignment & Geometric Healing Model I* (2013), which is the transposition into miniature (and in copper) of a large 2009 installation (*Improved Geometric Mechanotherapy Cell for Harmonic Alignment of Movements and Relations*), reflects in the same way. With their absurd titles, these sculptures, whose form evokes both the attraction of a playing field and the metaphor of a gas plant, are like tools designed by any pseudoscience, used to ensure social balance and harmony between individuals – if heavy metal is not enough to do this.

The recent portrait *Scratchy Cheek (working title)*, 2015, is original as much by the technic than the references that it suggests. Pablo Picasso's blue period (1901-1904) is brought to light and reveals this portrait as a singular artwork in Steven Shearer's work. While integrating the Spanish reference in his approach, Shearer is offering to the viewer a blue cast portrait, imbued with melancholy. The portrait, is quite enigmatic, and the essence of the painting seems elusive. Shearer leads this painting into a profound reflection and leaves the viewer in a deep confusion.



Steven Shearer © Steven Shearer. Canadian Art.

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LIST OF WORKS

ROOM 1



Steven Shearer

NRG

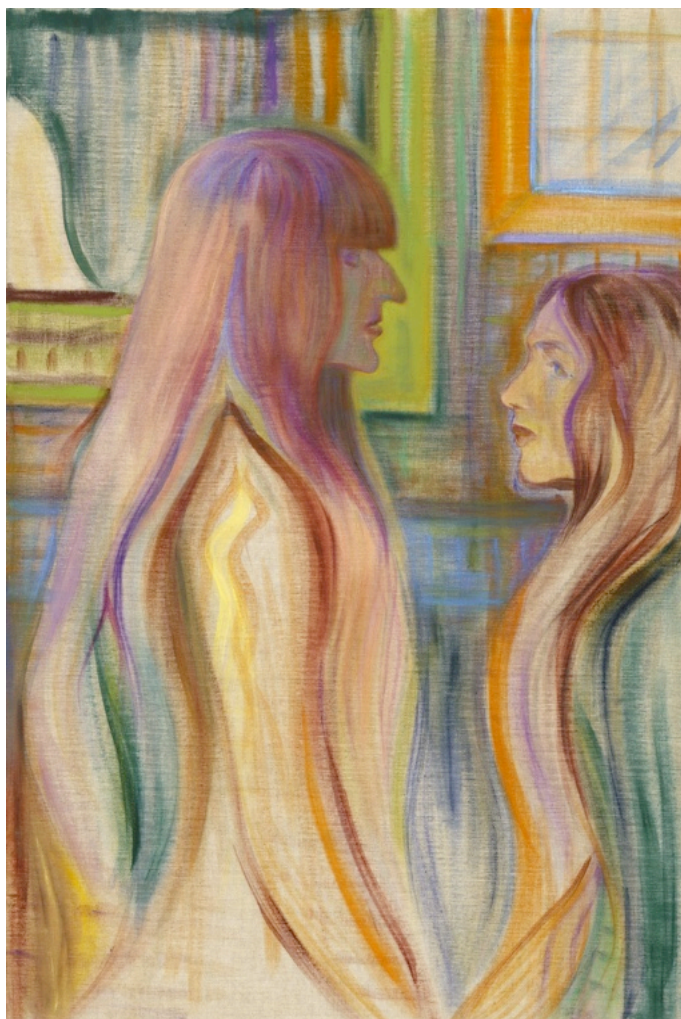
Acrylic ink on canvas

188 x 290,5 cm

Varied editions ½

© Steven Shearer

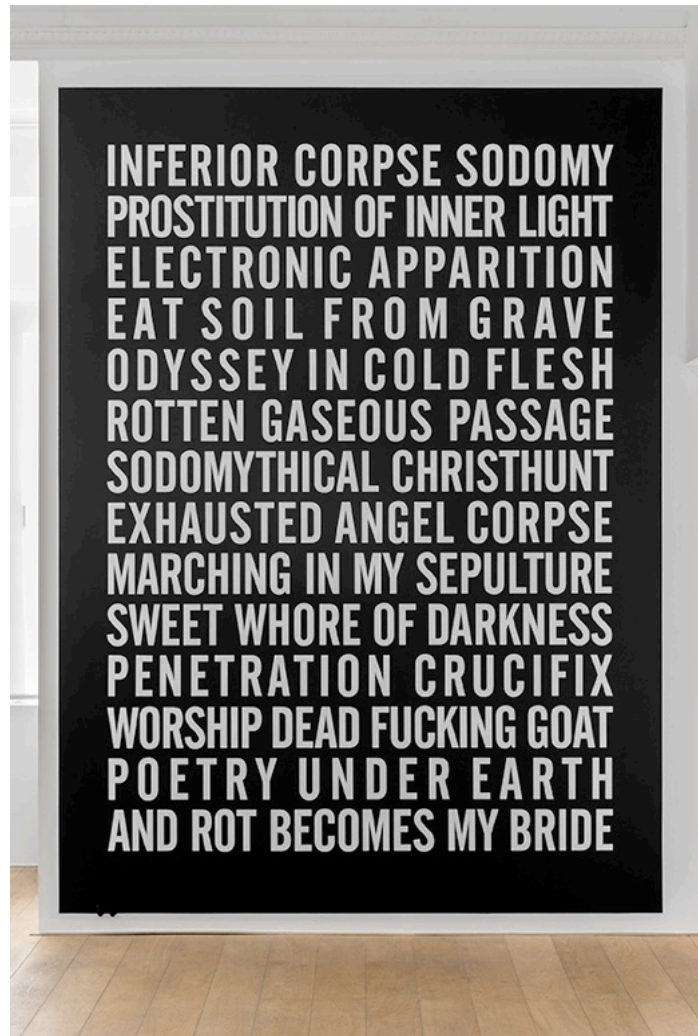
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Steven Shearer
Guys & Dolls, 2006
Oil on linen
101,6 x 71,1 cm

© Steven Shearer

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Steven Shearer
Poem VII, Vertical Mur, 2013
Acrylic on wall
Adaptable dimensions

© Steven Shearer

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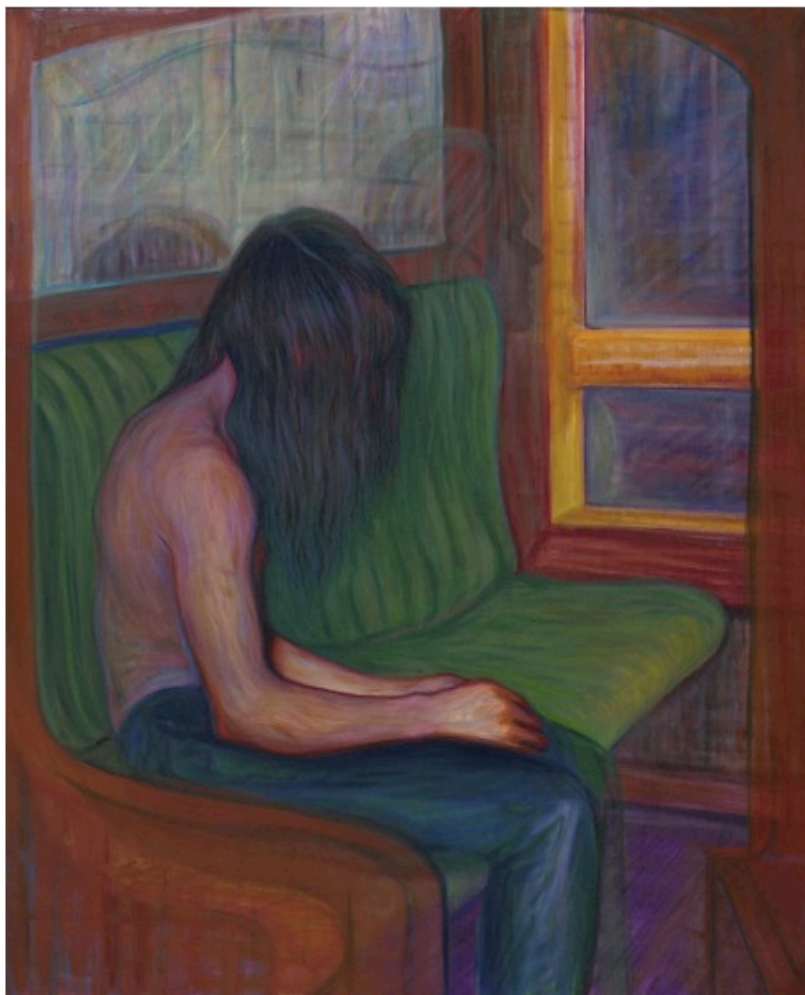
ROOM 2



Steven Shearer
Bunching & Shading, 2012
Inkjet print on aluminium
147 x 109 cm

© Steven Shearer

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Steven Shearer
Man Sitting, 2006
Oil on canvas
147,5 x 127 cm

© Steven Shearer

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Steven Shearer

Conduit Cell for the Elevation of Harmonic

Alignment & Geometric Healing Model I, 2013

Polished Copper

42,5 x 42,5 x 42,5 cm

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ROOM 3



Steven Shearer

Clownin', 2014

Ink, acrylic on rag paper mounted on aluminium

10 parts, framed

307,7 x 658,8 cm

© Steven Shearer

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Steven Shearer

Randy, 2007

Oil on japanese paper

32,7 x 27,9 cm

© Steven Shearer

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ROOM 4



Steven Shearer

Geometric Healing n°7, 2004

15 framed silkscreens on paper

256 x 451 cm

© Steven Shearer

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Steven Shearer

Scratchy Cheek (working title), 2015

Oil paint and oil pastel on jute

Artiste's frame

40,5 x 30,5 x 2 cm

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INSTALLATION VIEWS

Steven Shearer's installation views in order by rooms and from left to right.



Room 1, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition
Foreground, on the left : *Vertical mur* (2013)
Foreground, on the right : *Guys & Dolls* (2006)
Background, on the right : *Bunching & Shading* (2012)

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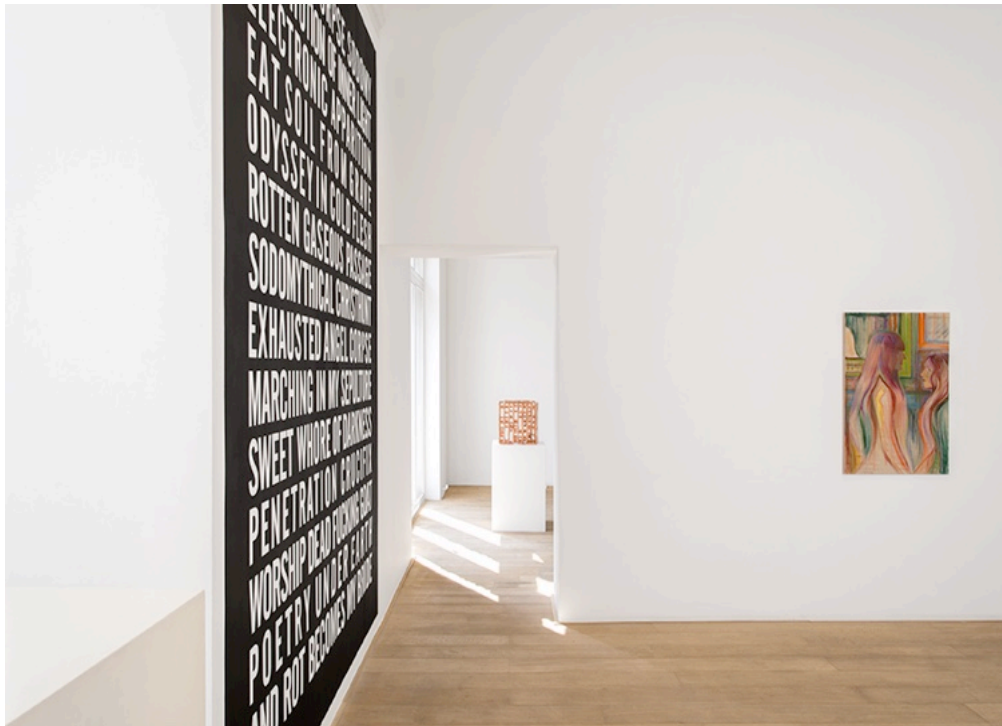
Room 1, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition

Au premier plan, à gauche : *Guys & Dolls* (2006)

Au second plan : *NRG*

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Room 1, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition

Foreground: *Vertical mur* (2013)

Middle ground, on the right : *Guys & Dolls* (2006)

Background : *Conduit Cell for the Elevation of Harmonic, Alignment & Geometric Healing Model I* (2013)

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Room 2, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition

Foreground, on the left : *Man Sitting* (2006)

Middle ground : *Conduit Cell for the Elevation of Harmonic, Alignment & Healing Model I* (2013)

Background, on the left : *Vertical mur* (2013)

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Room 2, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition
*Conduit Cell for the Elevation of Harmonic, Alignment & Geometric
Healing Model I* (2013)

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Room 2, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition
Foreground, on the left, : *Conduit Cell for the Elevation of Harmonic, Alignment & Geometric Healing Model I* (2013)
Background, on the right : *Bunching & Shading* (2012)

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Room 2, Room 3, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition
Foreground : *Bunching & Shading* (2012)
Middle ground : *Clownin'* (2014)

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Room 3, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition
Clownin' (2014)

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Room 3, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition
Randy (2007)

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Room 4, Charles Riva Collection, Steven Shearer's exhibition
Foreground : *Geometric Healing n°7* (2004)
Background, on the left : *Clownin'* (2014)

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