

One Year

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Late on the afternoon of December 6, 1989, Marc Lépine walked into an Engineering classroom at L'école Polytechnique of the Université de Montréal. Brandishing a firearm, he shouted "You're all a bunch of feminists!", and demanded that the male students and instructor leave the room. They did so. Lepine then began his massacre, killing fourteen women before taking his own life. His misogyny and his intent to kill as many women as possible were confirmed in a suicide note. He claimed "political reasons" for his actions.

On December 6, 1990, students, staff, faculty and alumni of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design remembered the deaths of these fourteen women. An exhibition entitled "One Year", featuring art work by over forty contributors, opened in the College's gallery.

The organizers of the "One Year" project had encouraged participants to reflect on the broader issues of inequality and violence against women in proposing works for the exhibition. A resource kit with a range of written materials was made available to those preparing submissions. A senior design class took on the design of a poster, which was used to raise funds for a women's shelter in Halifax. The connections between violence against women and the oppression of other groups were explored in a series of noon hour discussions. Although the "One Year" project resulted in a gallery exhibition, the ongoing pro-

cesses of information-sharing and discussion were the real objectives. The project allowed many women in the College community to speak about their own experiences of violence and fear in a warm and supportive atmosphere.

In initiating this project, the organizers were faced with questions about the appropriateness and effectiveness of such a response to the murders. For many, grief and rage have been given the form of silence. Recently, a women's art collective in Montreal published a statement explaining their decision not to comment publicly on what has become known as the "Montréal Massacre". They write: "we have often preferred silence to gestures made in vain. Silence as vigil." There is also the assertion that "silence is violence"; that silence which is imposed leaves one powerless. The "One Year" organizers felt that speaking, listening, reading and making were ways in which the educational institution could be reclaimed as a site for learning and growth.

Is it all in vain? In a single one-month period, eleven Quebec women were killed by former husbands or boyfriends. The statistics for violent crimes against women have increased across Canada over the past year. The federal government's new gun-control legislation has been watered-down after pro-gun lobbying. A recent federal government committee report on violence against women was not supported by its own author's party authors, who claimed that the title "The War Against Women" went too far. The President of the Université of Montréal has opposed the move to have December 6 declared a national Remembrance Day for women victims of violence, saying that "we need to forget".

Those who participated in the "One Year" project chose to remember, to express their feelings and thoughts in a shared and public space, and to link their words with actions, to change.

One Year

Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, December 6, 1990

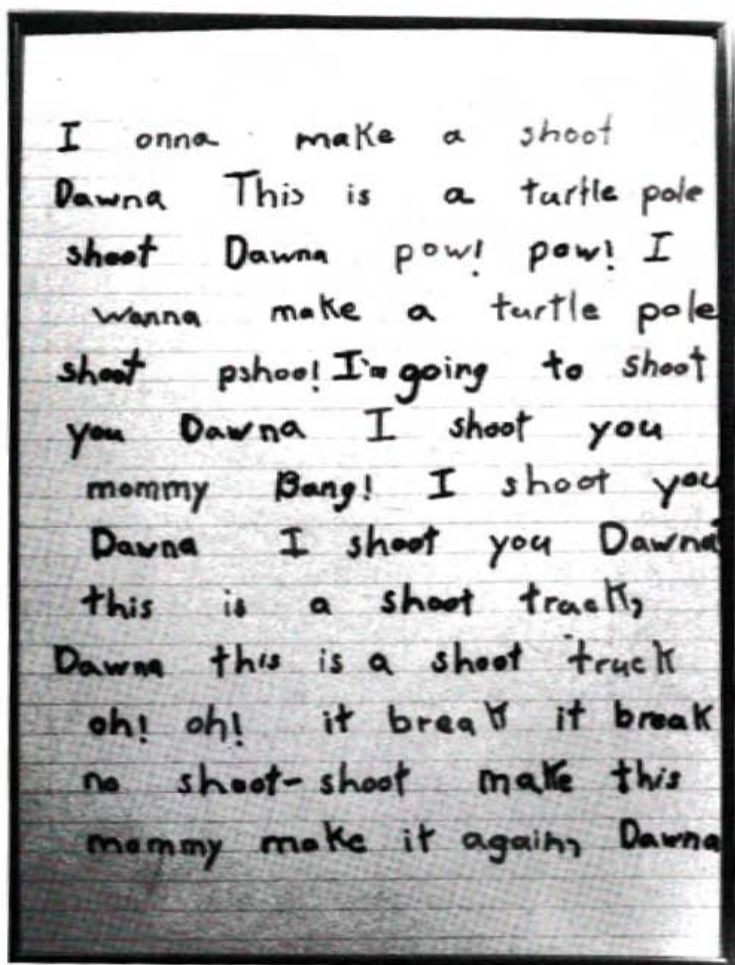


A year later, our grief and anger are still fresh. We mark not only the deaths of these fourteen women, but the pain and abuse sustained by too many of us. We gather together to reaffirm our commitment to a world of equality and dignity for all women.

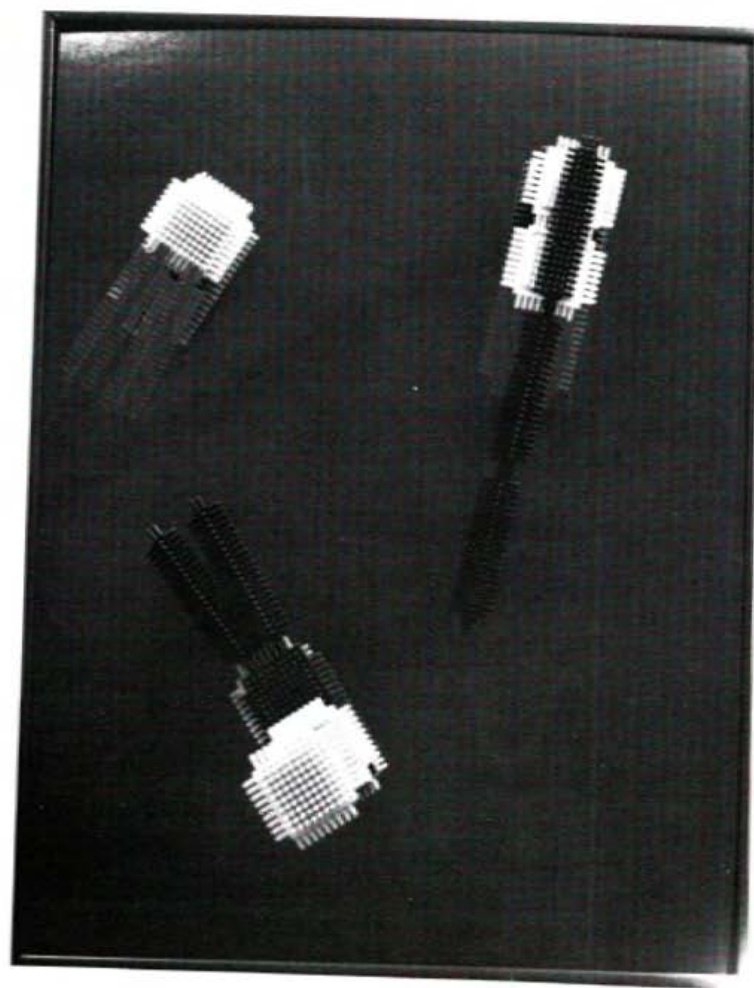
Un an plus tard, notre douleur et notre colère sont toujours bien présentes. Nous nous rappelons non seulement la mort de ces quatorze femmes, mais également la douleur et l'abus subis trop souvent par plusieurs d'entre nous. Nous nous rassemblons pour réaffirmer notre engagement envers un monde où l'égalité et la dignité de toutes les femmes sont respectées.



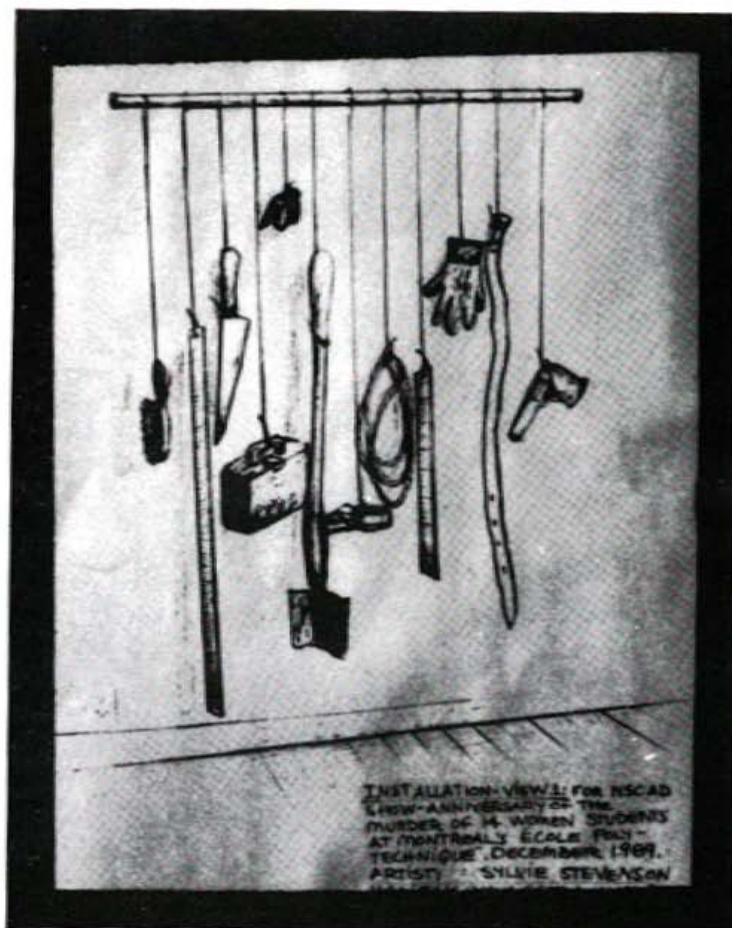
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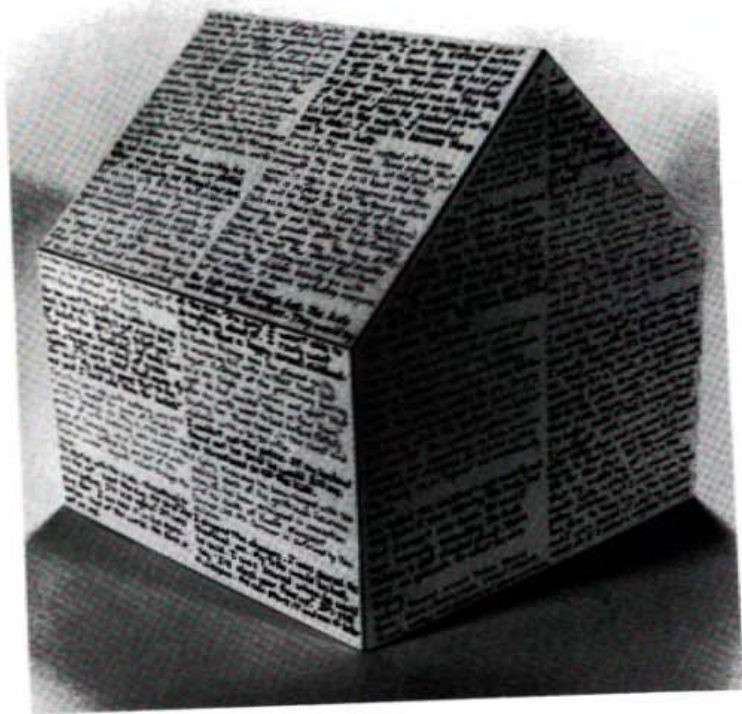
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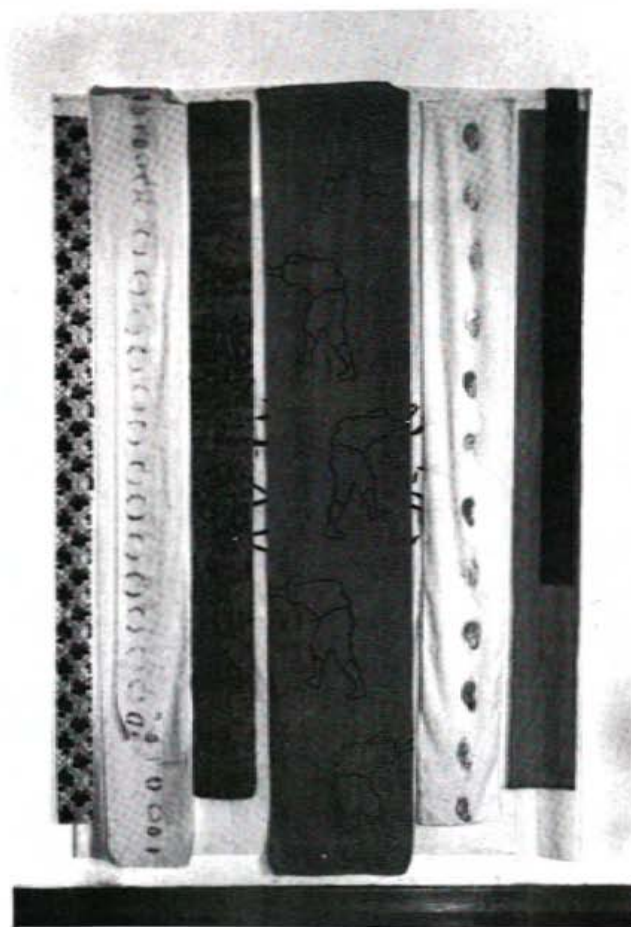
Do It My Way



You Should Be Able To Fix Things



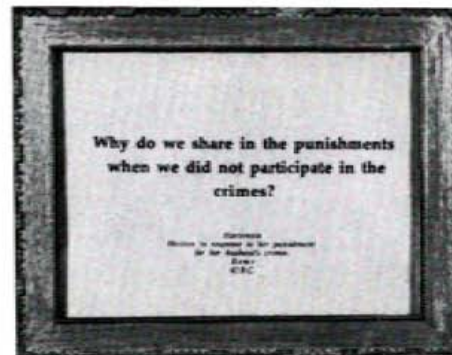
Shelter



Read My Lips



Résistance incessante



Résistance incessante

Selected Artists and their Works

From: *One Year*, An exhibition held during December 1990 in the Anna Leonowens Gallery at The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

- 38 Erik Norbraten – Detail of poster design for the exhibition.
- 39 Sara avMaat – *Untitled* – Detail of installation.
- 40-41 Dawna Gallagher – *Untitled* – Details of *typtych*.
- 42 Sylvie Stephensen – *Do It My Way* – proposal sketch.
- 43 David Wagner – *You Should Be Able to Fix Things* – detail.
- 44 Terry Vernon – *Refuge*.
- 45 Dagmar Dahle – *Read My Lips*.
- 46-7 Andrea Ward and Marilyn McKay – *Résistance incessante* – Details of installation.

