

# Seduce and repel

Art Gallery of Sudbury  
exhibits won't leave you cold

BY LARA BRADLEY  
The Sudbury Star

It would be hard to find more contrasting works.

On the main floor of the Art Gallery of Sudbury, Gary Blundell's *Patterns of the Crucible* explores Coniston's slag lakes and Creighton's roastbeds on slabs of router-scored wood in heavy oranges, reds and even turquoise.

It's a real landscape that feels unreal in the way it has been manipulated and marred by mining. Then take the stairs up to Gallery II and leave intense colour behind for some creepy, ethereal black-and-white photographs in Joan Kaufman's *Sure Sign*.

"Gary's really interested in texture and colour," said

director Celeste Scopeletes. "Joan's work is subdued and ethereal."

Each exhibit has a sense of tension. So viewing Blundell's exterior landscapes and Kaufman's interior landscapes together "creates this sense of foreboding," she said. Neat.

Wednesday found both artists helping with the installation, getting ready for today's opening reception at 7 p.m.

Blundell, now a Haliburton resident, has been coming to Sudbury since the 1960s. He's a trained geologist who has always been blown away by Sudbury's black rocks.

"Blown away in the sense of being really intrigued," he said.

Blundell's exhibit focuses on three aspects of the mine-altered landscape: the O'Don-

nel roastbeds (just past Creighton); the slag heaps in Coniston; and the impact of the acid air on the rest of Sudbury's pre-Cambrian outcrops.

After getting some directions from some former Creighton residents, Blundell hiked with Scopeletes to the old roastbeds last summer.

"It's bizarre when you're there because you know you're in the real world, but it feels artificial," he said.

Although ore has not been cooked there for 75 years, the landscape is still scarred. Blundell could taste sulphur coming off the rocks.

"It's as wide as a football field and several football fields long," he said.

The rocks in the roastbeds are red, cadmium, caramel

and even purple in places. While Blundell's large pieces are abstract interpretations of these landscapes, he has also included sketches of the ore beds and lakes bordering on the slag heaps. The colours

are unreal, but real.

"I can testify to that," said Scopeletes. "I was there."

Blundell, who has painted landscapes such as quarries in France, said that cooked rock had many of the same colours

as the volcanic landscapes of Iceland, which he has also painted. Interesting because Sudbury's rock is among the oldest on Earth, while Iceland's the newest.

See AGS / C2

## OPENS TODAY

**Gary Blundell: *Patterns of the Crucible* and**

**Joan Kaufman: *Sure Sign***

► **When:** Sept. 21-Nov. 19;

► **Where:** Galleries I and II, The Art Gallery of Sudbury, 251 John St.;

► **Opening reception:** Today from 7-9 p.m. Admission is free but donations welcome;

► **Coffee Talk with Gary Blundell:** Saturday, 10:30 a.m.-noon;

► **Gallery Hours:** Tuesday to Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday 12-5 p.m.;

► **Admission:** Adults \$5; students/seniors \$3; and kids under 12 free.

## AGS: 'I can't stop looking at them'

Continued from page C1

Viewing the old roastbeds, Blundell said he felt several conflicting emotions: horror at the environmental damage; amazement at its vastness; and fascinated by the human industry that went into its creation. Coniston's slag heaps also contained remarkable bursts of brilliant colours; orange and yellow reflecting off the lakes and blues coming off the slag pile.

In geology, you learn about "erosion and deposition," he said. It's similar to painting, Blundell said. In art school, you learn that it's about putting paint on the canvas and then pulling it off.

"It's the push and pull idea," Blundell said.

There's also a sense of push-pull in Kaufman's manipulated photos.

"They're somewhere between reality and unreality," she said.

"They seduce and repel," said

Scopeletes. "I can't stop looking at them."

The backdrop of the work is the Roman baths shot using infrared film. To these moody photos, Kaufman later added odd elements such as metal bed frames submerged in the water; a mattress absorbing a dark liquid; and ghostly images of people such as a girl wearing bath cap walking stilt like on crutches through the water.

She wanted to create a sense of tension. On one hand you have the baths, which are associated with healing and relaxing. On the other you have these threatening elements that point to sickness or death.

"Is this the aftermath or preparation for something?" said Kaufman.

She has also added beams of light to some of the pieces. The light represents the hope "maybe we can work this out," Kaufman said.