

## The Bus Show

### Transit workers know what they like

*Claire Kujundzic is a Vancouver artist. Her past work includes community and political posters, individual works of fine art, educational slide shows for unions which made use of her drawings and graphics. As well as participating in numerous one-woman and group shows, she has worked with Persimmon Blackbridge, a feminist sculptress. Together they organized a showing of political women artists' work and statements on their art and politics. Claire Kujundzic is currently a member of the East End Artists' Association, a support group for Vancouver women artists.*

**The Bus Show**, Claire's most recent work, was displayed in the bus drivers' cafeteria during safe driver award ceremonies. Her pieces explore and integrate the bus traveller's relationship to the outside world from three different perspectives: the interactions between bus travellers, the impact of the interior of the bus as an advertising space and the view of the outside world in transit. Within these themes her images describe the isolation of bus riders from one another and the sense of community amongst common groups of travellers, the absurdity of commercial messages played against the real concerns of mothers with children, workers, older people and tired shoppers, and the varieties in social and physical bus environments in working class and middle class communities.

Kujundzic used a range of art techniques to develop this sense of contrast and integration. In a linocut, a man reads a newspaper while a woman peers over his shoulder, a shift worker sleeps while children play. This print is alternatively collaged against a "walk for peace" demonstration, a pencil drawing of aimless unemployed men seeking work outside the Millionaire Club and simply foregrounded on newspaper. Motion and interaction on the buses is caught with line sketches, characters are explored with detailed pencil drawings or cartooned. Ads are superimposed into the pencil drawings.

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On the Bus — "Walk for Peace" (linocut) (1982)

In both the content and exhibition of **The Bus Show** Kujundzic aims at providing working class people with a reflection of themselves absent from dominant gallery art and mass media. By incorporating the **Buzzer** (B.C. Hydro's publicity hand-out), graffiti and local bus signs she creates easily identifiable images. The daily and often unconscious world of the bus traveller becomes complex and delightful.

Claire decided to show her work in the drivers' cafeteria after two bus drivers' viewed her pieces and encouraged her to make them accessible to other transit workers. She wanted to experiment with alternatives to traditional gallery space in the hope of communicating with her

chosen audience: riders and drivers. By fitting the exhibition into the awards ceremonies, Kujundzic hoped that drivers would feel more comfortable with an unfamiliar exposure to art.

They were responsive to the show but not drawn by the same issues as commuters (graffiti, crowded conditions, the Buzzer). The transit workers wanted to see themselves at work, not only their working environment. Claire plans to continue this series, depicting the drivers. The combined pieces would examine both aspects of a public service: the pressures and strengths of working with that "public", especially in a time of cutbacks and the experience of the consumers. ●