

# ARTS ENTERTAINMENT

## Artist scores big with hockey art

Rideau Canal and SAW Gallery host 'Winter Life' exhibit

By Lauren Krugel

In a winter bereft of NHL hockey, the SAW Gallery's latest exhibit will redefine how we experience the iconic Canadian sport.

The "Winter Life" exhibit started Feb. 3 and runs until mid-March, and will take place both at the gallery itself and at various points along the Rideau Canal.

"We really wanted to have a more poignant exhibit for Ottawa," says Stefan St-Laurent, co-curator of the exhibit.

He adds that the installations won't include the usual Group-of-Sevensesque snowy landscapes.

Take for instance Hamilton performance artist Liss Platt's "puck paintings."

To create the paintings, Platt shoots hockey pucks at a goal-

sized piece of white plywood.

Platt says the rubber scuff-marks left from the pucks' impact look like "fluttering leaves or feathers."

The idea for her puck paintings was literally a result of a blow to the head.

A few years ago, Platt got a concussion while playing hockey.

She says her colleagues at McMaster University, where she teaches multimedia, worried that a sports injury would compromise her work as an academic and artist.

"I'm trying to combine these two things that are important to me and people are saying that the hockey part shouldn't be important, that it's risking the other parts of my life. So I really came up with this idea as a way to assert that being an artist and being an athlete are part of the same identity."

Platt has always considered herself a "jock." She has dab-

bled in many sports, but experienced a "sports renaissance" when she took up hockey a decade ago.

Now she plays for two teams, five times a week.

An American ex-patriot, Platt was thrilled to see how passionate Canadians are about hockey when she moved to Hamilton in 2002.

"One of the things I like about hockey is it's folded into the fabric of every day life. You see kids out on the street playing hockey. It's part of the culture.

It's part of winter."

In her puck art, Platt says she also plays with the idea of meshing "low" and "high" culture.

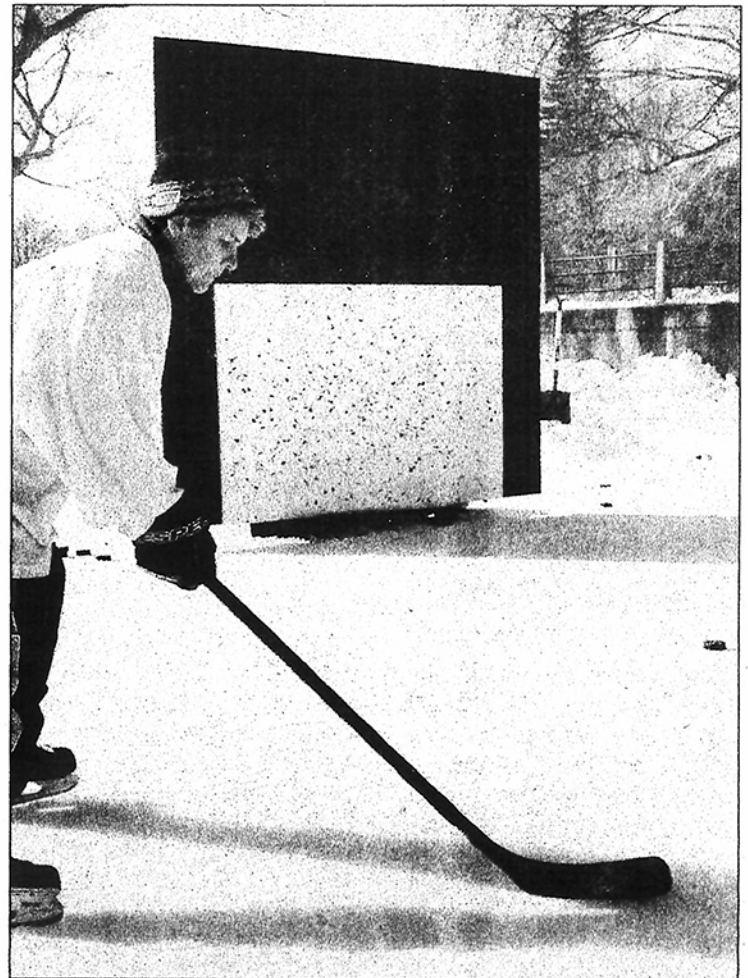
"It's really a way to marry sport culture and

art culture," she says.

"I'm bringing something that's part of the culture to art, but not in a representational way. I'm actually trying to transform the activity into an artwork, kind of capture a gesture

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Liss Platt, performance artist



T.J. Goertz, Centretown News

Liss Platt prepares to shoot a puck to create her "puck paintings" at the Glebe's Patterson Creek, off the Rideau Canal.

or an essence."

Aside from using her art to express identity and Canadian culture, Platt says it's also important to involve as many people as possible in the process.

Frequently she'll invite passersby to pick up a stick and take some shots for themselves.

"Art can be complex and important," she says. "But it can also be fun."

Centretown video artist Ryan Stec is also playing around with the way we see hockey as a cultural icon.

For the launch of the "Winter Life" exhibit Feb. 3, he gathered a group of 10 video artists and asked them to remix video footage from the last period of

game seven of last year's Stanley Cup playoffs between the Tampa Bay Lightning and the Calgary Flames.

"It's significant and poetic what happened last year," he says.

"The idea is to encourage the artists to reflect on Canadian cultural icons and show the plurality of how people experience a certain event."

For instance, one artist from northeastern Ontario recreated what it was like watching hockey games with such poor television reception that the puck is barely visible.

"It's sort of like listening to a remix album where you hear the same thing all at once, but with a different take," says Stec.