

# Eric Cameron Record of Work

May 20 - September 11, 2009

Opening: May 19 at 6 pm

(access until 8:30 pm)

Originally from England and currently living in Canada, where he has spent the greater part of his life, Eric Cameron is a major figure in Canadian art and a meticulous analyst of his own artistic practice. A multidisciplinary artist, critic and professor, he is the author of a series of masterful works as well as numerous essays about his own work and that of other artists.

Among his creations, Eric Cameron is best known for his famous *Thick Paintings*, a series of conceptual sculptures composed of a significant object having belonged to someone close to the artist and progressively covered with countless layers of gesso, which little by little, modify the object's initial shape. White and matte, compact and often strange in appearance, this unusual corpus of works contains something quite significant: the memory of all of the gestures that have been laid upon them. *Lettuce, Exposed/Concealed: Laura Baird VIII, Alice's Yellow Rose*, etc, share the artist's quotidian life within varying lengths of time, and each work is continuously transformed until acquired by a buyer. The philosophical as well as aesthetic importance of Cameron's work is brilliantly and tenaciously in line with the greater practice of sculpture and actively participates in the renewal of issues surrounding contemporary sculpture.

*Record of Work* exposes artistic creation but also the notion of work. The exhibition presents a group of sculptures from the series "in progress" entitled *Thick Paintings (to be continued)*, as well as a selection of "Sheets of check marks" which have considerable documentary importance in so much as they attest to Eric Cameron's work programme over the last thirty years. In an exhaustive manner, Eric Cameron has been tirelessly making notes to remind himself of what – that is to say, what material and what number of operations – has gone into each object he has created; and, in passing, of what has gone into his own life, in so far as it has been largely devoted to the creation of these objects. Grouped together in a *Ledger*, the "Sheets of check marks" are in some way the mathematical portrait of the artist in the continuity and discontinuity of his cumulated gestures. The exhibition *Record of Work* aims to reveal the nature of this unusual relationship to a work of art and to a document.

A new version of this exhibition, produced in collaboration with Maurice Fréchuret, will be presented at the Musée Chagall in Nice (France) in the spring of 2010.



*English Roots: Paintings (1332)*, 1998 – 2007, Jonathan and Paula Lexier Collection.  
Acrylic gesso and acrylic on canister of undeveloped film, 16,5 x 26,5 x 10 cm (61/2" x 101/2" x 4") - Photo: Dave Brown, Courtesy TrépanierBaer Gallery, Calgary

*"Eric Cameron's Thick Paintings are, all in their common symbolism and each in its untreatable individuality, in its elegance, its singular form and rhythm, in the mood by which it is inhabited, the secret that it contains and the surprises that it holds, objects of an unbelievable and poignant beauty [as well as] an endless source of meditation."*

Thierry de Duve

"Deux ou trois choses que je crois comprendre du "programme" d'Eric Cameron", exhibition catalogue from *L'œuvre en programme*, capcMusée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux & Fage éditions, 2005, p. 16.

*"A sculpture by Eric Cameron embodies an application of layers and the non-application of desired layers. It embodies a lapse, a lack, along with the emotion triggered by such lapses. This information is implicitly present in the ledger in the form of blank spaces, empty columns, and rows of marks or symbols less complete than others. Eric Cameron has occasionally revised his method of notation, without ever challenging the underlying principle, namely keeping a record of every half-coat applied to the surface of a work, as well as making, at regular intervals, a cumulative count of the number of half-coats per work, broken down into completed works and works-in-progress, plus the total number of half-coats applied to all works collectively."*

Catherine Bédard, *Record of Work*.

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**NOW AVAILABLE: the exhibition catalogue**  
**Eric Cameron: Record of Work,**  
**published by the Canadian Cultural Centre.**

With a preface by Louise Blais and essays by the artist and the curator: Eric Cameron, "Record of Work"; Catherine Bédard, "Eric Cameron: on the extreme effect of half measures".

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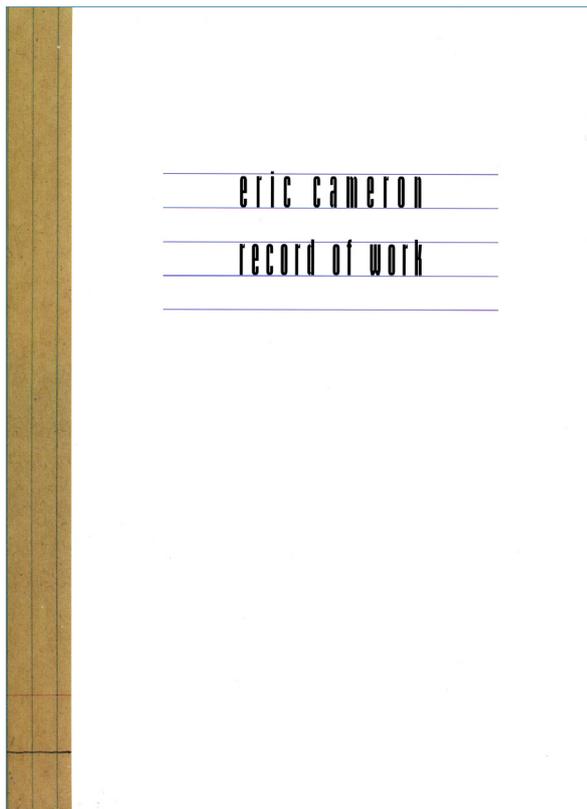
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## Biography

Born in Leicester, England, in 1935, Eric Cameron studied art at Durham University in the 1950s under leading English artists Lawrence Gowing, Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton. He went on to receive a diploma in art history from the University of London's Courtauld Institute. From 1959 to 1969 he taught in the Department of Fine Art at Leeds University, at which point he emigrated to Guelph, Ontario, where he taught for several years before being named Professor at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Cameron currently lives in the province of Alberta where he holds the rank of University Professor and Professor of Art at the University of Calgary.

Cameron is not only a multifaceted artist but also the author of an impressive list of publications. He has written major essays on his own work, notably in the catalogues *Bent Axis Approach* (Calgary, Nickle Arts Museum, 1984), *Divine Comedy* (Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, 1990) and *English Roots* (Lethbridge, The University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, 2001). He has also written on the work of other artists, including Dan Graham ("Dan Graham: Appearing in Public", *Artforum*, November 1976), Ian Wallace ("Semiology, Sensuousness and Ian Wallace", *Artforum*, February 1979), Jeffrey Spalding ("Miscellaneous Notes in Relation to Jeffrey Spalding's Recent Paintings", Saskatoon, Mendel Art Gallery, 1982), Cliff Eycland ("System and Sensibility", Winnipeg, Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1998). Furthermore, he has authored theoretical texts on issues directly linked to his art, notably "Given" in *The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp* edited by Thierry de Duve (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1991) and, more recently, "De l'altérité dans la similitude" in *Lectures obliques* edited by Louise Déry (Hérouville Saint-Clair, Centre d'art contemporain de Basse-Normandie, 1990).

Since the early 1970s Cameron has participated in numerous national and international group shows. The most recent notable exhibitions include: *Voici*, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, 2002; *L'œuvre en programme, capc/ Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux*, 2005; *Documents: A Survey of Conceptual Art*, Triangle Gallery, Calgary, 2004; *The Sixties in Canada*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 2005; *Analogue 1968 – 1988*, Tate Britain, London, 2006. His first solo show in France was hosted by the Canadian Cultural Centre in 1980 (*In the Picture – and Lawn*) while the second, *Exposer/ Cacher*, was held at the Galerie Arena in Arles in 1993. In Canada, *Divine Comedy* toured the country in 1990-1991 (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Winnipeg Art Gallery; Glenbow Museum, Calgary; Vancouver Art Gallery; Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina; Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax). The Art Gallery of Ontario also hosted a solo show of his work in 1998 (*Exposed/ Concealed*). That same year, *English Roots* was presented in England in two different versions, one at the Leeds City Art Gallery and the other at the Tate Gallery St. Ives, followed by another presentation at the Hatton Gallery in Newcastle in 1999.

A member of the Royal Academy of Arts (Canada), Cameron has received many awards and honours, notably the Gershon Iskowitz Prize in 1994 and the prestigious Governor General's Award in 2004.

Eric Cameron is represented by TrépanierBaer Gallery in Calgary : [www.trepanierbaer.com](http://www.trepanierbaer.com)