

Julie Oakes

Human Sacrifice

Three Exhibitions/Three Novellas
Quercia Stories
The Revolving Door
Conscientious Perversity



Death of Harmonia, Oil on Canvas, 66" x 56"

March 3 - March 27, 2005

The Rivington Gallery

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Human Sacrifice

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Cover, *Death of Harmonious*, Julie Oakes, 2002, oil on canvas, 66x56 inches

Photographs of drawings and paintings by Richard Fogarty

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HUMAN SACRIFICE

The first London exhibition of work by JULIE OAKES

3rd - 27th March 2005

Reception 6 - 9pm Thursday March 3rd

Gallery Hours - Noon to Five Wednesdays - Sundays

JULIE OAKES is a sensual woman who has created an erotic book, "Quercia Stories". The book itself (a limited edition of 65) with the accompanying drawings plus 3 paintings will make up the showing. Each sold drawing will include a copy of her book.

Art feeds on its makers' life. It reflects and makes use of the "plagiarism" of the artists' powers of observation and it includes their own experience and interests. A sensual person and a highly sexed one will demonstrate these vital parts of their persona in the art they make.

JULIE OAKES lives and works in New York City and Vernon, B. C. Canada. She has adjusted her life to urban and country environments as well as changing it with the seasons of the year. She is a traveller who "lives" where she arrives.

The drawings exhibited are layered. They start as drawings from the antique, often at the Metropolitan Museum. They are then overlaid with quotes from her texts, plus drawings of the subjects of these texts. These may be lingerie, shoes, reptiles and historical motifs. Read the stories in her books and study the drawings. Then interpret for yourself the eroticism they reflect.

JULIE OAKES is a petite, feminine person whose facade masks a powerful artist and a strong personality.

Harold Werner Rubin

Julie Oakes
Human Sacrifice - Quercia Stories

This booklet describes the first of three exhibitions and the first of three autobiographical novellas recently written by Julie Oakes. Her first book is titled, *Quercia Stories*.

Human Sacrifice - Quercia Stories, the exhibition, opens at The Rivington Gallery, London, England on Thursday, March 3 and runs until March 27. The opening reception is Thursday, March 3rd from 6 - 9 PM.

Oakes will present over fifty drawings and three paintings and each work will be accompanied by a limited edition, signed, hard cover book of *Quercia Stories*.

The second exhibition and novella, *The Revolving Door*, is scheduled to show in Canada. The third venue for the exhibition and novella, *Conscientious Perversity*, will be in New York City.

This is Oakes' major opus.

“Every Sunday, I walked 160 blocks round trip, to the Metropolitan Museum and back. At the Met, I stood to draw, rotating my oversized paper on a hard surface that is only 8in x 11in. I drew from most of the animals in the various collections. I also drew from the heads of the Greek, Roman and French busts. These, I call “the lovers.” This regime was a stoic discipline that I continue to practice.

I have also written a series of over 150 anecdotes during this time, based on ethnographic research into the sex clubs in New York, cultural musings and my personal understanding of life.

On top of the Metropolitan drawings, I sometimes placed a quote from the texts or I drew from the subject of the text - lingerie, shoes, lizards, snakes, and motifs from art historical sources.

This discipline resulted in the three exhibitions that will include the writings, drawings and overall motif, the twisted lizards. The twisted lizards signify sexual entanglement.

The philosophy that backs up this body of work vacillates between a high and a low aesthetic. My paintings are large, consciously gorgeous renderings of animals, often juxtaposed with an historical art reference. My personal presentation adheres to rigid habits of exercise, stoicism, and an ongoing study of philosophy, literature and high art. But I also explore the seedy side of life with a similar dedication and thoroughness. Sex has been an ongoing theme in my work and this present body of work - risky ethnography, metaphorical innuendos and shades of pornography - furthers the expression of my knowledge.”

Julie Oakes

Quercia Stories

Renaissance, Sensuality and Feminism

Beauty, obsession, passion. All these describe the work of artist Julie Oakes.

Quercia Stories intentionally references the techniques and concerns of Renaissance art. Over the past three years Oakes has drawn from the Metropolitan Museum collection in New York City as a ground for her writing. She derives from the collection, yet moves away from mimicking a style, and brings the works into a contemporary framework. The materials used are the traditional media of past generations. Specific references are made to techniques of the Renaissance period: parchment paper with sepia, indigo or black pencil, canvasses prepared with rabbit-skin glue, Bologna gesso, and natural pigments. In the paintings, meticulous renderings from Renaissance works are overlaid with strange and romantic imagery, at once obfuscating and revealing. In the drawings, excerpts from Quercia Stories, appear lightly on the page. They are difficult to read and follow. The writing is overlaid on the Met drawings with yet another layer of drawings obscuring the cursive writing. Within the universal symbols of love and eroticism the artist develops a personal, visual vocabulary.

The bed is an image clearly charged with sexual, political and sociological symbolism. Quercia Stories are tales of beddings. On first reading, the overall images are layered, yet they are also often broken down into fragments, reconstituted, and scaled toward the intimate. Erotic references from historical works, Victorian illustration, East Indian Tantric paintings, or Japanese erotica offer titillation, with contemporary images such as the provocative stiletto, lacy underwear, lipstick or the feathery fronds of an artist's brush balancing the collection with a less specific representation of sensuality. The freedom of literary expression, the strong, graphic presentation and the artist's confidence in handling her materials works well with the duplicity of the imagery: romance and threat, life and death, love and its absence.

At once feminine and masculine, hard-edged and soft, Quercia Stories, as a whole, text and visuals, captures the enigma that is the often tenuous and volatile relationship between human beings.

Condensed forward written by Susan Brandoli
Former Director/Curator, Vernon Public Art Gallery



Coons, Oil on Canvas, 54" x 48"

A Story, Paintings and Works on Paper

Drawing from the structure of Dante's *Inferno*, *Quercia Stories* is made up of sixty-one cantos in three books. As in Dante's *Inferno* - the first sin addressed is incontinence (lack of control over our passions and desires). In *Quercia Stories*, Justine is in absolute control as she researches the limits of love and knowledge.

The second major literary influence in *Quercia Stories* are the two books *Justine* and *Juliette* by the Marquis de Sade. Oakes retains the libertine lifestyle in her character, Justine, but brings her adventures into a more reasonable context. Justine is given a role similar to that of a bachelor - a role that society deems acceptable for men but is still dubious for women.

Paraphrasing the introduction to Dante's *Inferno*, there is not just a single sense in this work, *Quercia Stories*: it might rather be called polysemous.

There are six subjects that should be asked about any serious work. What is its subject, its form, its agent, its end, the title of the book and the branch of philosophy?

The subject, the whole work then is sex. The form is a story and works on paper.

Allegorically the subject is a woman exercising her free will, and in doing so, she is earning or becoming liable to the rewards or punishments of justice.

Quercia Stories is about a Canadian by birth but not in character. The character is Italian. Oakes is the author. In the whole and in the part - it is her sister, Justine, and she is clearly so without.

This branch of philosophy is eclectic.



Editing Evil, Oil on Canvas 36"x 18"

Consuming Moths Justine Tells Juliette All

I am obsessively drawn to the potent seduction of sexuality. Sexual encounters consume my interest, time and energy. My research drives my desire to know more, to tell more, and to critically theorize.

I emerged from the cocoon of a twenty-year marriage with sufficient physical beauty to still attract lovers. I love having sex. I mistrust “being in love” or any attachment based on habit, duty or a domesticated sexuality. I am able to use my body with a degree of objectivity to increase a seduction. I tilt my hip for effect, arch my back to showcase my ass and reveal the length of my leg in a black stocking with a lacey edge. I flirt. I am not, however, a coquette. I am a mature, hot-blooded woman, flaming and flaring, giving heat and consuming moths.

Excerpt from introduction of *Quercia Stories*, Julie Oakes

Human Sacrifice

This devotional documentation requires a human sacrifice. Just as God called Abraham twice, “Abraham, Abraham,” and demanded from him the life of his only son - and just as Abraham, never questioned his worthiness for the sacrifice would prove his devotion to God - so my research continues.

The human sacrifice is obvious. I am granting to this quest the gift of my experience. I, Justine Quercia, am sacrificing my life, my time.

I am featuring and sharing my blood. The careful journal entries, the immersion in sexual permissiveness and risk-taking, the willingness to perhaps become a loathed being, an unwomanly, immodest woman; has a grand and arrogant precept.

I am presuming that I am the one called upon to offer a sacrifice. I have shaped my circumstance and physicality to this end. I have been granted the opportunities to pursue my path of knowledge. I am operating with blind faith that it is I who will perform, that the casting director has chosen me from those who had auditioned. Now I am writing the script as I speak the lines.

The narrative is an epic. This is an important piece of literature. It deals with the beautiful and the sublime and it is within the nature of the sublime to be beyond comprehension.

My choices are able to be more extreme as I am offered a wider range of possibilities to further my research into the limits of love and knowledge.

Justine Quercia

An Interlude of Conscience, Morals and Ethics

A work of art organizes and articulates understanding of experience. Do “ethics” attach themselves to the work of art or to the experience from which the articulation comes?

If sex with another is used as the research for art in order to illuminate the questions of life, where does morality belong - to the sexual experience or the artwork?

The writer or artist who feeds “life experience” into the creation of the artwork uses this experience as a “standing reserve.” When the standing reserve consists of the intimate conjoining of the artist with a sexual partner, then moral and ethical questions arise.

When the tents of the day have been folded and I am stealing away home, ordering creeps in. The events of the day are placed in my hands to be turned, as the divine creator whose position I assume, into “art.” My raw material is my engagement in society and, being engaged, I am a part of the raw material. Just as my ordering of this standing reserve is destined by me, I, as a part of it, am destined and thus lost to it. From the freedom of non-existence, as I bring the work of art into existence, it enters the realm where it is now free for the taking - a 'free for all.' I can be judged through this work of art.

My calling is to create art. I live to experience, with this end in mind. I anticipate the experience I am living as part of the standing reserve and am myself a part of that future picture. The creation of the work also becomes part of a standing reserve for the next wave in the future. Where is the ethical responsibility in this cycle?

The art object, in this instance, is this book, which is also placed in a visual context as cursive writing on drawings. The truth of the artwork could justify the sacrifice of the intimacy, of the other, of me and of my reputation. At this point the public looks at the work and reads it. It can be digested and contribute to their standing reserve.

Does this reveal anything or just add to confusion?

Sex and morality can also be submitted to this ordering. The development of a moral code is founded on precedents. Sexual intimacy, when totally private and enacted with no record taken, doesn't enter the standing reserve. Sexual intimacy used as a resource for knowledge, as it is ordered, documented and processed - destines. To communicate outwards, to make public the two way communication of sex, changes the status of the sex act from object to standing reserve.

Conversely, to remain moral to the act itself within our present guidelines, our destiny is to remain silent, private, and intimate.

Excerpts from Chapter Eleven, Quercia Stories

Human Sacrifice - Book / Exhibition

Fifty-five pencil on parchment drawings 18"x 22"

Six pencil on parchment drawings 22"x 34"

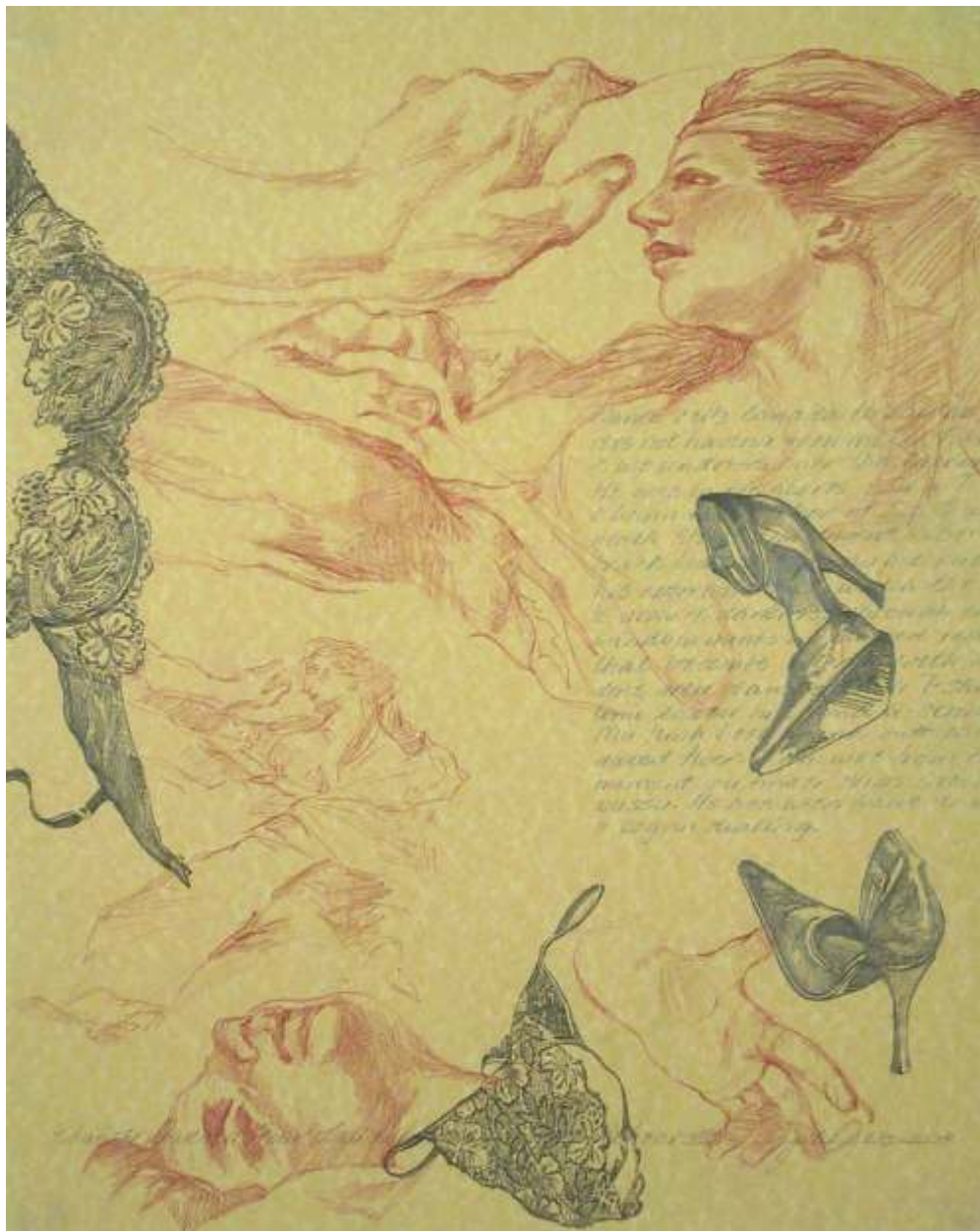
Three paintings

Editing Evil, Oil on Canvas 36"x 18"

Coons, Oil on Canvas, 54" x 48"

Death of Harmonia, Oil on Canvas, 66"x 56"

Hardcover limited edition book, *Quercia Stories*



One of fifty-five pencil on parchment drawings 18"x 22"

















Human Sacrifice - Quercia Stories

Installation photos

Premier exhibition

Art Ark Gallery, Canada, 2004



Julie Oakes

Born 1948 in Canada, Julie Cowan

Married Sir Christopher Oakes

Resides in New York and Vernon, BC.

Education

- 2004 Completed a second Masters Degree in Cultural Theory, New School University, New York
- 1998 Masters Degree, Art and Art Professions, New York University, NY.
- 1994 Computer Graphic Design, Extension Dept. Okanagan University College, Vernon, BC.
- 1998 Canadian Securities Commission Certificate, CSC, Toronto, Ont.
- 1975 Professional Teaching Certificate, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.
- 1974 Intensive Chinese Language, Tibetan History, New School for Social Research, New York, NY.
- 1971-1973 Thangka painting under the master Lhasa court Thangka painter, Sherab Palden Berut, Samye Ling Tibetan Center, Eskdalemuir, Scotland.
- 1970 Emma Lake Workshop, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask.
- 1969 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Gold Medal, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Man.
- 1966 Painting 101, Emma Lake Summer School, University of Saskatchewan, Regina, Sask.
- 1965 Summer Painting School, Banff Centre of Fine Arts, with Charles Stegeman and Francoise Andre

Solo Exhibitions

- 2004 *Human Sacrifice*, The Art Ark, Kelowna, B.C.
- 2004 *Poppies and the Sublime*, The Fugitive Gallery Featured Artist, Vernon, B.C.
- 2004 *Forbidden Fruit*, The Destination Gallery, Parrsboro, NS
- 2001 *Gentle Bondage*, Vernon Public Gallery, Vernon, BC.
- Private Parade*, Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
- 2000 *Reptiles and Roses*, Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
- 1999 *Venezia*, Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC.
- Complimenti*, Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
- 1999 *Rising Above*, Bau-Xi Gallery, Toronto, Ont.
- Feathers Flying*, Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
- 1997 *The Venice Series*, Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC.
- The Venice Series*, The Grunt Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
- Home Offerings*, Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
- 1996 *Herstory*, The Alternator Gallery, Kelowna, BC.
- 1995 *Cunte Perfume Launching*, Artimisia Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
- Upright Man, Upright Woman*, Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC.
- Born to Shock*, Gallery 56, Vancouver, BC.

- 1993 B.P.A. RCA Visuals, Public Art Gallery, St. Johns, Nfld.
 1992 *Born to Shock*, Alternator Gallery, Kelowna, BC.
 1987 *I am a Woman with a Past*, Vernon Public Gallery, BC.
 1985 *Gardens and Clothes Lines*, Assiniboia Gallery, BC.
 1983 *Lady Oakes*, Temple Gallery, Nassau, Bahamas
 1973 Chandoo Gallery, Toronto, Ontario, Zangmo

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2003 *SCOPE International*, Curcio Projects, Miami, Florida
 2002 *Meledandri, Fred Mitchell and Julie Oakes* Sugarhill Art Center, NY
SCOPE International, Gershwin Hotel, New York, NY
 2001 *Having Returned*, Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC.
 2000 *Master Program Exhibition*, New York University, New York, NY.
 2000 *Gallery Artists*, Totem Gallery, Venice, Italy.
Clara e gli Americani, Brescia Gallery, Brescia, Italy. Catalogue
Masters Program Exhibition, Venice, Italy. Catalogue
 1998 *Venice*, Casa Italiana, New York, NY.
 1998 *New York University Masters Program Exhibition*, Venice, Italy. Catalogue
 1996 *Jury Show*, Vernon Public Art Gallery, Vernon, BC.
Gallery Artists, Alternator Gallery, Kelowna, BC.
 1996 *Gallery Artists*, Grunt Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
 1994-1999 *Group Exhibitions*, Headbones Gallery, Vernon, BC.
 1994 *Emerging Artists*, Museum of Modern Art, Miami, Fla.
Art of the Motorcycle, Redding Art Gallery, Redding, Ca.
 1993 *Images and Objects XI*, Assembly of BC Arts Councils, Trail, BC. Catalogue
 1992 *Juried Show*, Daniel Cameron, Pleiades Gallery, New York, NY.
In the Biblical Sense, Smash Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
B.C. Festival of the Arts, Vernon, B.C.
 1991-1992 *Earthlines, Deadlines, Lifelines* is a group show of seven artists curated by John Taylor. The exhibition included seven large paintings by Oakes including the triptych "*Behind Those Hills, There are No Trees*" which aroused controversy and extensive media attention. When the BC Forestry industry took exception to the works.
 01/14-02/13 The Kelowna Public Art Gallery/Museum, Kelowna, B.C.
 03/30-04/29 The Vernon Public Art Gallery/Museum, Vernon, B.C.
 05/29-07/05 The Redding Public Art Gallery/Museum, Redding, CA
 08/01-08/31 The Hama Sushi Gallery, Venice Beach, CA
 12/01-12/31 Neutral Ground, Regina, Saskatchewan
 09/06-10/20 The Art Gallery of the South Okanagan, Penticton, B.C.
 Canadian Museum and Curators Conference held here in September.
 11/22-01/05 The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Victoria, B.C.

- 1991 Helio Gallery, New York, NY Group Show
 1990 OAL Gallery, Kelowna, B.C. Condominium Show
 1989 Dome Gallery, New York, N.Y
 1989 Vernon Public Art Gallery, Okanagan Artists
 1989 Loch Mayberry Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba
 1988 Okanagan Jury Show, Penticton, Kelowna, Vernon, Kamloops, B.C.
 1988 B.C. Festival of the Arts, Victoria, B.C.
 1988 Gallery Gagnon, Vernon, B.C.
 1986 Assiniboia Art Gallery, Regina, Sask. Two Woman Show
 1986 Bessborough Gallery, Saskatoon, Sask.
 1985 Rosemont Gallery, Regina, Sask. Two Women Show
 1985 Penticton Art Gallery, Art Attack four artists
 1983 PIAFA Art Auction, Penticton, B.C.
 1982 Okanagan Jury Show, Penticton, B.C.
 1982 Kamloops Public Gallery, A bed of Ones Own, eight women
 1978-1980 Grainary Gallery, Fintry, B.C. Owned and operated and exhibited solo and group shows
 1977 Kelowna Public Gallery B.C. Two person show
 1976 Brackendale Gallery, Brackendale, B.C.
 1976 BauXi Gallery, Vancouver, B.C.
 1976 Galerie Royale, Vancouver, B.C.
 1969 Winnipeg Public Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Visual Performances

- 1994 *Cunte Perfume Launching*, Artimisia Gallery, Vancouver, BC
 1993 *A Bevy of Beauties*, Alternator Gallery, Kelowna, BC
Breasts Protest Fashion Extravaganza, RCA Visuals, St. Johns, Nfld
 1992 *Breast Protest Anonymous*, Vernon, BC
 1989 *SWAT*, OAA Gallery, Kelowna, BC
 1986 *I am a Woman with a Past*, Vernon Public Gallery, Vernon, BC
 1969 *Purse Snatching, General Idea* in conjunction with Felix Partz.

Videos

- 1996 *Women who Wax and Pluck*, (5 minutes) produced and acted.
 1993 *Cunte*, (3 minutes) produced.
 1994 *Crow's Feet*, (2 minutes, 48 seconds) produced.
 1994 *Trashy Lingerie at the Cappuccino Bar*, (12 minutes, 14 seconds), produced and acted.
 1993 *A Bevy of Beauties*, (3 minutes, 4 seconds) produced, acted.
 1992 *Breasts Protest Anonymous*, (13 minutes) produced, acted.
 1989 *Snuff Walls Around Townhouses (SWAT)*, 4 minutes, produced, acted.

- 1987 *I am a Woman with as Past*, 25 minutes, produced, acted.
 1983 *Lewd Wave*, (5 minutes) designed, acted.
 1984 *Wives and Lovers*, (4 minutes) produced, acted.

Writings

- 2002 *The Revolving Door* (Power Images, NY, 2002) 167 pages
 2001 *Quercia Stories: Lay My Head on the Chest of the Dane, Gentle Bondage, Editing Evil* (Rich Fog Micro Publishing, Vernon, BC 2004) 153 pages
 2001 Personal observation reportage for “The Morning Show”, CBC radio, BC following September 11, for eight broadcasts.
 1974 *White Socks Suck*, Young adult novelette, 87 pages

Selected Reviews

- 2001 Sights of Resistance by Robert J. Belton (University of Calgary Press, 2001) “Boys when the Spring Comes,” pages 167, 318, 319.
 1994 Art in America, March 1994; “Cunte, a Performance Piece by Julie Oakes” pages 60,61.

Scholarships and Grants

- 1993 Canada Council Project Cost Grant
 1985 Canada Council Art Bank Purchase
 1975 Canada Council Project Cost Grant
 1973 Canada Council Short Term Grant
 1970 Canada Council Bursary
 1969 Canada Council Bursary
 1967 Cotes-Hallmark Scholarship

Selected Collections

- Canada Council Art Bank (2)
 Credit Union Central
 Enigma Trading Company
 Cotes Hallmark
 Lower Manhattan Cultural Council
 Saskatchewan Telephone Company (2)
 Vancouver Authors Society
 Vernon Arts Council
 Vernon Public Art Gallery
 Vernon Performing Arts Centre

Julie Oakes

Born Julie Cowan in Nelson, British Columbia, Julie Oakes established her reputation as a provocative, culturally critical, multi-dimensional artist. Through painting, drawing, writing, video and performance, most of her work autobiographically comments on social concerns, with emphasis ranging from banal to exotic and erotic.

She holds a Master degree in Art and Art Professions from New York University and a second Masters degree in Critical Theory, Liberal Studies, from the New School University in New York City.

At the age of sixteen, Julie attended the Banff School of Fine Arts under Charles Stegeman and Francoise Andre. While still in High School and working at the Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina, she helped install one of the first kinetic art shows in Canada and also helped Edward Keinholtz to install his exhibition. The next summer, she attended the University of Saskatchewan's Emma Lake painting and drawing program with Ted Godwin and Ricardo Gomez. With the help of a Cotes-Hallmark scholarship, she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Manitoba and attended two more workshops at Emma Lake in the company of Ernie Lindner. In Winnipeg, her first public group exhibition was at the Winnipeg Art Gallery where she presented two kinetic works. In Winnipeg, she worked with Felix Partz on a filmed performance piece titled *The Purse Snatching*. Julie was awarded two successive Canada Council Grants that took her from Europe to India and back - overland. Back in the western world, she studied both thanka painting under the master Lhasa court thanka painter, Sherab Palden Berut at the Samye Ling Tibetan Center in Eskdalemuir, Scotland and Intensive Chinese Language and Tibetan History at the New School for Social Research in New York City.

The Purse Snatching (performance, video, 1969), *Earthlines Deadlines Lifelines* (painting, 1991), *Breast Protest Anonymous* (silkscreen, photo, performance, video, 1992-93), *Cunte* (installation, performance, painting, video, 1993-94), and *Quercia Stories - Gentle Bondage* (painting, drawing, writings, 2004) are some of her more universally known works.

For almost a decade in the 1990's, Julie supported community arts as the director of Headbones Gallery in Vernon, British Columbia. She has raised two children, a boy and girl from her marriage to Sir Christopher Oakes. She currently lives and works from her studios in both New York and rural British Columbia.

Richard Fogarty