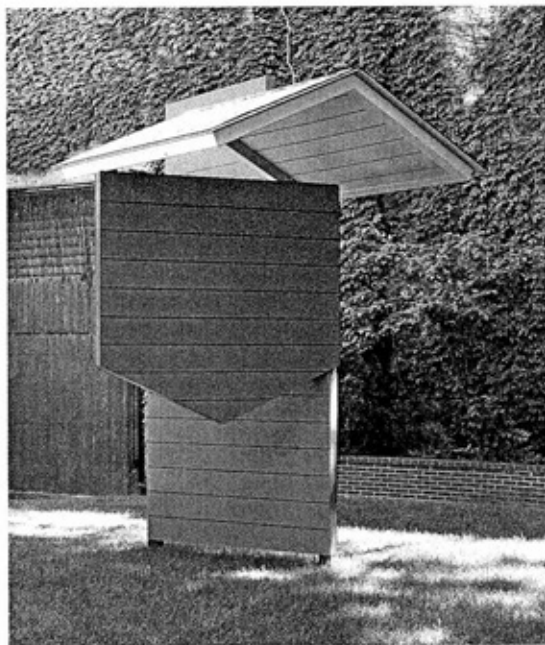


JOHN MARRIOTT *easy to assemble* 2006 Paint, asphalt shingles, wood, steel
4.57 x 4.57 m (approx.)
PHOTO W. N. GREER



and disarms. For example, the sorcerers, Petra and the final multi-organism chorus are all rendered in a rudimentary, brightly coloured animation style. Despite their visual absence from the video, the artists are clearly present in song and spirit in this phenomenal and deeply philosophical piece of aesthetic wit and wizardry. **JON DAVIES**

John Marriott

TORONTO SCULPTURE GARDEN, TORONTO

Have you ever been baffled by the schematic drawings that accompany build-it-yourself projects? John Marriott's *easy to assemble*, at the Toronto Sculpture Garden last summer, whimsically posited two outcomes: either assembly can go terribly awry or a free spirit can create something unexpected with a set of given components.

Manifestly a garden shed constructed of paint and asphalt shingles on wood over a steel structure, *easy to assemble* was approximately 15 feet high and 15 feet wide. As Marriott explains, "At the heart of *easy to assemble* are perceptual and philosophical tensions that arise when we probe the relationships



BEN REEVES *Cars* 2005-06
Oil on panel 1.21 x 1.58 m

between 'what is shown' and 'what is perceived.'"

A standard garden shed takes a predictable form. Here, it was as if the installation were a reconstruction of a frame from the film *The Wizard of Oz* or a clip of a tornado from a disaster home video. Marriott presented a frozen image of the conflagration: the shed flying apart, deconstructed before our very eyes. The violence of the moment was offset by his lighthearted use of orange and teal paint.

Positioned in a courtyard, *easy to assemble* contrasted with the mix of 19th- and 20th-century buildings surrounding its site. Unlike a conventional structure—a roof supported by four walls—the piece balanced precariously upon the crisp, narrow edge of one wall. Marriott positioned the roof to retain its role as provider of shelter from the elements, and the

IT WAS AS IF THE INSTALLATION WERE A RECONSTRUCTION OF A FRAME FROM *THE WIZARD OF OZ*

result was a structure that floated high above the ground and yet pressed down upon the earth with great weight.

In the serenity of this urban garden, viewers could stroll around the installation, enjoying its suspended geometry from all angles. The effects of available light and the shadow that the piece created upon the lawn combined with the patterns that branches and leaves cast upon the sculpture to recall a sundial, with the shadows varying according to the time of day.

Marriott's sculpture was full of contradictions—assembly versus disassembly, motion versus rest, three-dimensional versus two-dimensional, functional versus functionless and natural versus man-made structures, to name a few. The natural elements of the venue were imposed on the man-made structure, with the man-made correspondingly imposed upon nature. **CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON**

Ben Reeves

MUSEUM LONDON, LONDON

The work in this exhibition reiterates and extends Ben Reeves's topographical investigation of the surfaces and gestures that construct painting. When discussing this mapping activity, whether in the series of drawings based on Tom Thomson's small oil *Wild Geese* (1916) or in the suite of new paintings depicting the bucolically bleak suburban landscape of London, Ontario, physical substance is the pertinent term.

Reeves's drawings carefully chart Thomson's idiosyncratic brush marks in a coolly beautiful analytic progression from a drawing of the whole surface of the painting to increasingly isolated close-ups of each goose. In Thomson's painting, the geese are