

Manitoba has spent almost \$2.5 million on the campaign over the last two years, paying a consulting firm to come up with the Spirited Energy brand and buying newspaper and television advertisements aimed at attracting people and businesses to the province.

The campaign has come under fire from critics who say the Spirited Energy slogan is vague and baffling. The opposition has said the campaign seems to be more focused on promoting the NDP government than on promoting the province....CBCNews, Oct. 3, 2007

Aazha omaa akiikaan Manitoba-ang niizhwaaki apane, 2.5 million minik gii-jaaginigem diba'amawindwaa awiyag ji-ozhitoowaad owe Spirited Energy gaa-gii-izhinikaadamowaad wiindamowaad owe gechiwaag aki. Gii-adaawewag dibaajimoo-mazina'iganan zhigwa ji-mazinaatesininig wii-gagwe-andongewaad ji-bi-izhaang omaa ji-bi-anokiing gaye omaa.

Ikidom idash aanind awiyag gaawiin ogikendanziinaawaa' aaniin wenji-izhinikaadenig. Ogimaakaanag gaa-niigaanaginzosigwaa ikidowa nawach oniigaan-asaawaa' NDP ogimaakaanag apiich wiin owe gechiwaag akiikaan...izhibii'igaade CBC News, Oct. 3 2007.

A number of years ago, the province of Manitoba paid a significant amount of public funds to an advertising agency to develop a new "brand" for the province. The resulting slogan and public relations exercise euphemistically named "Spirited Energy". It would give many Manitobans pause to reflect on the province's motives and, to be perfectly honest, caused most of them to laugh their asses off at the provincial government for the waste of money.

Namanj minik daswaaki apan, omaa Manitoba-ang niibiwa igo zhooniyaa gii-diba'amawaawag awiyag owe ji-wiindamowaad. Zhigwa apii gaa-giizhakamigiziwaad iwe "Spirited Energy" ogii-izhinikaadaanaawaa'. Niibiwa awiyag omaa onji ji-naagadawendamowaad wegonen gegwe-izhichigeng owe onji. Zhigwa, ji-ikidowaan igo, gii-baapichigaade owe omaa aaniin minik zhooniyaan gaa-jaaginaawaad.

What the government didn't seem to get (or at least their advertising agency didn't) is that Manitoba has never been about "spirit" or "energy". This is not a slag of Manitoba folk, it's just that that kind of bizarre self aggrandizement doesn't make sense here. Manitobans I think prefer a "real-ness" that defies simple description.

Gaawiin ogimaawin omaa Manitoba maamikawisesiiwag, gaawiin wiin 'Spirit' ezhibii'igaadeg gemaa 'energy' gaa-ijigaadeg inaabanjigaadesinoo owe aki. Gaawiin wiin ji-majenimindwaa awiyag omaa gaa-ayaawaad, gaawiin gaye omaa awiyag gitendizisiiwag. Nawach gegoo ji-nisidotaagwak odoo-minwendaanaawaa.'

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Steve Loft review of Ian August

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The government would have been better off using that money to buy art from Manitoba artists. And that would certainly include work by Ian August.

Nawach ogimaawin omaa onji ji-adaamaawaapan gaa-mazinibii'igenid gechiwaag omaa daabishkoo Ian August gaa-izhinikaazod.

As a member of the 2-6 collective of artists, and as an individual artist, Ian August has been that most interesting of cultural commentators: someone rooted enough in a place to understand its nuances, and removed enough aesthetically and generationally, to also understand its foibles, eccentricities and demons. His practice incorporates both a collaborative aspect (with the art collective 2-6) as well as his own solo practice.

Wiin bezhig awe 2-6 collective gaa-inindwaa omazinibii'igeg. Onagajitooon dazhindang awiyawag odinaadiziwiniwaan. Wiin gaye bezhig minik omaa gaa-gii-ayaad onagadendaan aaniin ezhi-ayaamaganinig. Enaabandang gegoon, epiitizid zhigwa gaye ogikendaan aaniin omaa gechiwaag akiing enaadizing. Gaa-mazinibii'iged, wiidanokiimaa' owiiji-mazinibii'ige' imaa collective 2-6 zhigwa gaye wiin igo odanokiiwin.

He and the rest of the “crew” (including artists...) are well known for their public interventions, (pre-fab paintings they nail to poles, walls, etc...really, any outdoor space they come across.

Wiin zhigwa wiidanokiimaagana' wiidookaagewag mazinichiganan agoodoowaad bigo imaa abooshke agwajjig ji-minonaagwaninig anoojigo mazinibii'iganan.

Challenging and irreverent, much of August's work speaks to our obsessions with mass culture, but he also delves interestingly in Winnipeg's particular psyche. Other times, such as with his guerilla art (pre-fab's) he shows an eagerness to engage a “public” definition of art. And, in other works he explores the spectrum between abstraction and representation. His work is thoughtful, well executed and ingenious.

Iwe enaadizid gaawiin zhaagwenimosii gegoon wii-dibaajimod, August ezhichiged odibaadodaan gidinaadiziwininaan zhigwa gidizhitwaawininaan memindage omaa Winnipeg inendamowin. Zhigwa miinawaa omazinichigewinan gagwedwemaganoon aaniin awiyag enendamowaad bebakaan mazinichiganan. Zhigwa gaye oganawaabandaan inaabishiniwin dago mazinibii'aman gegoo. Omazinichiganan ogii-nanekaajikaadaanan, gii-wawiingezi gaye onibwaakaawining onji.

In “Winnipeg Hydro”, his most recent solo exhibition, he has combined a selection of his iconoclastic drawings and a new suite of oil paintings. August's trademark humour is most evident in the drawings. His puns and double entendre's are, as always, whimsical, intriguing and inventive. Using iconic images from celebrity, popular culture and advertising worlds, he infuses his drawings with subtle, and not so subtle ironic references.

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Iwe “Winnipeg Hydro” gaa-idaming gaa-gii-waabanda’iwed omazinichiganan, gii-waabanda’iwe omazinichiganan wiin ayinendang bebakaan gegoon zhigwa bakaan zhizhoobii’iganan gaa-aabajitood. August gaye omazinibii’igewining odatoon obabaapishi’iwewin. Nitaawe gaa-aabajitood nabogiizhwewin jaakenjigaadegin waabanjigaadegin. Aayaabajitood miziwe gaa-gikenimindwaa awiyag zhigwa gaa-nagazaabanjigaadegin mazinichiganan, omazinibii’aan wiin igo enendang gemaa enenimaad awiya gaa-gikenimimind.

But it is the paintings that show a new direction for his work. Although part of August’s oeuvre has always been large scale paintings (most often featuring members of 2-6), these new works take a decided turn in content. These new representational works mark a departure of sorts for August. Well known as a member of the 2-6 (or two-sicks) collective, August is best known for his smaller “book cover” paintings and drawings. These works, full of ironic wit and social commentary, are nonetheless far removed from these latest works.

Omazinibii’igewinan wiindamaagemaganoon bakaan ani-izhibii’iged. August gaa-inind omazinichiganan gaa-gii-bi-ozhitood gii-mamaachaaniwan gagaana igo wiidanokiimaad ini 2-6 collective gaa-izhinikaanidiwaad. Ono dash omazinichiganan bakaan ani-izhibii’ige memindage wiin onji. Megwaa wiidanokiimaad ini 2-6, August ogii-nitaa-ozhibii’aanan mazinichiganan mazina’iganing ji-aabajichigaadenigin. Ono oshkiya’ii gaa-ozhitood, bakaan izhinaagwanoon apiich wiin ini mazinichiganan gaa-gii-onji-gikenimind.

Lush and resonant, there is a sensuousness in the paintings that belie their subject matter; an intense subjectivity grounded in the Winnipeg (prairie, Manitoba) personality. A self reflective act....an homage of sorts, but not maudlin. The works in “Winnipeg Hydro” are not elegiac. Rather, they are intuitive, finding those points of intersection between human encroachment in natural environs...they are snapshots of a place. In this case, our place.

Epiichi-minonaagwakin omazinichiganan, gikenjigaade aaniin ji-inaabanjigaadenigin. Ji-gikenjigaadegiban Winnipeg nakeya’ii gii-onjibaad wayaabanjigaadenigin omazinichiganan. Oganawaabandizowin...gaawiin idash gidimaagendizowin. Gaawiin gaye ini ‘Winnipeg Hydro’ mazinichiganan ji-gidimaagenjigaadegin. Nawach ji-inaabanjigaadegin daabishkoo nagishkigaadeg bagwadakamig...mazinaakizigaadeg ningoji daabishkoo eyaayang giinawind.

August's sense of place is established by those "man made" objects that are manifested in our landscape.....transforming it, infecting, affecting, and being affected by it. Without resorting to anthropomorphic landscape traditions, August infuses his paintings with a life and a dynamism that resides in the popular imagination of Winnipeggers. They are iconic in their own, unprepossessing way. They resonate with a geographical ontology, ideally suited to Winnipeg's sense of itself.

Wiin wiin August enind, inaabid ningoji ini 'ozhichiganan' miziwe eyaamagakin...aanjichigaademaganoon, daabishkoo aazhoo'idiwin aaniin ezhishkaagoowin. August omazinibii'igewinan ateniwan imaa Winnipeg onji eyaawaad odinenjiganiwaan gaawiin memwech ji-bimaadizi'itood gegoo mezinibii'ang. Odoozhichiganan igo nisidawinaagwaninon wegonenan enwaadegin. Aaniin igo wenji-ayaamagakin gegoon bimaadiziwining daabishkoo Winnipeg ezhi-ayaamagak.

While the paintings can be seen as "realist", August's is a view that looks "between" the frames of the film that is Winnipeg....Like fellow Winnipegger Guy Maddin, August creates an imaginistic, though totally real world, not by populating, but by de-populating it... he leaves it to the viewer to fit themselves in his landscapes.

Omazinibii'igewinan naasaabibii'ang mezinibii'ang inendaagwan, August dash oganawaabandaan daabishkoo bebiitoowaya'ii Winnipeg...daabishkoo gewiin Winnipeg onji Guy Maddin. August odoozhitooon ji-mamaakaadenjigaadenig geget dash wiin ezhiwebiziyang gibimaadiziwininaang. Gaawiin wiin mooshkinetood gidayaawininaang ji-gwayakaabandamang...obagidinaan awiyan ji-asidizonid imaa omazinibii'igewining.

His is a Winnipeg as much moored to it's history as the tourist riverboats he has painted moored to their docks.....frozen by natural forces, victims of weather constrained by their seasonality. The flaking paint of their hulls and the ice they are trapped in speaking to their (and our) fragility.

Omaa Winnipeg wenjiid, geyaabi omaa izhi dibendaagozi daabishkoo ini jiimaan gaa-gitaakopijigaadegin gaa-gii-mazinibii'ang....bikinong ezhinaagwak, aaniin igo ezhiwebiziimagak ayaamagak. Bebangising zhizhoobii'igan daabishkoo mikwam gechiuwised mii daabishkoo naniimaadiziwin.

...an icebreaker navigates the red river, seemingly erratic...tracing fissures in the frozen river...

...dwaaw'igewichigan bemi-ayaamagak miskoziibiing, anoojigo epideg...naasaaba'adood dawaanig ziibiing...

...the suspended car chassis that acts as a sign for Tessler's junk yard, A throwback and a symbol of conspicuous consumption.

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...odaabaanish egoodeg daabishkoo ji-webinigaadegiban Tessler's webinigeWIN. Ji-maamikawiseng aaniin minik webinigeYANG.

...two ice huts....an attachment to place that encompasses its cultural, social and atmospheric peculiarities...

...niizh mikwami-waakaa'iganensan...imaa etemagak ezhitwaang zhigwa bebakaan enaadizing miziwe.

It is an homage to the unforgiving...No, screw that, only someone from outside the prairies would actually refer to the wind as "unforgiving". Ian August understands that. Instead, his is a tribute to the wind, the ice and the people who challenge, fight and embrace it. His paintings reveal truths about the places that are instantly recognizable to anyone from here. His is a smart and robust visual language that contains entry points to who we are and where we live. Each painting in its own way speaking to the solitude, the humour and yes, even the "spirit" that is life in Winnipeg. And that's pretty cool!

Ezhiwebiziwin ji-gikenjigaadeg...Gaawiin wiin iwe, awiya eta bakaan onji daa-inendam noodin ji-gidimaagenjigesinog. Ian August ogikendaan iwe. Nawach onanaakondaan noodin, mikwamiin zhigwa igiweg gaa-babaamendanzigwaa, gaa-miigaadamowaad gemaa gaa-minwendamowaad noodin. Omazinibii'igewinan gaa-gii-ozhitood zhemaag awiya omaa onji oada-nisidawinaan. Wiindamaagemaganoon omazinibii'igewinan aweneniwiyang aandi gaye eyaayang. Waabanjigaade gaye bangang, baapishiwewin zhigwa gaye iwe 'spirit' gaa-idamowaad ajiiaakiwin omaa Winnipeg eyaang. Onizhishin idash o'o!

Ian August is going to be leaving Winnipeg. The siren song of post graduate studies in the "Big Smoke" (Toronto) apparently could not be resisted. Ian is an amazingly talented, incisive artist and a good friend. He has a lot to offer, and we will be hearing a lot from him in the future. Good luck Ian, as you explore your distinctive vision. In that spirit, I'd like to offer the following lyrics from Jimmy Buffett's "Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes" to help send you on your way.

Good luck, dude...

Wii-maajaa Winnipeg onji Ian August. Onjida iidog ji-giizhitood ogikinoo'amaagewin imaa Toronto, "Big Smoke" gaa-idamowaad. Aapiji wawiingezi Ian, nitaawibii'iged zhigwa gaye niijiiwaagan. Geyaabi gegoon giga-ondizimin; giga-noondaamin ani-niigaan aaniin ayendid. Minosen Ian, bemi-ayaayan gibimaadiziwining. Owe enendaagwak, giwii-wiindamoon Jimmy Buffet ezhibii'ang onagamowining "Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes" ji-wiiji'igoyan eni-maajaayaan.

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