

HOW TO BE A CANADIAN

An evening of short videos.

All Canadian Parliamentary decisions are made under a structure named The Peace Tower. On summer nights the nation's capital invites citizens and tourists alike to sit on its barricade-free front lawn. A spectacular sound and light show commences, detailing Canadian mythologies and first-person perspectives. Astonishingly, also selected for giant, projected broadcast on the government walls are admissions of Canada's historical flaws and bureaucratic errors in judgment. The evening ends with a heartfelt promise to make Canada the ultimate socially responsible, peaceful and welcoming country that so many of its residents proudly speak of.

The second largest country in the world, Canada houses a population less than California's 34 million. The birthplace of *You Can't Do That on Television*, Tom Green, and the inspiration for *American Pie*, Canada has been a chief exporter of adolescent gross-out comedy for two decades. No MTV, Madonna, Mister Roger's Neighborhood or melting pot, but Much Music, Alanis Morissette, Mr. Dressup's tickle trunk and government-mandated Multiculturalism.

The videos of **Jake Kennedy**, **Jim Munroe** and **Jon Sasaki** propagate popular images of the well-mannered, sportsmanlike Canadian. But, this is only part of the story. The self-inflicted pain and chronic angst of **Jubal Brown's** *Deathday Suit* and the real-life, vengeful ice capades in **Brett Kashmere's** *When Canadians Attack* evidence a hushed violence. The weepy protagonist of **Daniel Barrow's** *A Miracle* and the webcam community in **Tom Sherman's** *HALF/LIVES* delicately construct loneliness in a socially liberal state.

Paige Gratland's *Shoe Squishing Food Project* and *Sex* by **Shary Boyle**, **Peaches** and **Kara Blake** dress up and act out domestic perversions. **Jeremy Bailey** (*Video Paint 1.0*, *Strongest Man*) portrays himself as an underdog with a feeble narcissism. **Dorion Berg** (*ASCII Alphabet*) and **Jubal Brown** (*The 6th Day*) condense the culture of image to split-second beats in their scratch video compositions.

Utilizing artistic (re)enactment, telepathetic aesthetics, manual animation, performance and a grab bag of low-end high technologies, these videos question traditional representations of (Canadian) identity and gender.

- Curated by **Astria Suparak** and **Brett Kashmere**.

References: Statistics Canada, www.statcan.ca; Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1985, www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/policy/act_e.cfm
Want to immigrate to Canada? Check out your chances with the Skilled Worker Self-Assesment: www.cic.gc.ca/english/skilled/assess/index.html

1. **When Canadians Attack**
Brett Kashmere (2004, 3:15)

2. **Colonel Canuck**
Jake Kennedy (2003, 2:25)

3. **HALF/LIVES**
Tom Sherman (2001, 6:45)

4. **Deathday Suit**
Jubal Brown (2002, 8:41)

5. **A Miracle**
Daniel Barrow (2003, 2:37)

6. **Circle Game**
Jon Sasaki (2002, 5:28)

7. **ASCII Alphabet**
Dorion Berg (1999, 5:30)

8. **My Trip to Liberty City**
Jim Munroe (2003, 9:00)

9. **Strongest Man**
Jeremy Bailey (2003, 4:33)

10. **The Shoe Squishing Food Project**
Paige Gratland (2003, 4:00)

11. **Sex**
Shary Boyle, Peaches, and Kara Blake (2001, 3:45)

12. **Video Paint 1.0**
Jeremy Bailey (2004, 2:56)

13. **The 6th Day**
Jubal Brown (2003, 9:30)

Running time: 70 minutes.

More information: www.astriasuparak.com/howtobeacanadian.htm

HTBAC is the third installment of Eyebeam's **Panorama series**. Panorama presents innovative digital moving imagery created in different regions of the world, drawing connections with work made closer to home. In 2004, it focused on NAFTA countries, screening new works produced in Mexico, the United States, and Canada. The experimental shorts programs are followed by live audio visual presentations, emphasizing the rapid evolution of this new form.

Canadian-to-American Dictionary (Of items referenced in the screening.)

"Birthday Suit - with scars and defects" • n. Lisa Steele's groundbreaking 1974 video in which Steele celebrates her 26th birthday by touring her body with a video camera, stopping to recall with her photographic memory important scars and blemishes and how they came to be. - *J. Brown (ref. in #4)*

bunny hug • n. One of the cutest idioms of the Saskatchewan vernacular, meaning hoodie (sweatshirt with a hood and pockets). - ORIGIN, as explained by SK residents: "When your hands are in the pockets they curl, similar to the paws of a standing rabbit." I think 'kangaroo' or another marsupial is more apt.

busk • v. To perform out in the street for some cash. - *J. Munroe (ref. in #8)*

Canuck • n. informal. A word of obscure origin that rhymes with a bad swear; it means "any Canadian" and often means "any 'Canadian'" (the quotation marks implying donuts, beer, hockey, snow, maple syrup and mullets). - *J. Kennedy (ref. in #2)*

dépanneur • n. Quebec term for what is known as a bodega in NY, a liquor store in CA, confectionery in SK, and a corner store, convenience store, or variety store, elsewhere.

eh /pronounced 'aye?'/ • exclam. informal. A common expression added to the end of a statement, implying and/or eliciting agreement.

Douglas, Thomas Clement "Tommy" • (1904-1986) A Scottish-born Canadian Baptist minister, politician, and Premier of Saskatchewan (1944-1961). He was a leading figure in the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a left-wing political party, and as Premier formed North America's first socialist government, introducing innovative social reforms such as hospital insurance, the beginning of Canada's medicare program. - *www.brainyencyclopedia.com*. Also, the grandfather of actor Keifer Sutherland.

Hardcore video (aka JAWA) • n. A style of scratch video cutup. Taking contemporary electronic music genres of broken beat, break core, acid techno, the deconstructive techniques of sampling, looping, the cut and distortion and applying these to visual media creating kinetic staccato compositions at furious speed and intensity. The images are never cut to match the beat. Music is never added in post-production. What we hear is exactly what we see, 900 edits per minute and layered with an obsessive attention to detail and mathematics. The result is a synthesis of synesthetic audio/video rapture. See www.famefame.com. - *J. Brown (see #14)*

milk bag • n. In grocery stores or dépanneurs (see above), milk can be bought in pillow-shaped plastic bags, alongside your usual jugs and cartons. Bulk purchase. (see #11)

Mulroney, Martin Brian • (1939-) Conservative (i.e. Republican) Prime Minister (i.e. President of Canada) from 1984-93. Thatcher thought he was cool. - *J. Kennedy (ref. in #2)*

Novel Amusements • n. Originally a CD-ROM, now a DVD zine, which tries to bring the passion and fun of a personal zine to a digital (mostly vid) medium. - *J. Munroe (see #2, 6, 8, 12)*

Pearson, Lester Bowles • (1897-1972) Prime Minister (1963-68) and renowned ambassador for peace. - *J. Kennedy (ref. in #2)*
poutine /pronounced 'poo.teen' in English, 'poo.tin' in French/ • n. French fries (en francais, "pomme frites") covered in gravy and cheese curds. Quebec's unofficial provincial food. Canadian McDonalds serves a crappy version of it, listed next to their signature "Poulet mc croquettes" (Chicken McNuggets).

socialized medicine • n. Using public funds to pay for basic medical needs for all citizens—we actually just call it health care or OHIP in Ontario. - *J. Munroe (ref. in #8)*

toque /pronounced 'too.k'/ • n. A close-fitting, brimless hat. Known in America as a beanie, knit cap, or skull cap. - ORIGIN: from French (toque), Spanish (toca), or Celtic.

Trudeau, Pierre Elliot • (1919-2000) Our first and only Rock and Roll Prime Minister, from 1968-84, and a fella of contradictions: War Measures Act [of 1970 during the October Crisis, kind of like the Patriot Act] one day, Charter of Rights and Freedoms the next. - *J. Kennedy (ref. in #2)*

Vtape • n. Artist-run video art distribution organization in Toronto, Ontario, co-founded by Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak in 1980. One of many great distribution options for artists in Canada.

washroom • n. informal. A bathroom or restroom, but vague and polite sounding.

zed • The 26th letter of the Roman alphabet. That's "zed", not "zee". - D. Berg (ref. in #7)

- Compiled by *A. Suparak*

EYEBEAM center for art and technology supports the development, creation and presentation of new forms of innovative cultural production. Founded in 1996, Eyebeam is dedicated to exposing diverse audiences to new technologies and media arts, with the aim of establishing new media as a significant artistic genre