

08/17/06



## Arts Week

### A decade of Propulsion

Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts has a lot to celebrate for their 10th anniversary show -- and a lot of people to celebrate it with. "A gallery that lasts for 10 years has a certain kind of mysterious staying power," says administrator and curatorial assistant **Ruth Tait**. "I'm now seeing internationally exhibited artists who have Propeller entries on their CVs. For this show alone, we've managed to generate a list of 50 artists, and the list keeps on growing." Such artists include **Yechel Gagnon**, **Rebecca Anweiler**, **Gillian Iles** and **Jennifer Linton**.

It's in Propeller's nature to reach out and touch: founded in 1996 by a collective of OCAD graduates who wanted a place to show their work, the gallery's mandate is, accordingly, to provide emerging and mid-career artists with promotional and technical support. For five years, Propeller made its home at the Darling Building (96 Spadina Ave.); then it moved to West Queen West, an area that, for Tait, increasingly throws the whole project into relief.

"There's a definite dialogue that's happening between us and the commercial galleries," she says. "Our shows are group-inspired and, lately, tend to have a political or social bent; we're not looking for established names that sell." Propeller even distinguishes itself from some of the city's other artist-run centres, like Mercer Union, because it doesn't receive grant funding as an institution; grants for individual shows, donations and fees from its membership (which rotates on a yearly basis) are its bread and butter.

It's fitting, then, that Propeller's 10th anniversary be marked by a group show: few of the city's galleries host as many of them or, for that matter, issue as many open calls for artists. "The members know what it's like to struggle to gain a foothold," says Tait. "We try to honour that experience. It's really our common thread."

DAVID BALZER

**"PROPELLER TURNS TEN" STARTS AUG 23. OPENING, AUG 24, 7-10PM. WED-SAT NOON-6PM. SUN NOON-5PM. PROPELLER CENTRE FOR THE VISUAL ARTS, 984 QUEEN W. 416-504-7142. [WWW.PROPELLERCTR.COM](http://WWW.PROPELLERCTR.COM).**