

Canada

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Counter Gallery East End

This is not an exhibition of wintry landscapes nor a bunch of Canadian artists, but a showcase of work from an artist-run gallery in New York, called 'Canada' because its founder members studied under David Askevold at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax. Work by Askevold brackets the show. In the back space is a programme of films from the late 1960s and '70s. I saw 'Nova Scotia Fires' (1969), for which he poured a mixture of gasoline and oil on shoreline rocks, lit a match, stood back and let the camera roll. It's a hellish vision of land-art; accompanied by the murmurings of what sounds like a prog-rock elf, it points towards fiendish creativity.

The mood continues in photographs acquired by Brian Belott at yard sales and presented in themed albums. Things begin well enough – we see sunsets, bowls of fruit etc – but soon spiral out of control with

weirdly obsessive images of Thanksgiving turkeys shot from different angles, homemade porn, portraits with heads removed and lovers' pleas scribbled on the backs of pictures we aren't allowed to see. An underlying sense of misery is amplified by Belott's handling of the material, which feels less like an act of resuscitation than free and, at times, unpleasant association. He carries this forward in collages that defy interpretation; one is titled 'I know you want the horse the other way round but I'm the fucking artist'.

Using paint and satin, on the other hand, Sarah Braman can't help but elevate the bits of cardboard that form the basis of a sculpture and a wall-mounted construction. Like many young painters, Elena Pankova re-examines first-generation abstraction to arrive at dishevelled but surprisingly intimate takes on Suprematism and de Stijl. Wallace Whitney and Anke Weyer go a step further by immersing themselves in the dark art of freeform abstraction. *Martin Coomer*



'Boule de Nieve' by Wallace Whitney