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A Wanda Koop Retrospective in Montreal

BY CHARLES SHAFAlEH | MARCH 18, 2016



A retrospective of canvas and print work by Winnipeg artist [Wanda Koop](#) will open March 19 at [Galerie Division in Montreal](#).

One of Canada's most respected artists and a recent recipient of the Governor General's Award, Koop has engaged in a lifelong critique of the ways in which technology, the natural world, globalization, and urbanization intersect.



“Wanda is a national treasure,” Dominique Toutant, director of Galerie Division, said. “I can’t think of another painter who says more about our world with such sophistication and such perfect economy. From her sense of color and line to her themes of cultural identity, warfare, transit, energy, and technology, she’s a true force of nature and just a brilliant artist.”

The exhibition, which covers Koop’s career from 1984 through 2016, includes many pieces taken from a number of longer series, among them the paradoxically serene and unsettling “Satellite Cities,” 2002, in which cosmopolises seem to float, like clouds, in a sea of near-uniform color that both suspends and disconnects them from the rest of the world; “Barcode Faces,” 2009, that superimposes groupings of solid rectangular barcode-like shapes over various landscapes, merging together the physical, bucolic, and commercial as well as serving as an ominous symbol of the ways in which our natural landscapes are being overtaken by industry; and “Green Zone,” 2005, which takes as its source material television footage from the Iraq war. A collection of Koop’s early work, rarely on display, is also featured.

“For decades Wanda has treated us to great exhibitions, and we all know — or think we know — her work,” Toutant said. “But in fact, there’s an imperceptible evolution over the years that you don’t notice unless you’re standing in front of both older and recent paintings. It’s like looking at a close friend in a photo album — they don’t seem to have changed, but a look back reveals the many transmutations that make up who they are. In Wanda’s case it’s not only the themes that change, but also the brushwork, the way she handles paint, and her use of color. Her work is a big, ongoing opus, and it gets more and more interesting the deeper you explore.”

[Wanda Koop](#)’s work will be on view at Galerie Division in Montréal from March 19 through April 30.