

Cover Art: *Get There From Here*

Nicole Bauberger

Get There From Here is a travelling public gallery exhibition that links the known to the imagined. Its long sequence of paintings strings viewers' most familiar landscapes onto the same cord as those through which they have never travelled, although it's all part of what we call Canada. That's the subtle pun in the show's title, on the use of the word "get" to mean "understand." The title explicitly refers to the compulsion behind driving, but can also evoke the idea of "getting" a place—perhaps viewers can understand other landscapes ("there") in the context of their own ("here").

"Whitehorse to Inuvik, #17" is one painting from an exhibit of about 250. Every 50 km from St. John's to Victoria and up to Inuvik, I pulled over and painted the road and the landscape it passes through, in oils on a 12" square panel. For the two or three hours it took to make each painting, I inhabited and observed a place that is usually passed by at great speed.

Canada's contemporary arts mostly inhabit urban centres, and so focus on those places. This series spreads out the attention, measuring the mundane Canada between these cities, painted from many of the nameless places where people seldom stop: boring views from ditches, as well as mountains; dramatic skies and traffic signs. By means of the paintings and booklets, the audience travels with me, and we can look at Canada together.

In Canada's North, the road does not go everywhere. The road or the absence of the road plays an important part in the way people who live in these places access opportunities ranging from groceries to education. Present or absent, it's important. Often you can say "the road" and everyone will know what road you mean—there's only really the one.

The road is our commons. As Canadians we pay billions to make and maintain it. Making these paintings, I occupy that commons. I use it oddly though not illegally. This gives me a different point of view to think about the road. It disappears from our view under clouds of habit. It's like the air, the atmosphere we need, which we can't see, and which the practice of driving is changing. Maybe it's a good thing to look at.

Nicole Bauberger got a ride from Peterborough, Ontario to the Yukon in 1996, then drove back in 2001. Since 2003 she has made her home in Whitehorse with her partner Dean Eyre and her stepdaughter Ariel Durant. Visit www.nicolebauberger.com to find out when *Get There From Here* will tour to a gallery near you.