

Burning Rubber brings
the road into the galley

Making some art marks

By Dean Lisk

The gallery smells a little like a garage; a hint of oil and rubber linger in the air, almost like exhaust. A red and black Michelin Scorcher tire stands on its own, and images of burnouts — those streaks of rubber left by the wheels of cars — hang on the walls.

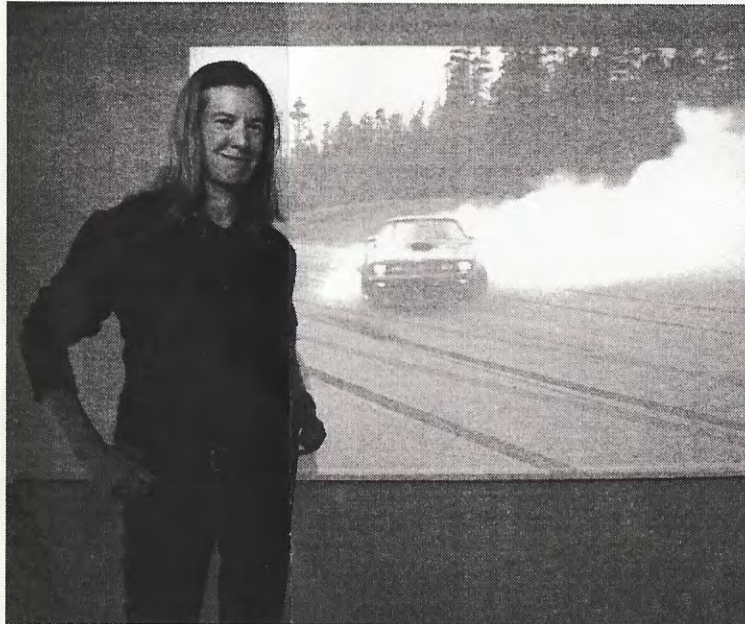
“It is almost a form of rural graffiti,” Ariella Pahlke said. “It is something definitely made for other people to see.”

She is the curator of Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery’s *Burning Rubber*, a show that looks at rural car culture, the marks left on the pavement by the wheels of tripped out speedsters, and the use of burnouts in contemporary art.

“I am not trying to say burnouts are art, but it does raise interesting questions for me,” Pahlke said. “It makes you think about what you are looking at and why when one person makes something it’s classified in a certain way, and when someone else does it, it is virtually illegal.”

Pahlke’s fascination with these black rubber marks started when she began noticing interesting shapes left on the roads near her home in Terence Bay.

“I don’t understand how they are made, and some of the shapes are quite interesting,” she said. She’s seen some in the shapes of ampersands — “&” — and wondered how they could be left by the wheels of a car. “I look forward to



Ariella Pahlke is curating *Burning Rubber* at Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery.

new ones.”

She started talking with drivers about how and why they made these marks on the roads, and soon learned it was a way for them to show off their car-handling ability, and demonstrate the modifications made to the vehicles.

“I think we all like to express ourselves, and you end up expressing yourself with whatever tools you have. So, in a rural community, where there is no public transportation, cars have a lot of value.”

A filmmaker, Pahlke started

working on a documentary about rural car culture and mark making. When Pahlke googled skid marks, she discovered a number of artists are working in the realm of burned rubber. She pitched the idea of it for the

IF YOU GO

WHAT: *Burning Rubber*

WHERE: Saint Mary’s University Art Gallery

WHEN: Through July 29

show to the gallery’s director.

Instead of a brush, Swiss artist Lori Hersberger has motorcyclists leave marks using their wheels. Lines of textured rubber run up the canvas. Artist Guy Overton left burnouts on paper using a 1977 Trans Am outfitted with Scorcher tires.

Taking the recklessness out of the burning-rubber process, Toronto’s Steven Laurie has made machines recreates the smell and sound.

In a side area of the gallery, a video recorded by Pahlke is projected on a wall. The video shows two drivers burning rubber in a rural area near Halifax. Displayed next to the screen is a ball of rubber scraped off the vehicles after the demonstration.

To open the exhibit, Hersberger and Laurie collaborated with local drivers on a performance event which took place at Exhibition Park.

“When I drive my car, I use it as a tool to get somewhere,” Pahlke said. “So, I am kind of intrigued by how people are using this tool in totally different ways; to have fun, to make art.”

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To see a video of the *Burning Rubber* performance at Exhibition Park, visit this article online at www.hfxnews.ca.

IN PERFORMANCE

ALDERNEY LANDING: DRUMLIN June 23, 10 a.m. Free. Details www.alderneylanding.com. Landing, Dartmouth Waterfront.

CASINO NOVA SCOTIA: Bruce Guthro’s Songwriters Circle: June 22, 8 p.m. **Charlie Major**: July 6. **Jimmy Rankin**, July 20 & 22. For tickets, call 451-1221.

CITADEL HILL: Nickelback with guests Daughtry, Staind, Finger Eleven, Default, State of Shock, and Hedley. July 1, 12 p.m. \$54.50. For tickets, call 451-1221.

CRICHTON AVENUE CENTRE: Dartmouth Players, Jasper Station, June 13 through June 30, Wednesday through Saturday, one matinee June 24, 2p.m. 465-PLAY (465-7529) 33 Crichton Avenue, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

CUNARD CENTRE: The White Stripes: July 13, 8 p.m. For tickets, call 451-1221. Pier 23, 961 Marginal Rd., Halifax. **Arturo Sandoval**, September 12. \$45, \$35 students/seniors/JazzEast members. For tickets call 492-2225 or www.jazzeast.com.

DALHOUSIE ARTS CENTRE: Molly Johnston: September 14, 8 p.m. Rebecca Cohn Auditorium. **Juan Mart** (guitarist): October 10, 8 p.m. \$25 advance, \$30 at the door. For tickets call 494-3820 (toll free 1-800-874-1669).

GRAFTON STREET DINNER THEATRE: Tartans, Touques and Tales, Eh?: June 8 through October 7. 425-1961. 1741 Grafton St., Halifax.

HALIFAX FORUM: Alexisonfire, July 20, Civic Center, Windsor St., Halifax. \$25 advance, \$30 at the door (plus service charges) www.ticketpro.ca or 1-888-311-9090.

HALIFAX METRO CENTRE: Randy Bachman & Burton Cummings, July 22, 8 p.m. \$59.50 advance, \$64.50 at the door (surcharge not included). **The Tragically Hip w/The Sadies**: Sept. 13, 8 p.m. \$49.50-\$69.50. 451-1221. www.ticketatlantic.com. 1800 Argyle St., Halifax.

THE MUSIC ROOM: Paul Simons, June 25, 8 p.m. \$20. Tickets available at Music Stop, Cunard St. or at the door.