

## WHAT'S ON

## VISUAL ARTS

As summer fades,  
art world blooms

MURRAY WHYTE

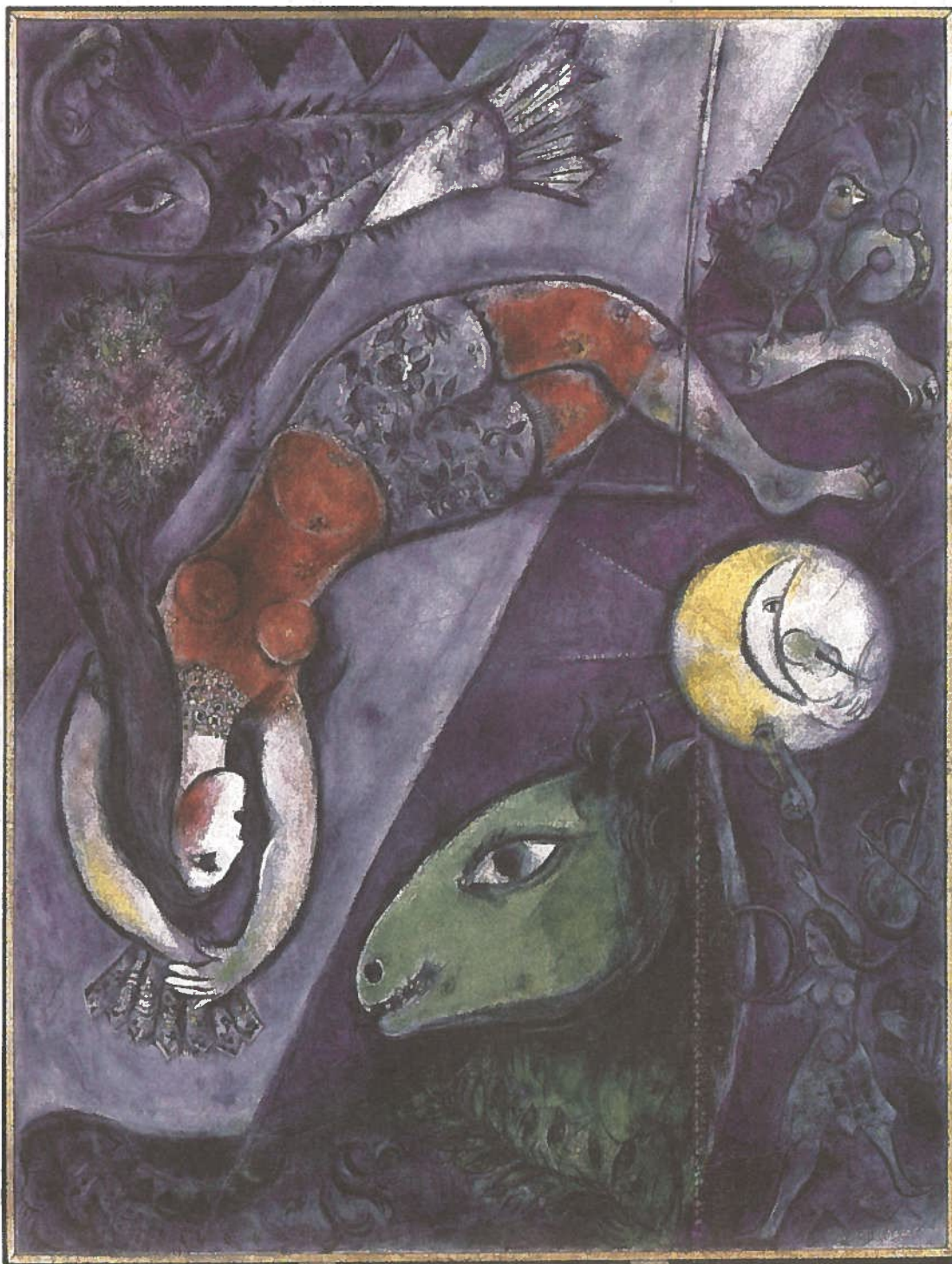
I put socks on for the first time in months this week, prompted by a crisp evening chill that can only mean one thing: Summer's nearly done, which means the art world's unofficial hiatus is coming to a close, and the fall season's chock-full schedule is about to kick in. Following is a selection of my highlights in the weeks and months to come, in no particular order.

**1. The Toronto International Film Festival:** Hollywood superstar-studded though it may be, TIFF's explosion into one of the world's glitziest film fetes has in recent years meant more art, not less, as the festival's deep coffers trickle out to help fund special presentations in some of the city's private galleries and artist-run centres. Of the many things to look forward to, you'll find **Ben Rivers'** post-apocalyptic film cycle *Slow Rivers* at Gallery TPW (56 Ossington Ave), **Elle Flanders and Tamira Sawatzky's** immersive, multi-screened *Road Movie* at O'Born Contemporary (131 Ossington), about life in contemporary Palestine, and **David Rokeby's** *Plot Against Time* at the Drake Hotel (1150 Queen Street W). Top of the marquee for me, though, is **Nick and Sheila Pye's** Toronto homecoming, *Light as a Feather, Stiff as a Board*, at Birch Libralato Gallery (129 Tecumseth). All opening in and around Sept. 8, the festival's launch date.

**2. Marc Chagall and the Russian Avant-Garde:** Masterpieces from the Collection of the Centre Pompidou, Paris: The hits keep on coming at the Art Gallery of Ontario, and while in the past I may have meant that more as criticism — of a wearily predictable, imported blockbuster model, mainly — it's been quite the opposite in recent months. Following on the AGO's winning display of MoMA's Abstract Expressionist New York comes this exhibition of kooky, folksy early-Modern semi-surrealist **Marc Chagall**, from the museum whose collection of his work is definitive. Intermingled with Russian avant-garde painters (hence the name; Chagall is French, but of Belarussian descent), the show promises to shed new light on Chagall's broad, whimsically frantic oeuvre; though what I'm looking forward to most are the 8 **Kandinsky** works scheduled to make the trip alongside Chagall's 32. Oct. 18 to Jan. 15, 2012.

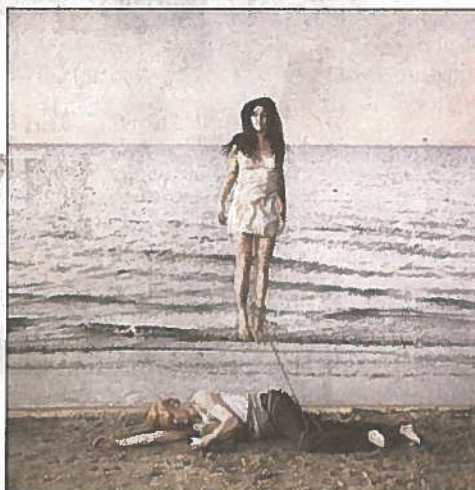
**3. Speaking of the AGO . . .** The museum is making the bold move

Brushing up on the exceptional artists coming to our galleries



of installing local artist (and international modest sensation) **Paul Butler** as its first-ever artist in residence. Butler showed most recently in the spring at Jessica Bradley, a series of cutouts, collages and prints as idiosyncratic as the artist himself. For a taste of the Butlerian oeuvre, drop by **YYZ Artists' Outlet** (401 Richmond Street, Suite 140) for one of his signature Collage Parties — the name says it all, or most of it, anyway — on Aug. 31 at 1 pm.

**4. Nuit Blanche:** Here we go again. As much as I or anyone else grouches about it (and man, there's plenty



Marc Chagall's *Blue Circus* (above) is coming to the AGO. At left, Nick and Sheila Pye's *Amend*, from 2010. Their new work will be at Birch Libralato Gallery.

of us), Toronto's (ahem) "All-Night Contemporary Art Thing" is a runaway success on the singular — and significant — grounds that it's a spectacular crowd-pleaser.

More than a million people wander the city all night, which is extraordinary, and sure, it's an uneven mess of installations but there are always moments, and I'm inclined to think those moments make it worthwhile. A tiny handful of personal highlights include projects by Toronto artists (I will always claim her for our own, however long she stays in Vancouver) **Germaine Koh**, **Bill Burns** (remember "Safety Gear for Small Animals?" This is "The Dogs and Boats and Airplane Choir"), and **Jeremy Jansen and Niall McLelland**. And a couple of dozen other things, but let's talk later. Oct. 1.

**5. David Hockney's Fresh Flowers, at the Royal Ontario Museum:** In the world of living painters, **David Hockney's** about as brand-name as it gets, so the marquee value is assured. What's a little less so is the work Hockney will be showing: 100 or so drawings the artist has made on iPads and iPod Touches. A senior artist in every sense — at 74, the British painter has been a towering figure in the art world for decades — Hockney's playful curiosity about representation and technique remains alive and well. Oct. 8 to Jan. 1, 2012.

**6. Jack Chambers:** Finally, fall 2011 is **Jack Chambers'** time. Not overlooked, exactly, but certainly not well-celebrated enough, Chambers lived out his entire life and career in London, Ont., alongside the Forest City's favourite artistic son, **Greg Curnoe**, in whose shadow he laboured. The magnetic, affable Curnoe's charm was equalled only by his talent, which was singular and prodigious, and Chambers, in his late career, having been diagnosed with leukemia in the late '60s, turned to a sort of homespun neo-realist painting that the post-conceptual art world deplored.

But Chambers' gifts as an experimental filmmaker and painter were many, as we will see for the first time when the first major retrospective of his work opens at the AGO Nov. 26.

**7. More Chambers:** Concurrent with the AGO's Chambers show is a smaller show of his work at the **McMichael Canadian Art Collection**. Mounted and first shown by Museum London in January, the show is called "the light from the darkness, silver paintings and film work," and is what it says: In London Chambers' little-seen silver paintings provided stark, intuitive context for his experimental films, and sites him clearly within the conceptual swirl around him, and not outside it, as myopic historical viewpoints sometimes suggest. Oct. 1 to Jan. 15, 2010.