

January 18, 2001

For immediate release...

DISTANCES **BETWEEN**



www.mbvan.org/proj/distances

Distances Between, a new internet project by Canadian artist Tim Schouten will be launched online today, on The Manitoba Visual Arts Network server at The University of Manitoba. Distances Between is an independent web project which will be hosted for the next two years by MBVAN. The project will be publicly launched tonight at The Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba during the opening reception for, W5: Winnipeg Artists Spanning Five Generations. W5 is a group show featuring Bruce Head, Ted Howorth, Tim Schouten, Calvin Yarush and Marcel Dzama.

Schouten will be exhibiting paintings and a bookwork at the AGSM and an off line version of Distances Between will be presented on an iMac computer in the gallery.

In the context of expanding global economies and the vast Chinese Diaspora, Hank Bull has asked, "Where is China?". With his new web project Schouten wonders if, in North America today and more specifically in Canada and in the south, we should not be asking similar questions, "Where is the North? Where is Indian Country?". Hank's answer to his own question was, "Right here - amongst us". Schouten suggests that for non-native people on this continent there is an urgent need to move toward similar conclusions with regard to the First Nations of "Turtle Island".

Distances Between uses text, sound, video and animation to venture a ways up the Winter Roads in Manitoba. The Winter Roads - a system of frozen roadways built every winter through The Bush, over lakes and muskeg to remote First Nations communities, acts as a metaphor for the many possible ways to bridge the 'distances between' cultures. These precious roads are passable only for brief months, sometimes weeks each year but they are vital for the provision of building materials, fuel and other goods to communities accessible only by air or water when the road is closed. They also represent greatly increased freedom to travel to people in these remote communities. Air fares to the North are notoriously expensive.

Schouten will actively invite collaboration over the first year of his project's online life as he seeks to expand the breadth of the site with more of the multitude of stories which wend up and down and extend out from the Winter Road.

Distances Between has received support from Manitoba Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts and The Banff Centre for the Arts.



Advance Electronics of Winnipeg provided the computer for W5.