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## MANITOBA: Tim Schouten - *The Treaty 4 Suite (Adhesions - westward into the Indian country)*, Nov 27 to December 20, 2008, Ken Segal Gallery, Win

Since 2003, Manitoba artist Tim Schouten has been exploring the Treaties of Canada, historic agreements between the Government of Canada, signed between 1871 and 1954, and the country's Aboriginal people, granting rights and setting boundaries. His work explores the relationship between the treaty language and lands they encompass, and the visual and written stories that are connected to them. Each work in the series depicts the exact location where a treaty was signed. This exhibition shows the second set of *Treaty Suites* of the series.



Tim Schouten, *To the Cypress Hills (Treaty 4)*, detail, oil, pigment, beeswax, microcrystalline wax, dammar resin on vellum, 24" X 36", 2008.

Schouten uses encaustic and vellum in his work, creating a satisfyingly heavy texture.

The balance between the thick encaustic and

the light and translucent vellum allow for an interesting juxtaposition of materials. The wax is built up and layered over each colour, creating a deep and rich palette of tone and texture.

Schouten organizes the scenes in the works into horizon lines and linear scenes among the vast whiteness of the vellum. The space along the top and bottom edges of each of the works gives the small scenes breathing room, through an overwhelming sense of whiteness – maybe speaking to the political issues surrounding the treaties.



Tim Schouten, *Her Majesty's Commissioners and the said Indian Chiefs and Headmen (Treaty 4)*, detail, oil, pigment, beeswax, microcrystalline wax, dammar resin on vellum, 24" X 36", 2008.

Deep greens mingle with flecks of shimmering gold, while the fresh blue sky hangs above.

The beauty that he gives each place is set

against the politics of the treaty language and history, creating an interesting visual and historically literary conversation within each work. The colours blend in some spots to create vibrancy, while in other works such as *All ungranted or waste lands in the Province should be vested in the Crown*, the layering creates a murkiness that mirrors the intent behind the image.



Tim Schouten, *To have and to hold the same (Treaty 4)*, detail, oil, pigment, beeswax, microcrystalline wax, dammar resin on vellum, 24" X 36", 2008.

The text sprawled across and around the linear landscapes relates to the historical nature of the work. Schouten places text from both the actual treaty documents, and letters about the treaties in each piece. This gives each work a storytelling aspect apart from the visual narrative that is already occurring. In *And Whereas great Frauds and Abuses have been committed*, the viewer is confronted with the severity of the language, pushing through the layers of golden prairie landscape and small communities.

Viewing Schouten's work is an interesting experience in texture, history and beauty. He is able to give viewers a sense of the feeling of the landscapes, while leaving the history of the treaties, and their language, for interpretation.

— BY Stacey Abramson