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An avid reader who's worked in public libraries for 15 years, Robin Ripley knows the tactile, aesthetic pleasures of books—and is all too aware that we may be losing these in our increasingly wired world.

“When you see microfiche disappear and then other forms disappear, you think, ‘Are books next?’ ” says the mixed-media artist, who explores the subject in a series called “Book Bytes”, showing at this weekend’s West of Main Art Walk open-studio event. “I’m approaching it sort of like an anthropologist: are these things culturally important, and do I visually like the way that print rests on the page?”

Visitors to the Art Walk can see what she means in works like *Florescence*, carefully cut-out flower and plant definitions from a dictionary, all meticulously collaged and splayed like petals on a 20-by-20-inch round flower. Its red edges come from the dictionary’s notched pages, “which I loved when I was young”, Ripley says.



Another piece inspired by a disappearing art form, *Pitman Shorthand* submerges the pages of the old shorthand guide, layering them with sanded paint and plaster, Ripley having used a Dremel tool to carve out the shorthand symbols.

The work, showing at 3793 West 11th Avenue (where Ripley, who lives in the 'hood, is exhibiting as a guest), continues her interest in humans' relationship to objects. And the work has an important three-dimensional look and feel. "Compare that to a screen, which is so 2-D, and where people are reading now," she says. "My work reminds people books are physical objects."

Along with Ripley, here are three other form-pushing artists you should make sure to catch at the Art Walk:

Leah Price

(5474 Trafalgar Street)

Price turns trash into eye-pleasing, thought-provoking artwork, imbuing her mixed-media creations with history or commentary about the source materials. Think whimsical framed collages of discarded toys, game pieces, and ornaments, or dryer lint, realtor promotional material, and plastic packaging sewn into a new vision of "home".

Olga Campbell

(3866 West 12th Avenue)

Campbell's digital collages and mixed-media paintings defy easy definition, combining human and bird imagery, text, and objects into dreamlike combinations all their own. Also on sale at the walk: her moving book of poetry and artwork about her family's Holocaust history, *A*

Whisper Across Time, and her photo book of Vancouver street art, *Graffiti Alphabet*.

Alice Philips

(3793 West 11th Avenue)

This veteran hand-felter and fabric artist, who shares a studio with Ripley, will have exquisitely crafted practical and wearable objects on sale at the Walk, from tea cozies to scarves. But we love her more out-there pure artwork, like the *Boogie* wall hanging, whose shaggy felted Wensleydale and merino wools drip with layers of saturated pink and red against grey.

The West of Main Art Walk takes place Saturday and Sunday (June 2 and 3) between Point Grey and Main Street, and from Granville Island to 41st Avenue.

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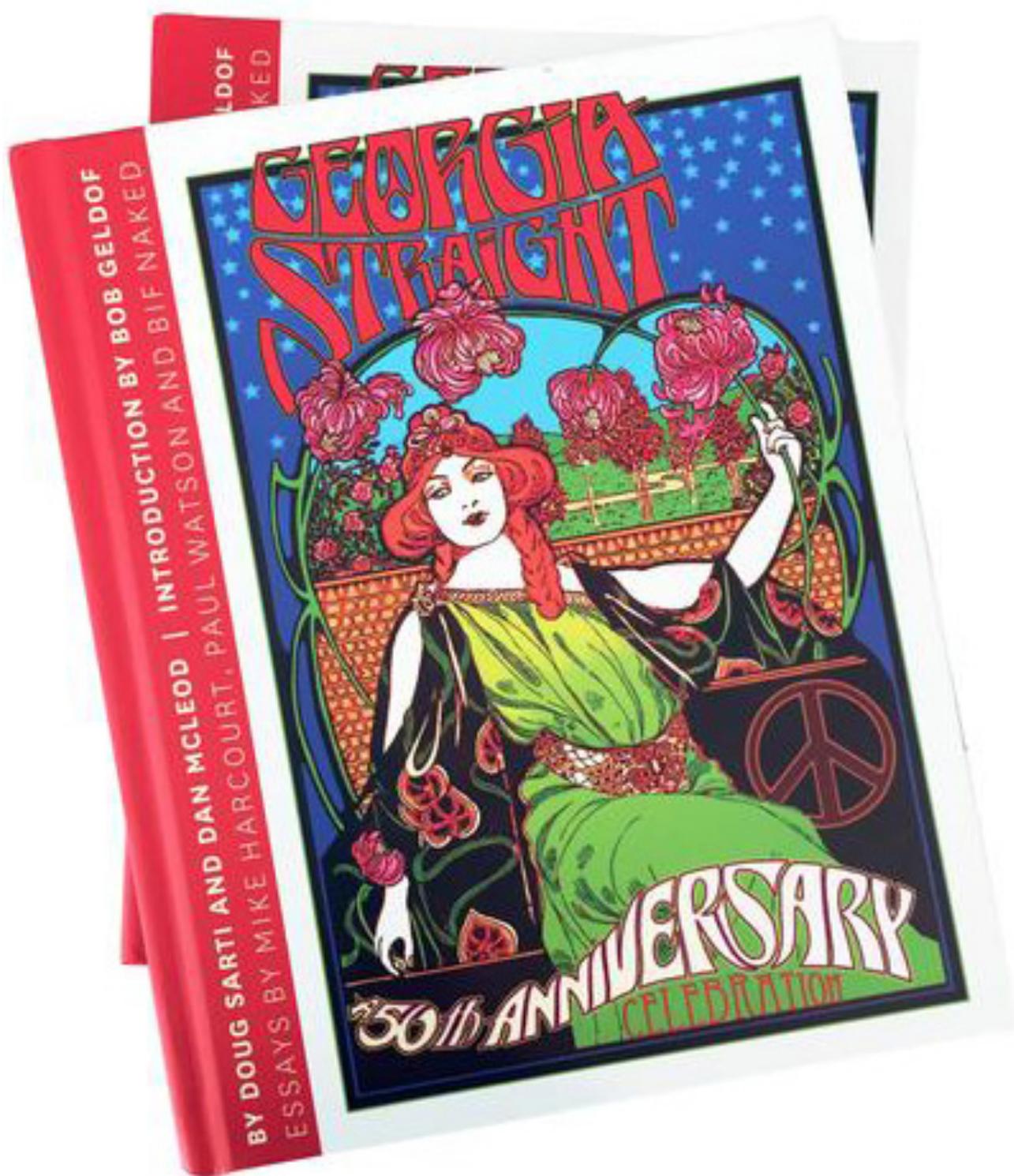


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