

All things giant and beautiful

Photographer Henri Robideau is best known as the pioneer "giantthropologist" who travelled Canada in search of examples of the national urge to make giant objects and put them by the side of the highway.

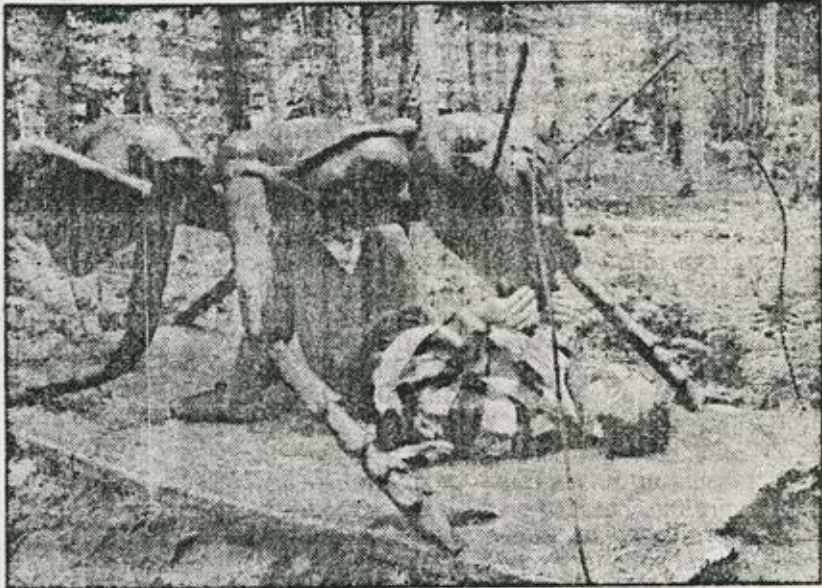


In Pacific to Atlantic: Canada's Gigantic, Robideau's current show at Presentation House, there's a roomful of giant things including: the Giant Oil Can, a monument to Rocanville, Sask.'s Ernest

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Symons, inventor of the self-squirting oil can; Buggsy, the giant ant from Bonsahw P.E.I.; the giant statue of the Hindu God Chaitanya outside the Burnaby Krishna Consciousness centre; the giant crow and baby crow in the Crow's Nest Past coal mining town of Blairmore, Alta.; and a giant Glooscap, legendary Micmac war god, on a quiet street in Parsboro, N.S.

But Robideau's photography has been developing a cutting edge over the past few years. Using the same technique as in his giantthropological work — panoramic shots trimmed and glued together to give an undistorted vista wider than any lense could supply — he has produced photographs of giant marches, rallies and protests.



HENRI ROBIDEAU has some fun with Buggsy of P.E.I.

The sweep of these photographs makes them effective renderings of the events, exactly like a crowd where we zero in on individuals and move back out to see the entirety.

The sequence taken outside the Hotel Vancouver on October 15, 1983 — the day of the second Operation Solidarity march — is a stunning view of the fracture of our society. Moving across the photograph from, as Robideau's caption puts it, "fluffy sweater hip capitalist flat top entrepreneur Sacred convention delegates" to "plaid

shirt working class minority disabled single parents on welfare unemployed," the eye traverses two entire worlds.

Combined with *The Crossroads of Life*, Robideau's hilarious five-part journey of disillusionment, these photographs of B.C. society in turmoil establish him as much more than your funny, friendly giantthropologist.

At Presentation House, 333 Chesterfield, North Vancouver, through June 8. Admission \$1.50.