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October 27th, 2005
 Guy Bérubé's Le Petit Mort Gallery

Breathless

Dale Smith

Orgiastic pleasures at Le Petit Mort Gallery

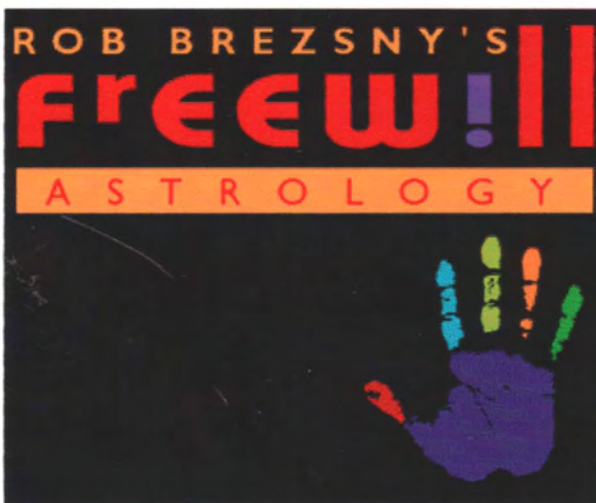
"La Petit Mort" is a French euphemism for the orgasm. When local curator, artist and enfant terrible Guy Bérubé gave the name to his new gallery, he said he did it for two reasons. There's the "deep" reason of wanting a gallery to be more about the breathlessness of seeing new art in a new way, the way an orgasm takes your breath away. That, and the phrase is tattooed on the back of his neck.

"I've been doing curating and putting shows together and selling as a dealer on my own for a number of years," said Bérubé, who lived in New York for 10 years but returned to Ottawa last year where he has worked as an independent curator, dealing from his apartment. "With meeting so many different, diverse artists—a lot of new, young, fresh talent—I noticed that I could show them all over the city in small venues like nightclubs, restaurants and stores." Bérubé has also started showing overseas in London and Paris.

"Eventually I figured it's time that I should have my own space to take it to the next level and show that if these artists are not considered standard enough for the Ottawa-style of clientele, then I was going to open my own space and show whatever the hell I wanted," he said. "And also it's showing Ottawa what else is there—it's not just underground art, it's art that sells very well, it's affordable, and it should be seen in that kind of venue."

The venue will mix art with mobilier—high-class furniture by local designers, and a couple of others from Brazil and Montreal. It will have the

relaxed feel of a lounge, where the art's not all lined up with price tags. Le Petit Mort will also feature works from two lighting



designers which, though designed for the space, are also for sale.



To happier days.... by Peter



Bérubé takes in his new gallery on Cumberland
 photo: Aaron McKenzie Fraser

"The Gallery basically offers the services of these lighting designers, the furniture designers, my own interior design, but it's also casual in that you don't get the sense that we're marketing that, unless you ask," Bérubé told us.

The main focus is of course the art and monthly exhibitions. La Petit Mort Gallery has 24 members, and plans 11 solo shows plus a group show over the course of the year. The gallery will also have a space for single works by the other artists not selected for a solo, plus a full inventory of their works in the basement, which has as much space as the gallery itself.

For the opening, Bérubé said he felt the need to bring in someone local who hadn't been seen much. He decided on Peter Shmelzer, whose works Bérubé considers orgiastic, his sculptures creepy. They will be on display when Le Petit Mort opens October 28 and stay up through December 2.