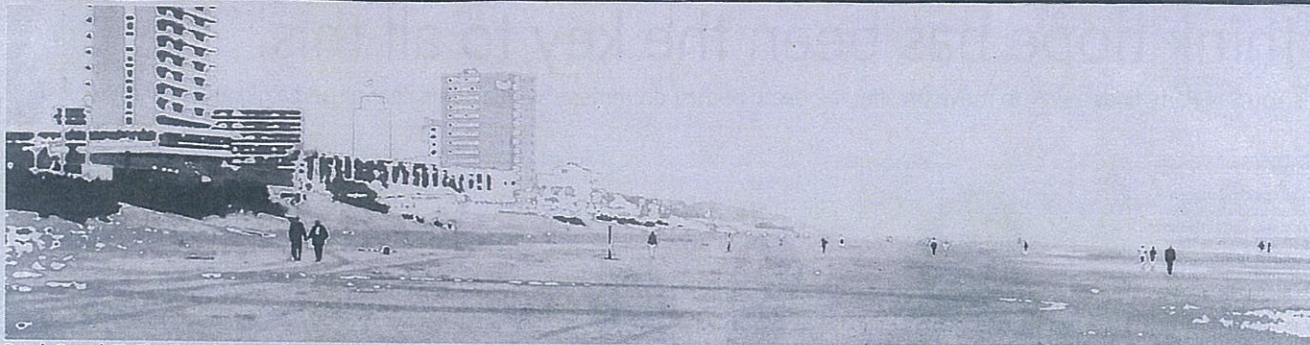


# THE GLOBE AND MAIL

CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER



Beverly Owens's Big Blue Sky: Using manipulated digital photography printed on six-foot-long metal plates, she presents a series of odd, inviting images.

## In the glare of a hot summer sun

Toronto artist-entrepreneur Beverly Owens's work shines at her own gallery, which is showing the exhibition At Last the Sun



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**BEVERLY OWENS AT THE BEVERLY OWENS PROJECT**  
Until Sept. 12, 1140 Queen St. W., Toronto; [www.thebeverlyowens-project.com](http://www.thebeverlyowens-project.com)

One of the art world's most stupid prejudices is against artists who run galleries and have the nerve to show their own work in said galleries. The old-school thinking regarding this practice — thinking that is never applied to other creative shopkeepers, such as clothing designers or chef-restaureurs — is that anyone who shows in a gallery they own does so because no one else wants their work.

This is just silly. Theatre artists frequently produce their own plays, and many musicians run their own recording labels. Ultimately, a commercial art gallery is a retail space. Why not cut out the commission-grabbing middle man?

Toronto artist-entrepreneur Beverly Owens runs The Beverly Owens Project, and while I do not always love the work by other artists on offer, Owens's work continues to intrigue. Her latest exhibition, At Last the Sun, is particularly striking, as it marks a departure from her much-admired encaustic practice.

Employing manipulated digital photography, printed on impressive, six-foot-long metal plates, Owens presents a series of odd, inviting images of sun-drenched resort beaches and hotel towers. Anyone who went outdoors this summer without sunglasses will recognize the hazy, disorienting glare Owens has recreated.

The beaches and hotels are not remarkable spaces in themselves. They are meant to be generic, and to thus invite audience projection. The manner in which the beaches and environs are photographed, however, is atypical, and far from postcard friendly.

Using a high-contrast style that dissolves particulars and distinctions to turn the beaches, visitors and adjacent hotels into almost indistinguishable blobs of lurid colour, Owens manufactures a boiling dreamscape, a sunstroke fantasia. Her solarized inks produce glorious colours — grape-juice purples that reminded me of the colour of mimeograph prints, pink hues dulled with hints of denim blue, and greens citrusy enough to ward off scurvy.

Owens wisely gives the buffed silver-grey metal enough breathing room on the printed surface to be an active element in the works, not just a conveyance, and the effect is both calming and jarring, like watching a freshly washed car pass quickly under a streetlight.

As summer comes to a cool close, At Last the Sun provides one final blast of blinding light, capturing on cold metal those meandering afternoons when UV-damaged corneas turn the world into one long swipe of melting colours and shapes.