



Photo: Gordon E. McCaw

Gord's recent scan of his 1985 photo of the Hong Kong Café on Pender Street in Vancouver's Chinatown (now vanished) sang out to me of autumn: perfect, I thought. This neon is more autumn than autumn itself. I wonder if I can scan a leaf montage that even approaches this?

First attempt is at the right....

(continued...!)

*Nature &
Artifice*

Scanner art/text: Elaine Bougie Gilligan





Despite heavy colour manipulation and image editing on that scanner montage, it just didn't have the right qualities. The leaves are opaque, not illuminated, like the neon. With my level of graphic resources, it takes a less realistic treatment to suggest fluorescent natural colour.

(continued...!)



I must emphasize, “with my level of graphic resources,” because in the natural world, there are illuminated greens and reds at least as brilliant as those in the café neon . How do I know? The little I know of nature tells me so.

In the 1980s, I was on an overnight hike in the dry south end of the Stein Valley near Lytton, BC. This was before the Stein watershed was protected, and I was in a group being given a bit of an ecological tour. I didn't say anything to our host or the native band youths who were assisting as guides, but I was bothered by the bits of “artificial stuff” I kept seeing tangled in branches or stuck in crevices on the ground.

At the time, hot pink, smouldering green and other flaming neon colours were in fashion, and that type of green, I was sure, existed only in manufactured palettes. Nowhere in the real world, I thought, would that lurid green be found. So, who was strewing apparently spray-painted bits of mossy stuff along the trail in the unadulterated Stein Valley? Were there would-be loggers hiking in, leaving Hanzel-and-

Gretel- like tokens of flurorescent green to guide their retreat?

It took more than a day to realize, there weren't any litterers . It was stray bits of moss left behind from the rainy season, so pungently loaded with chlorophyll that when dried, it was too green to be “real.”

I rethought my aversion to “neon” colours, then, considering that my never having seen a certain hue in nature said more about my limited experience than about its authenticity.

(continued...!)



R.M. Robinson, Elk River Falls trail

The Coloured Cauliflowers



Recently, I bought this golden cauliflower, at the Granville Market. It really did look like this; I didn't alter the colour one bit after scanning it straight to the computer.

The farmer mentioned, this isn't some new variety of cauliflower. He said that before supermarkets decided to sell only white cauliflowers, they came in a variety of colours, including purple and yellow.

My childhood memories of the 1950s must come in black-and-white--I can't recall the vivid vegetables I readily find in a web search.

According to www.deliciousorganics.com, *"Purple Cauliflower is WILD and is actually better for us. The color is caused by anthocyanins (like those found in red cabbage and red wine) ..(which are)... antioxidant (s).*

The thing is, once something becomes homogenously "normal", everything that deviates from that norm appears artificial, even if it is actually *less* forced, and more in tune with the normal, varied state that exists in the natural world. Variation begins to seem forced, even false.

(continued...!)



from: www.deliciousorganics.com



Linda Willetts from: www.pbase.com

You can fool some of the birds, some of the time

When I first held up for viewing a little bird dish my sister-in-law gave us, it was hard to tell what our pet birds saw in it. They appeared to be cautiously interested.

After a few weeks, I found that our female budgerigar, Danny, was pretty impressed with this unreal line-up of budgies. So impressed, she flew at it a number of times, and slid down the slippery face.



Later, she sidled up and pecked at the “branch” the birds are sitting on.

Danny is just as likely to be attracted to the painted branch as she is to those “other birds.” Perhaps the birds don’t really fool her, and the branch does: *“that looks like something good to chew.”*

Like her wild counterparts in Australia, she avidly works away at anything made of wood, a nesting skill. Danny’s nobody’s fool, but a fake might be rather tempting, when it comes to the thing she really loves. ➡



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