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# BOOKS AND VISUAL ARTS

## Pondering pain

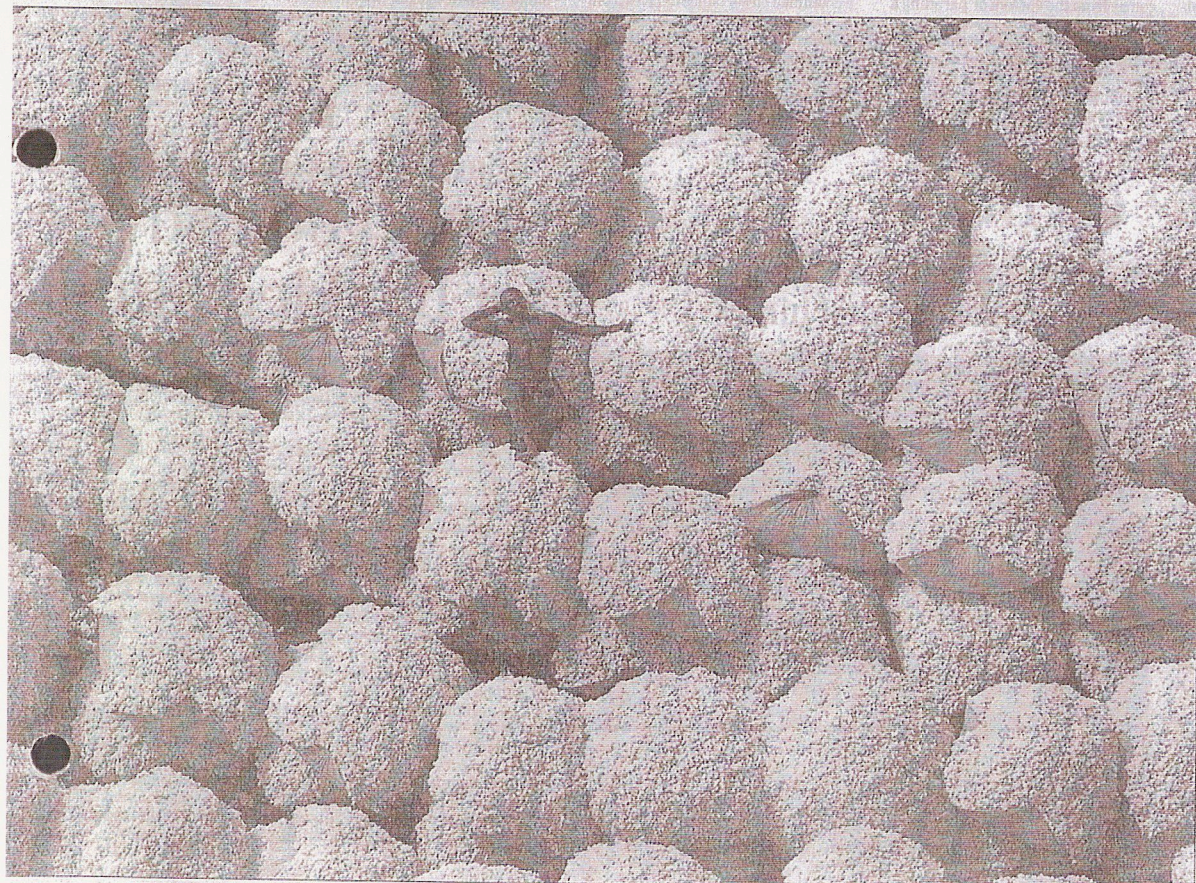
Medicine has tended to take a high-tech, interventionist approach to health instead of enlisting the resources and strengths of the body to negotiate with pain.

*In Pain: The Fifth Vital Sign*, Marni Jackson writes that acknowledging the body's own recuperative powers won't be easy.

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Bales of Cotton, Côte d'Ivoire is one of 120 aerial photographs on display on McGill College Ave.

French aerial photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand has an expert eye for subtle texture and nifty colour contrasts

COURTESY OF YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND



RICHARD ARLESS JR., GAZETTE

Arless checks out the Earth from Above photo exhibit. The continues throughout the summer.

# A world of patterns

HENRY LEHMANN  
Special to The Gazette

Like the Montreal jazz fest, which includes free outdoor events, a current open-air art exhibit offers pedestrians a major show for merely the price of strolling downtown in hot summer weather. Indeed, the west side of McGill College Ave., for a full three blocks between Ste. Catherine and Sherbrooke streets, is filled with display cases containing more than 120 aerial photographs, each four feet by six feet.

Titled Earth from Above, this down-on-the-street exhibit is the work of Yann Arthus-Bertrand, an internationally known adventurer and nature photographer whose images have appeared in Na-

tional Geographic, Geo and Paris Match. Aerial pictures that transform both nature and human-made structures into resplendent, somewhat mysterious patterns are Arthus-Bertrand's specialty. This project, which took 10 years and involved travel to five continents, was conceived when the photographer was shooting images of lions from a balloon in Kenya. Now, the aerial project has blasted off, with other shows by Arthus-Bertrand either currently on view or planned in 16 cities around the world.

Certainly, a major appeal of this obviously popular show is guessing what the patterns really represent. If there's still a deep suspicion on the part of the general public about abstract art, it seems there's only good cheer when it comes to Arthus-Bertrand's brand of

semi-abstract. Here, the challenge for us is make the connections between image and thing or place. Those mesmerizing swirls of brown met by a blue-green form in one picture do not represent a lab sample of a bacterial culture but rather the glory of Grand Prismatic Geyser at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. Those white bumps are not rows of spores seen through a microscope but rather cotton in an image labeled Bales of Cotton, Côte d'Ivoire; and that mosaic of reds is not a detail from a painting by Jean-Paul Riopelle but rather countless carpets laid out in Marrakech. Arthus-Bertrand has an expert eye for both subtle texture and nifty colour contrasts.

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