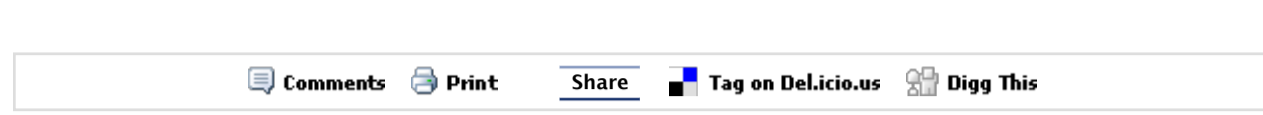


GALLERIES



The healthy butcher David R. Harper gives cut and paste a whole new meaning

Favourite Add to Favorites Recommend: 3

BY DAVID BALZER April 21, 2010 21:04

EDITORIAL RATING:

PERSON PLACE THING To Sep 6, \$6-\$12. Mon-Tue, Thu-Sun 11am-5pm; Wed 11am-8pm. Textile Museum of Canada, 55 Centre. 416-599-5321. www.textilemuseum.ca.

David R. Harper just wrapped a show at MKG 127, a small commercial gallery on Ossington which, despite its strong stable, can't always display artists to full, monumental effect. So, if you missed it, take heart: Harper is still showing at the Textile Museum of Canada in a mini-exhibit entitled "Skin & Bone" - part of a tripartite offering, "Person Place Thing," with Lia Cook and Stephen Schofield - and his impressive work has been given the room it needs to shine.

The first thing you see in the show is Harper's The Last to Win, a life-sized horse, made of cowhide, with a motif of a naked woman surrounded by a border of flowers embroidered on the horse's croup. Harper - only in his mid-twenties, making him significantly younger than both Cook and Schofield - has taught himself taxidermy and has an avid interest in tattoo artistry.

These two combine in his sculptures and wall pieces in a thematic exploration of frontierism, 19th-century aesthetics and evolutionary biology. As a vehicle for these concepts, A Gathering, the other major work here, is better than The Last to Win; instead of a horse, Harper takes a herd of deer (again, they're not formerly alive ones; Harper only makes composites using available hides, usually cow and goat), and slices them in two, removing their hind halves and placing canvases over top of them, onto which he grafts Victorian-style cameo portraits.

Lia Cook, who has boasting rights to a pretty neat, idiosyncratic achievement - digitizing the Jacquard loom - plays with optics and, following this, with cultural readings of femininity and childhood. Like Harper, she enjoys the monumental: her large tapestries depict dolls' and kids' faces in impressionist grids.

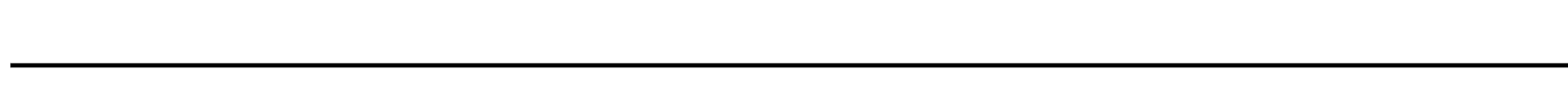
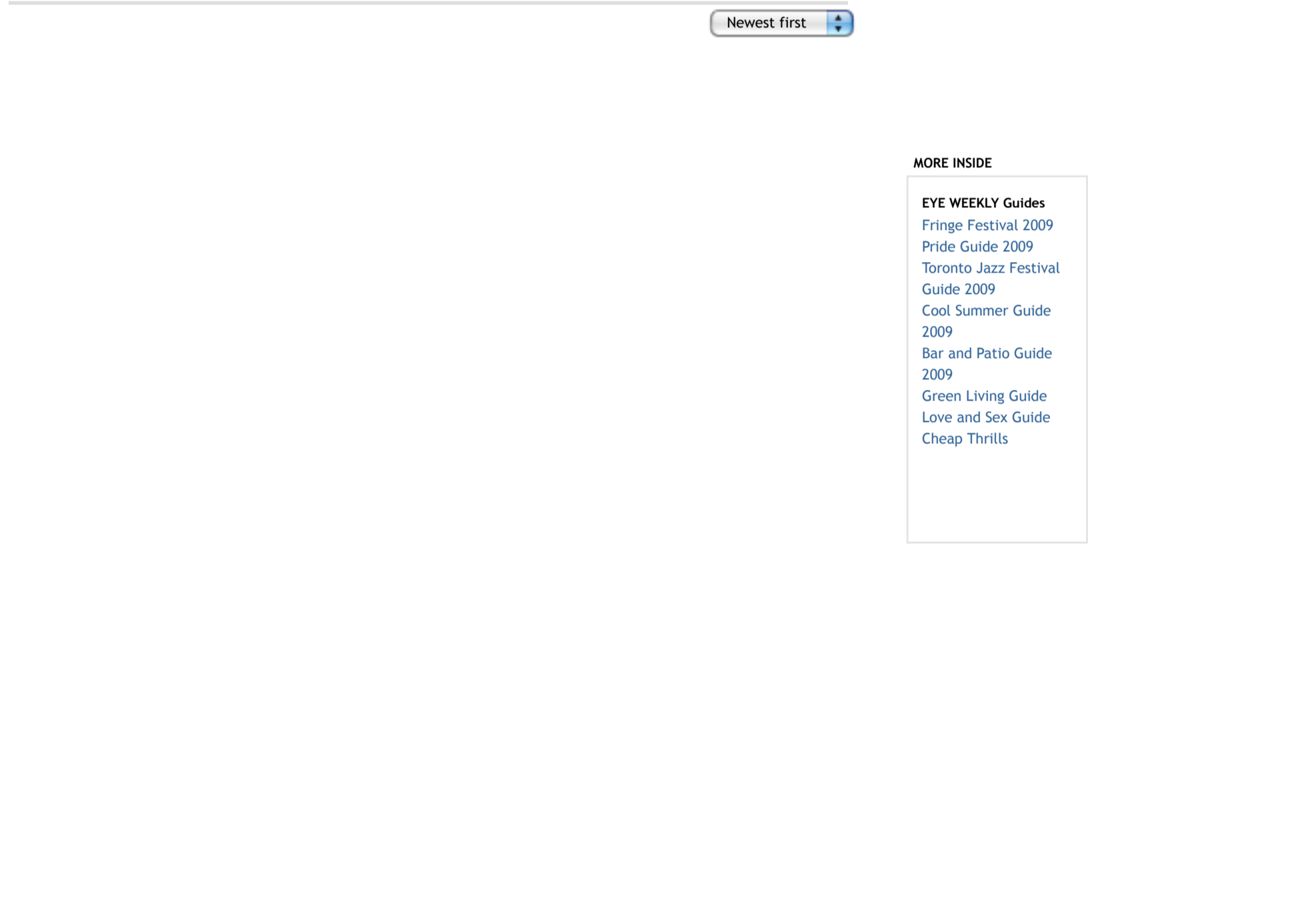
Coming after Harper, however, she lacks impact. Both deal in brutal themes, but Harper's work, in its three-dimensionality and handmade imperfections, is satisfyingly visceral in a way Cook's isn't. (It doesn't help that her work is also reminiscent of those rugs that photo stores make of people's kids.) Schofield's section, "Stumble," based on the fascinating writings of Pliny the Elder, takes "Person Place Thing" full circle. His used-cloth sculptures of men are quaint, perverse and haunting - like Harper's animals, they cast shadows both literal and figurative.

» EMAIL DBALZER@EYEWEEKLY.COM; TWITTER @DAVIDBALZER.

Email us at: LETTERS@EYEWEEKLY.COM or send your questions to EYEWEEKLY.COM 1 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor, Toronto Ontario, M5E 1E6

User Comments Comment Using Facebook Connect or EyeID or Comment Anonymously

Newest first



Select a City ABBOTSFORD 83% Off at U Weigh ALLISTON / INNISFIL Half Off Music Le AURORA / NEWM 62% off a Niagara G

Toronto Listings Finder FILM MUSIC CLUBS ARTS Film Finder Films | Theatres All Any Movie Genre Any Movie Rating Any Movie Title Find Film Chart Grab this finder

Related Stories

CONTACT decision maker Don't know what to see at Toronto's biggest photography festival? Check out our handy CONTACT primer. Refined crude In his ROM photo exhibit about the impact of oil, Edward Burtynsky once again creates haunting images of modern landscapes. The projectionist UK artist Lindsay Seers plays with film history in her Images Festival installation.

MORE INSIDE

- EYE WEEKLY Guides Fringe Festival 2009 Pride Guide 2009 Toronto Jazz Festival Guide 2009 Cool Summer Guide 2009 Bar and Patio Guide 2009 Green Living Guide Love and Sex Guide Cheap Thrills