



GALLERIES



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Pulp Fiction

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BY DAVID BALZER June 30, 2009 21:06

EDITORIAL RATING:

To Aug 23. Tue-Sun 11am-6pm;
Fri 11am-9pm. Museum of
Contemporary Canadian Art, 952
Queen W. 416-395-0067.
www.mocca.ca.

“Pulp Fiction” opens a little window for Toronto art scenesters, who may not know of London, Ontario’s nexus of similar-minded scrappy scribblers, painters, animators and builders or, if they do, may not be aware they do. A way into this MOCCA show, organized by Museum London and curated by Corinna Ghaznavi, is the recently opened Paul Bright Gallery on Bloor, which grew from a London- (and, briefly, West Queen West-) based gallery entitled Community Outreach, a

place that, though always vocal in its support of local artists (look at its name), tried very hard (much harder, actually, than a lot of Toronto galleries) to make connections with artists in the US, from Brooklyn to Philadelphia to Providence to San Francisco. (Actually, Paul Bright’s website currently says they are closed for the summer for a move to New York.)

With this in mind, the inevitable exhortation on seeing “Pulp Fiction” – “this is so Royal Art Lodge” – shouldn’t be entertained at length. The Royal Art Lodge happen to have come to prominence early and to be particularly good at what they do, but as art movements go, they are not terribly original or exclusive. Theirs is a generational expression, speaking to the common semiotics of white, middle-class, alterna-youth in North America. So, there’s not an aesthetic unique to London here; it’s what any good warehouse collective of twentysomethings might produce, and that means it’s worth a look, even if it’s not going to change your life profoundly. Especially eye-catching are the objects on which Jason McLean, often in partnership with Mark DeLong, paints, such as a rice hat (pictured), baseballs and baseball gloves, or packages of vanilla flavouring inserted into cassette cases. These objects represent the hopeful, DIY rejection of the ready-made, positing quotidian stuff as art only insofar as it might function as a canvas for the artist.

James Kirkpatrick’s big, weird, mixed-media installation, the talking that influences everything that still goes on those that allow it to happen, is more ambitious, and has that primitivist, shamanistic quality that betrays Mike Kelley’s influence. Such cool-kid pageantry translates best in a large gallery like MOCCA, as opposed to the many small works on paper, which, while neat, notably the detail-oriented illustrations of Marc Bell, get reduced on white walls to what they are, at heart – fanciful, tentative, boyish experiments, like pages pulled from the binder of that guy with the bloodshot eyes and the Butthole Surfers t-shirt in math class who always wanted to borrow your eraser.

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comoutgal
Jul 9, 2009 1:44 PM

community outreach

Dear EYE and David Blazer, Thank you for the kind words about my gallery Community Outreach, as well as my short lived endeavors in Toronto. I feel terrible about not continuing to run the gallery in Toronto but I simply had many more opportunities in the USA. It was very hard to sell this type of art in Canada and I could not continue to sleep on the floor of the gallery anymore. Also my fiancee and I are looking at adopting a baby here in the states so I had to pick my battles. So anyway, sorry to pull an Aykroyd on everybody and disappear to the states, Ill come back if MOCCA lets me curate a show there.
Paul Bright

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