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TERENCE DICK in Mississauga, Scarborough, Oakville 04/17/12

Lila Lewis Irving at the Art Gallery of Mississauga | Age of Consent at the Doris McCarthy Gallery |

Keren Cytter at Oakville Galleries

posted by [Terence Dick](#) - April 17th, 2012.

The material quality of paint has always fascinated me (as my recent review of [Emily Schaefer](#)'s liquidy acrylics would attest) and, after my trip to the **Art Gallery of Mississauga** last weekend, I'd argue that the local queen of poured pigment might just be **Lila Lewis Irving**.



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Lila Lewis Irving, *Ondine*, 2007, acrylic on canvas

When I first glanced at the press pictures on the AGM website, I thought they were exhibiting a collection of aerial photographs of industrial sites. Irving's current colour phase is focused on earth and metallic tones, so you could say it was an honest mistake. The short documentary that greets you as you enter the gallery shows her playing freely with the elemental aspects of her medium to create canvases that don't always work on completion or in totality, but have zones of delight and, at their best, capture something of the energy of creation. With its overhead shots of Irving pushing puddles of paint around with a mop, letting the liquids mix as they may, so deliciously messy, childlike, and primitive, the video speaks directly to my instinctual self. References to opera in her titles suggest something of an inspiration, but the paintings are not about anything other than themselves according to the artist. With subject matter out of the way, the end products invite the



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kind of self-revelation that Dr. Rorschach perfected and we keep getting seduced by.



Sue de Beer, *Two Girls*, 2001

If the Visual Studies department at the University of Toronto keeps up with the caliber of exhibitions they're presenting this year as part of their Curatorial Studies degree, they are soon going to give places like Bard College a run for their money. One of three graduate projects opened this past weekend at the **Doris McCarthy Gallery** in Scarborough and the range of artists included would do any professional institution proud (the other two are at the [Justina M. Barnicke Gallery](#) and the [McMaster Museum of Art](#)). *Age of Consent* is curated by **Talia Linz** and focuses on the theme of adolescence. It's been done before, but the

subject matter of youth in transition will always be fertile ground for artists. International video artists **Sue de Beer** and **Tobias Yves Zintel** train their eyes on teens acting out fantasy identities in a style that always reminds me of Gregg Araki's deviant afterschool specials. Zintel's *Neverland Rising* in particular has a bounty of arresting images. Canadian **Rebecca Fin Simonetti** contributes dreamy ink drawings that combine Shary Boyle and Steven Shearer (two of a previous generation of teen-obsessed artists). And Toronto's **Leslie Peters** braves her own high school years by using her first appearance on videotape as found material for a meditation on acting out.



Keren Cytter, *Avalanche* (still), 2011

In the age of austerity, cuts to arts funding disappoint but don't surprise. My jaw dropped however when I read Murray Whyte's [recent piece](#) on the possible closure of **Oakville Galleries'** Gairloch Gardens venue. My love for OG is well documented and the unique location of their seaside offices has more than a little to do with it. Considering our unstable times, it's probably best to visit the cottage sooner rather than later. Their newly opened survey show of video artist **Keren Cytter** might just be the excuse you're looking for.

Given the artist's high international profile (Artforum covers, anyone?) and guest curator **Helena Reckitt's** previous gig, I wouldn't be surprised to find out that this exhibition was a casualty of the recent turnover in staffing at The Power Plant. Toronto's loss is Oakville's gain and another feather in their cap for prescient programming (cf. Cardiff, Marclay, Altmejd, to name a few). Cytter's work will prove as much of a challenge for suburbanites as it will downtowners; her dense and dreamlike dramas play themselves out like a slightly slower Ryan Trecartin who grew up on the French New Wave instead of Saturday morning cartoons. Characters double, proclaim cypically, comment on their roles, address the camera, and generally fragment

in the course of psychosexual relations that may or may not be figments of their simmering psyches. My deep-seated desire for resolution is continually frustrated by the speed with which the shorts shift and my only recourse is to satisfy myself with fleeting glimpses of meaning. While one critic referred to it as “nostalgia for postmodernism”, the discombobulating dramas feel more like my real life than I’d care to admit (though with less full frontal nudity).



Terence Dick is a freelance writer living in Toronto. His art criticism has appeared in Canadian Art, BorderCrossings, Prefix Photo, Camera Austria, Fuse, Mix, C Magazine, Azure, and The Globe and Mail. He is the editor of Akimblog.

Art Gallery of Mississauga: <http://www.artgalleryofmississauga.com/>

Lila Lewis Irving: Con Spirito continues until April 29.

Doris McCarthy Gallery: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~dmg/>

Age of Consent continues until May 12.

Oakville Galleries: <http://www.oakvillegalleries.com/>

Keren Cytter: Based on a True Story continues until June 10.

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