

Toronto

Michael Brunswick at Gallery One | Artists at TIFF | Diane Borsato and Taku Dazia at Mercer Union | Toronto Free Broadcasting

posted by Terence Dick - September 17th, 2009.

What with the rapid hipster-ification of Queen West, the old core of Toronto's art scene is being split asunder again. I spent this week traipsing from the older old core of Yorkville to the new frontiers of Lansdowne, finding hits and misses in equal measure. I wasn't expecting much when I found myself strolling Hazelton and Scollard with kids in tow last weekend. We stepped into **Fehely Fine Arts** and enjoyed a couple **Shuvinai Ashoona** drawings amidst the selection of work from Cape Dorset. Next door at **Gallery Gevik**, we discovered a playful abstraction down in the basement by **Janine Carreau** that my five year old connected with in particular (they both like to use sparkly paint).



Michael Brunswick

It wasn't until we crashed the install for Toronto-born, LA-based **Michael Brunswick**'s exhibition of new abstractions at **Gallery One** that I found something to get excited about. I always get knotted up with questions of intention when contemplating instances of non-representational work, but Brunswick gives me an out as his technique is partially out of his control. Mixing chemistry and pigment, he allows his canvases to establish their own identity and ends up with some strangely familiar forms that feel natural (crystals, molds, liquids) but have somehow entered the realm of semiotics. The materiality of his materials is intriguing and he likes to work big and glossy with some nice

colours. What's to complain about?

Future Projections and *Wavelengths* are the two **Toronto International Film Festival** programs where names most familiar to readers of Akimblog pop up. The first is an installation series with screenings everywhere from Yonge-Dundas Square to **IndexG**. A couple of **Mark Lewis'** current exhibitions across the city are folded into TIFF. **Lisa Steele** and **Kim Tomczak** have a work at the box office in Nathan Phillips Square and **Jesper Just** is showing at **The Drake**. *Wavelengths* screenings can be found on the Festival website and include folks such as **Heinz Emigholz**, **Michael Snow**, **Chris Kennedy**, and **Harun Farocki**. The Festival ends soon, but many of the gallery-based installations will hang around.

Inevitably there's someone with a visual arts pedigree making their feature debut at TIFF. This year it's **Shirin Neshat** with her film *Women Without Men*. I didn't see it (some of us have to work!), but my wife did and gave it the thumbs up. I managed to find time to see John Hillcoat's adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. I strongly suggest you read the book before seeing the movie and keep friends and family close by for comforting hugs and reassurance that things won't get that bad. McCarthy's vision of a horrific near future is marked by utter savagery and humane gestures survive only as the dying embers of a fire beset by the elements.



Diane Borsato, *The Chinatown Foray*, 2008

It was only after visiting **Diane Borsato's** exhibition at **Mercer Union** that I began to feel okay about humanity again. She works in the performance/relational art realm, so a gallery exhibition is a bit odd for her. What's here is a selection of well-mounted documents of her real "work." It mostly has to do with community and exchange. She travels with her mycology society to Chinatown to identify mushrooms in their unnatural environment. The look of delight on the participants' faces is infectious. She also exchanges her knowledge of earth-dwelling fungi for lessons in celestial understanding and learns Italian by taking ping-pong lessons and studying astrophysics in that language. The whole life/art divide is ignored once again and I can only look on with admiration at someone who finds so much to enliven and edify her everyday existence while at the same time fostering a sense of connection with the wild variety of people around her.



Taku Dazai, *All the Things I Have Done*, 2009

In the back room, **Taku Dazai** takes on a different kind of wildlife with his taxidermied sculptures. They have less to do with the natural science of Mark Dion and more to do with the bio-trophy of hunters and the symbolism of that struggle. Goats come at each other with knives and a crafty owl outwits a snake. And a little mouse sums up an individual's life. Is this modesty or tragedy? You be the judge.

Across the street at the **Toronto Free Gallery**, an ongoing project called *Toronto Free Broadcasting* has set up an "experimental learning channel" and production studio. Various events through the fall will end up on the air. The next is tonight at seven and will be led by local video artist **Oliver Husain**. Check out the website for more information and an archive of videos.



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*, and *The Globe and Mail*. He is the editor of Akimblog.

Gallery One: <http://www.galleryone.ca/>

Michael Brunswick continues until October 9.

Mercer Union: <http://www.mercerunion.org/>

Diane Borsato and Taku Dazai continue until October 24.

Toronto Free Broadcasting: <http://www.torontofreebroadcasting.net/>