

art

FILM

Toronto the star

Mark Lewis muses on T.O. as setting **By DAVID JAGER**

MARK LEWIS at Justina M. Barnicke Gallery (7 Hart House Circle), to October 26. 416-978-8398. Rating: **NNNN**

TORONTO'S GETTING A LOT OF ATTENTION in the film world lately. Just as TIFF Cinematheque proudly programs films set in our city, the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery presents *In A City*, by Mark Lewis. The show includes *Cold Morning*, the major work commissioned for the Canadian Pavilion of the 2009 Venice

Biennale, and T.O. is the star.

Lewis's seemingly authentic scenarios are often elaborately staged, and he's fascinated with the way cinema fuses disparate elements into a convincing narrative whole. This is most evident in his use of rear projection, where actors sit in front of a projected moving background.

Nathan Phillips Square offers a magical and lighthearted romantic interlude in which an interracial couple skates on the iconic outdoor ice rink at night. It takes a few moments to

realize that the background is entirely projected. They twirl and loop seamlessly, but a disconcerting and dreamlike sense of dislocation lingers.

In *Cold Morning*, a man rearranges

meagre belongings (a coffee cup, knapsack and sleeping bag) on a frozen Toronto sidewalk. Pigeons warm themselves on steaming grates and cars roll by while the man fusses and rummages. Yet you can't help but notice how his bright red coat matches the bag, and how those colours play off the green of the trash bin. The items end up neatly folded and stacked, while the figure himself disappears.

TD Centre, 54th Floor features one of Lewis's trademark slow pans, in which architecture plays a lead role. He photographs King Street at an extreme angle from Mies van der Rohe's tower, window frames passing in solemn rhythm like the individual cells of a film strip.

It's another of Lewis's thoughtful and clever deconstructions of cinematic expectations and technique. @art@nowtoronto.com



Skaters glide in Mark Lewis's Nathan Phillips Square, *A Winter's Night, Skating*.

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