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FEATURES

Minimal Most Certainly Can

To encounter minimalism is often, if not always, an exasperating experience. If we were to be honest, one might be tempted to say that minimalism borders being arrogant in its tightly pact simplicity. Minimalist art is not often thought of being synonymous with humor. *Why Can't Minimal* counters the preconceived downfalls of minimalism.

Walking through the gallery it is difficult to contain yourself. The pieces are akin to witty one liners. Considering the sculpture entitled *Slab, Base for a Future Monument* by Jon Sasaki the viewer is confronted with a slab of wet concrete on the gallery floor. Monuments, which have held an important place within the canon of art history, are within this presentation, debased to the simplest and least “artistic” state. It is the monument before artistry, craft or identity are impressed upon the medium. And yet, the thoughts upon monument art in the past and its evolution or extinction within contemporary art are still evoked.



Slab, Base for a Future Monument by Jon Sasaki

Similarly, the piece *Not Quite There (no.2)* by Liza Eurich which is a “failed drawing” that has been partially encased in concrete. The drawing is *not quite there* for a number of reasons, one being that the concrete has not fully consumed the failed drawing. Another reason for its incompleteness is that the failed drawing has yet to be fully resolved by the artist. Even so, the work *is there* and in a sense complete in that it is a work of art boasted on a clean white wall of an established gallery. The self deprecating undertones residing in the fantasy of masking our failures in concrete is a dark humor most people can relate to on some level.



Not Quite There (no.2) by Liza Eurich

Why Can't Minimal asks a fair question and the pieces exhibited answer unanimously. Minimalism most certainly can. This exhibition sheds the stigma that has fostered an apprehension towards minimalist art; leaving viewers saying “who knew minimalist art could be funny?”

Mia Guttman

*Exhibition information: *Why Can't Minimal*, September 2 – October

19, 2014, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Hart House at the University of Toronto, 7 Hart House Circle. Gallery hours: Mon – Sun 10 -5, Wed 12 – 8 p.m. / A *panel discussion* on the exhibit will be held on October 14th at 6 p.m. at the University of Toronto Art Centre, 15 King's College Circle.

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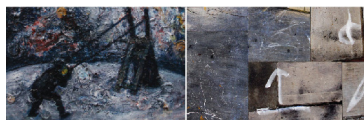
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