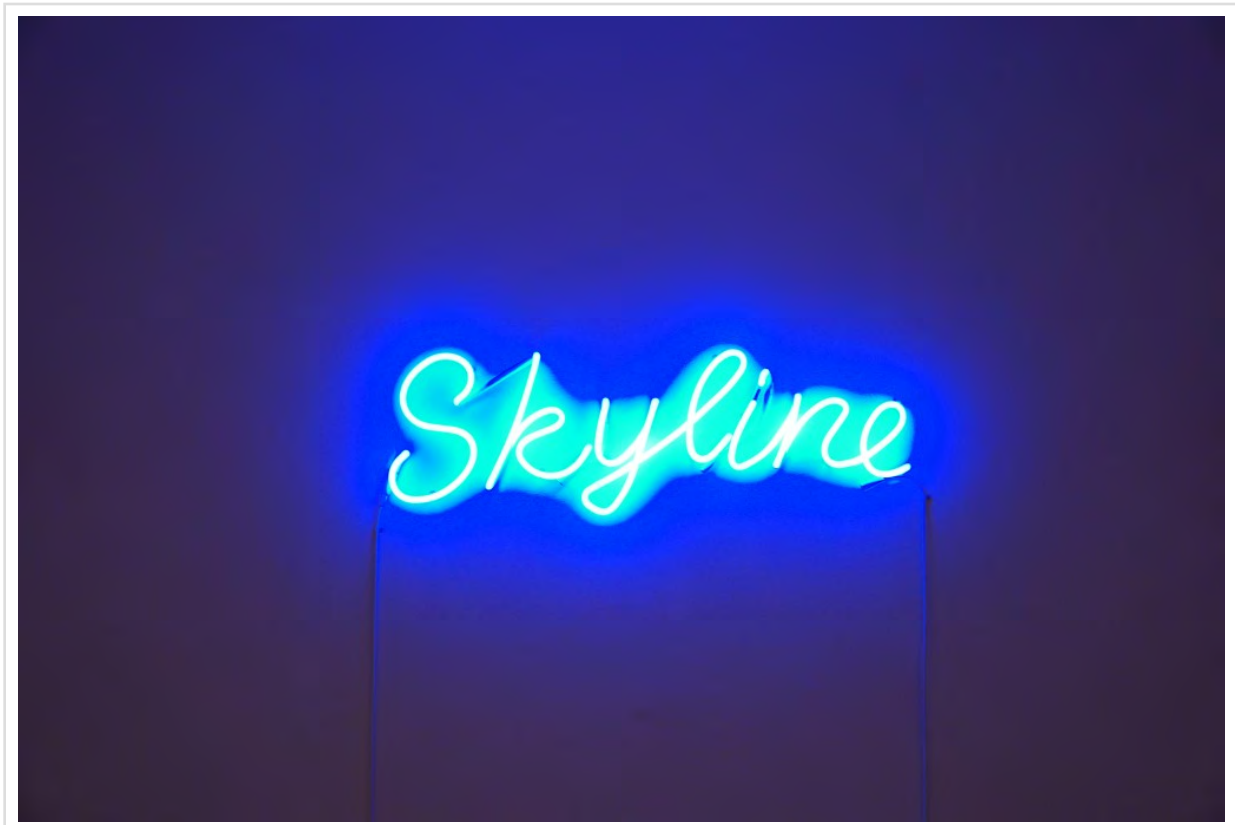


Life @ U of T

Showroom: A Trip to the New Exhibition at the Newly Re-named U of T Art Museum

Posted on **January 31, 2016** by **taryn**

Ever since my trip to the University of Toronto Art Centre last semester, I've fallen in love with the space. I don't find many things more relaxing than a trip to an art gallery, and having one on campus, and a beautifully curated one as well, has been wonderful.



After being closed for a few weeks for installation, the Art Centre reopened last Thursday with a new exhibition, *Showroom*, and a new name, *U of T Art Museum*. U of T's two art galleries, the U of T Art Centre in University College and the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery in Hart House now form the U of T Art Museum, though they're still maintaining their autonomy as separate galleries as well.



Showroom is a collaborative exhibition comprised of the works of more than 36 artists, and provides commentary on the influence of lifestyle marketing on the cityscape. Through both comedic and formal commentary, the pieces serve to critique the rapid urban growth of our city.



When first walking into the gallery, you're met with giant wooden sculptures created by the arts collective VSVSVS. From a giant hamster wheel to a barbell comprised of two wooden bananas, this instillation is a surreal depiction of a condo gym.

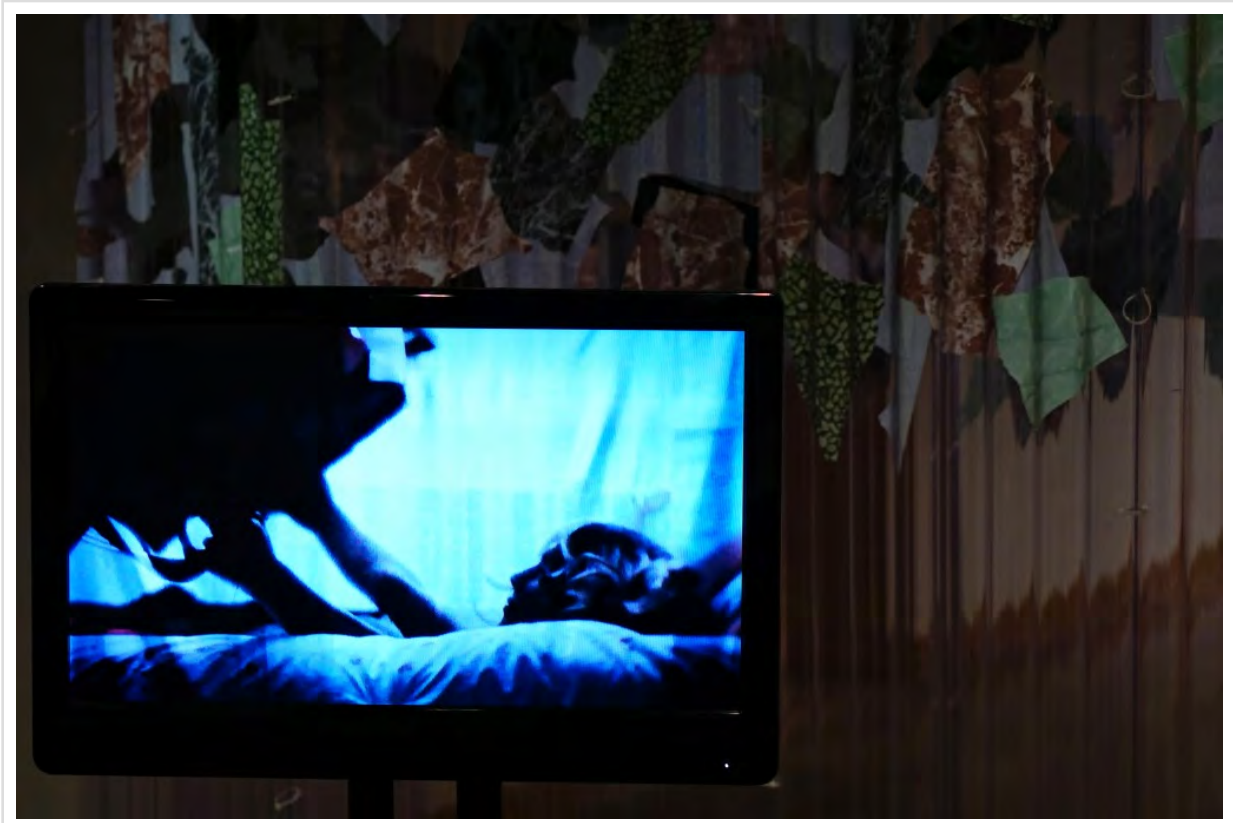




VSVSVS's installation was one of my favourite parts of the show. The tongue and cheek humour employed in each of the pieces did not only work as extremely successful satire, but created a fun space to explore.



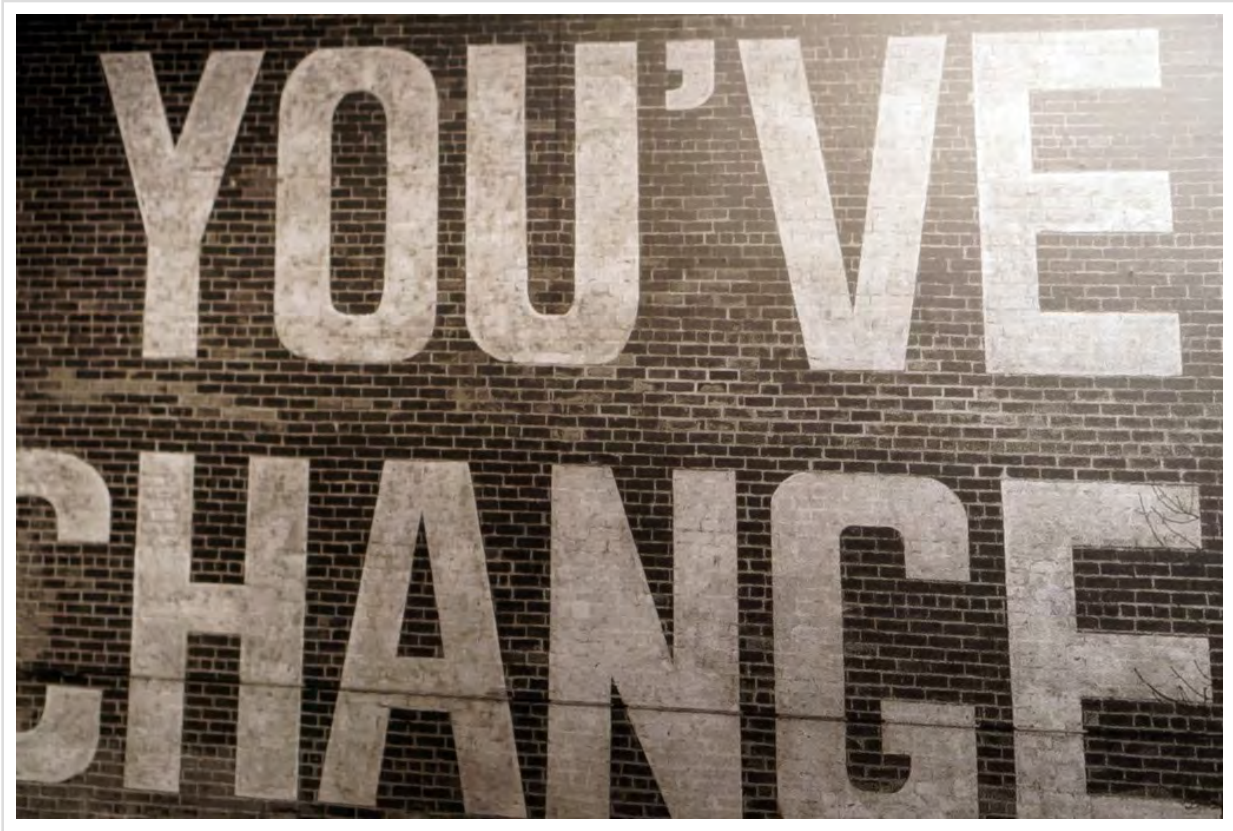
Another favourite piece of mine was Oliver Husain's 2013 piece Parade. On the TV, a video of condeo advertisements projected against flowing fabric plays. Husain's goal was to "reintroduce texture into the otherwise flat world of empty lifestyle sales".



I found Jeff Bierk's pieces (pictured below) incredibly striking, both visually and emotionally, and especially opposed to the lifestyle sales and condo recreations I had seen previously. The way that shelter was conveyed here, as something needed rather than sold, really spoke to me.



Showroom is definitely one of, if not the best exhibitions I've seen. It left me reflecting and questioning the way that our city is growing and changing, and how much of that change has occurred without notice.



The photos above are only a tiny sample of the beautiful pieces included in Showroom, which is currently being exhibited at both branches of the Art Museum, UTAC in University College and the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery in Hart House. Showroom is on until March 5th, 2016 and admission is free. The Art Museum is open from 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and from 12:00 p.m. to – 8:00 p.m. Wednesday.

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