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Ray Dirks, curator, rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca

workday: Timothy Joel Dyck a piece of work: Seth Woodyard Ulmeus Communitas: Frank Livingston

March 10 - April 29
opening:
March 10, 7:30 pm

In the past five years, three young Winnipeg artists have been making their presence known in the community and have developed impressive lists of exhibits and collections. We are pleased to show some of their current work at the Gallery.

Timothy Joel Dyck is a photographer who is interested in the interplay between people and nature.

He looks for what isn't always noticed. His portraits incorporate as much of the event and place as they do of the people captured in his work.



Timothy Joel Dyck, Great start to the morning

Timothy works primarily in film, which does not allow for manipulation in the way the digital process does.

Using a mix of control and coincidence in which humankind and nature overlap, Timothy records the ways our actions have an impact on our spaces. The obscure beauty that comes about through composition is a strange kind of thing that happens all the time, but usually unconsciously and often goes unnoticed.

Of this exhibit, Timothy says, "*workday* is an exploration of the banal components of work. There are many avenues to be explored in how something is made, and this exhibition focuses on the banal, the mundane, the overlooked.

An art object is the result of many factors combining to create something that can engage insight in the viewer. An art object can be measured as the culmination of hours of labour, cost of materials, the skill of the creator, or intended revelation of new ideas.

workday focuses on the minutiae of the job. In the grinding, menial, and often indifferent work environment, it can be easy to plod along, function without experience. Instead of succumbing to such numbness, the

viewer is shown new vantage points within the structure of the day, from which to reframe the mundane.

There is nothing inherently special or profound in any of these items, but perhaps re-framing one's perception allows a new understanding of the work day."

Seth Woodyard also pays attention to the interplay of everyday materials to create his works. He says of his drawings and installations, "I like to make things into other things. Regardless of the material I use, I am always interested in how, through a transformative creative process, a normal everyday object, material, or experience is rendered special and valuable – even sacred. I think one of the most important jobs for an artist is to use the tools at hand to elevate the everyday. I am interested in exploring the significance of historical, mythological, and domestic stories and rituals. My interest in myth and religion is an appreciation for the mysterious nature in which stories of various mythologies run parallel to one another, intersecting and repeating one another. It is this

promiscuous nature of myth to which I want to draw attention and give form. I like to think that I make icons to a playful transcendence, something that is tangible and incorporeal, sacred and profane, real and imaginary. I'm drawn to the mystery in the world and want to highlight that mystery."

A piece of work is a series of pencil drawings of piles of wood



Seth Woodyard, untitled

Bruce Hidebrand

blocks. The blocks are cutoff scrap material from other projects. My process is simple. I arrange the blocks into a variety of rudimentary forms that are simultaneously abstract and representational, architectural and figurative, monumental and diminutive. I sometimes add other objects to the assemblage: round stones, ladders, and plant specimens gathered from various locations. Then I make pencil drawings of the objects. Through the creative process the objects are transformed. What was once expendable is now precious and extraordinary.

As I assembled these objects, made drawings, reassembled them, and made more drawings, what stood out to me was the repetition of shapes and patterns common to the wood grain, to the plant specimens, and even to the human body. Knots in wood start to look like orifices or blemishes in skin. A branching stem resembles the framework of a building. These shared patterns and forms contain a mysterious beauty; perhaps it's even sacred.

Frank Livingston's artworks are a response to the loss of trees in his neighbourhood. He says, "**Ulmeus Communitas/Elm Community** began as a series of street art interventions – wheat pastes of trees – in Winnipeg's Wolesey neighbourhood. Motivated by a desire to commemorate the loss of historic elm trees (from Dutch Elm Disease) I sought to reflect on this organic demise with representational trees. The



Frank Livingston, untitled

sites I chose for the placement of these trees were the abject and benighted surfaces that populate our neighborhoods such as dumpsters, signal boxes and transformer boxes. Each wheat paste tree was drawn by hand in sections with separate trunks and clusters of leaves that would form the canopy. The trunks and leaves were filled with stylized design elements, many of them geometric, rendered with permanent marker, which re-inscribes the built and constructed nature of trees and landscape. Painted with watercolour in a range of green hues, autumnal yellows, oranges, pinks, and reds the leaves were applied separately.

The ripples and bubbles of the wheat-paste are intentional gestures to the original street art. Those works were done quickly, stealthily, and in the dark. I did not want to lose that sense of urgency by creating smooth and exacting decoupage. As a result I worked quickly, duplicating as best I could the method and process of the street art.

The paintings that form *Ulmeus Communitas* reference their street art origins in their construction, materials, and dimensions. These trees are not

realist representations but rather references to trees as iconic forms. All the tree trunks are decorated with non-organic designs that gesture to the manufactured and manipulated conditions that structures bio-organic life in the contemporary world."

MHC Gallery will officially become part of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) on June 1, 2017. I will continue as curator, responsible for raising the budget through donations designated to the gallery. Donations, for now, can continue as they always have, through Mennonite Church Canada. Any donations mistakenly sent to Mennonite Church Canada after June 1 will be forwarded to the gallery through CMU for at least a year following.

Major projects such as *Along the Road to Freedom* and *Leap in Faith* will be completed as anticipated. Exhibitions scheduled remain the same.

I believe this change of ownership is a good thing and am confident that as part of the university the Gallery can continue to be a vital, important institution, speaking to our wider community. We trust it will remain, as I was recently told by someone at The Winnipeg Foundation, "on the cutting edge" among arts, cultural and community institutions. The Gallery has been doing for almost 20 years what "many institutions still only talk about doing."

I request your prayers as we weave through the transition, that the path of the gallery, now and in the future, honours and acknowledges the Creator of us all.

Ray Dirks

Proposals?

Artists, please, submit your proposals to us! The gallery hosts exhibits in approximate two month blocks throughout the year.

Mailing list

To receive **CANVASSs**, invitations to all exhibitions and other gallery updates contact Connie Wiebe, cwiebe@mennonitechurch.ca.

Contact

Ray Dirks, MHC Gallery, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB Canada R3P 0M4. Ph: (204) 888-6781. E-mail: rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca

Thanks

To all who make donations, large and small, we thank you for helping keep the gallery alive and relevant.

Canvass

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