

EXTRA
ORDINARY

Extra Ordinary

Matt King
Sam Mogelonsky
Bree Zorel

Curated by Jenna Faye Powell

Forest City Gallery
April 04 – May 09, 2014



Extra Ordinary: Matt King, Sam Mogelonsky and Bree Zorel

Written by Jenna Faye Powell

Seduction is a powerful thing. Seduction, here, is not limited to just the animate. Objects too have the ability to entice a second glance, to provoke feelings of infatuation. A shiny penny, a displaced game piece, the thing you carry around in your pocket. The artists chosen for this exhibition have crafted objects that may seem too ubiquitous, too shiny, or too humorous to hold any other agenda than to entice and tempt. Yet, while the drawings, sculptures and things in this exhibition draw us in for one reason, they keep us attuned for another.

Upon entering the space, the gallery counter-intuitively resembles a high-end retail store. Modern and minimal, the “goods,” politely-sized, patiently sit for inspection. These objects aren’t what they claim to be, but they are confident in their disguise, comfortable in their askew representation. The artworks in *Extra Ordinary* appear as an ersatz version of reality, comedically off-kilter and humorously endearing. Whether a pile of used books or a junk-drawer-amount of thumbtacks, items mimicked in this exhibition are so beyond commonplace, so ordinary, they are extraordinary.

Toronto-based artists, Matt King, Sam Mogelonsky and Bree Zorel transform unremarkable objects to first optically captivate and then interrogate. Taking cues from the Situationists of the 1960s, spectacle and humour are employed to subvert how we think of these easily ignored objects, and their easily passed-by aesthetic. Upon closer inspection of their works, initial infatuation fades. As colors dim, social commentary around the everyday, empathy, consumerism, and object fetishization becomes prominent.

Sam Mogelonsky

The work of Sam Mogelonsky is assertive, colorful, poppy yet oddly aggressive. Mogelonsky’s piece *Shiny Spinning Thing* seductively sparkles with thousands of painstakingly-applied colored sequins. These sequins act as a façade to a corresponding number of pins that keep the sequins in place. Against the white-wall of the gallery space, the surface quality of Mogelonsky’s work attracts the eye only to speak to notions of mass-production and a kitschy-type of violence. And yet it is hard to look away. The color of these shiny things glimmer an artificial, chemical-like glimmer, which attracts and repulses simultaneously. Reminiscent of handmade, sequined dance-costumes, soon to be outgrown, and trashed, they are cyclical in nature.

Pin Spiral I and *Pin Spiral II* allows a direct look at the underbelly of the artist’s process. Like a seasoned



seamstress, one can't help but think of how many times the artist was pricked in the making of this. These pieces suggest various dualities, that of interiority and exteriority, pleasure and pain, as well as the superficial and profound.

Target Practice is a peculiar thing. The title suggests some type of shooting challenge, but the form, with female-like contours, appears to be bodily. The allusion to the human body becomes paramount in this piece: Mogelsonky takes the mass-produced and creates the handmade, they come from both the machine and the body. They are both high art and low brow.

Matt King

Humor in art, whether it be satire, irony, or caricature, is a useful tool in addressing the taboo or the repressed, or simply just to solicit a laugh. At the root of all jokes is a story. These jokes and stories can only be successfully communicated if there is a shared understanding about our social world. In this



case that shared social world is that of Forest City Gallery and London, Ontario. Matt King, artist and musician, created his own set of symbols that recall a bold, commercial vernacular that we are accustomed to viewing on a daily basis in malls, store fronts and main streets. This aesthetic is so familiar, that King's installation *Chose* may be too easily passed, too easily digested. But there is more going on below the superficial lacquered surface. Teetering between religious iconography and supermarket-like signage, King creates a set of icons that are recognizable to a particular geographical, economical, and generational crowd. King states, "I came to learn that many of the cultural references I was making were very colloquial to my age, cultural heritage, or geographic location." In this sense, his work is reminiscent of an inside joke, those who fit the profile get it, while others are left to make up their own story. Leaning on theories around mimetics, *Chose* is aware that not all viewers will get the joke or understand the punch line, yet where the information is not shared, new, more bizarre narratives will arise. A modern day stickerbook.

King deploys bold primaries through a shin of glossy enamel to catch our attention, only to remind us



that we have seen (and dismissed) this type of scene before. Yet there is something a tad more tired and a fair bit more sincere about *Chose*. These are not objects of mass-production. You can see the artist's hand in the odd brushstroke, the irregular shaky black line. This signage appears to be minutely but proudly flawed, potentially scratched up and faded from over usage or consideration. Charming and honest for commercial-like signage. Single light bulbs flicker slowly without conviction or purpose, reminiscent of the tragic end of the Toronto-institution Honest Ed's. Yet, dissimilar to Honest Ed's, we are not inundated with an obnoxious or overwhelming display. Stripping the symbols of all discernable information, the sparse, intentional organization of the pieces makes the work seem more honest, more confident in its ability. Signs that are capable of storytelling, not just selling.

Bree Zorel

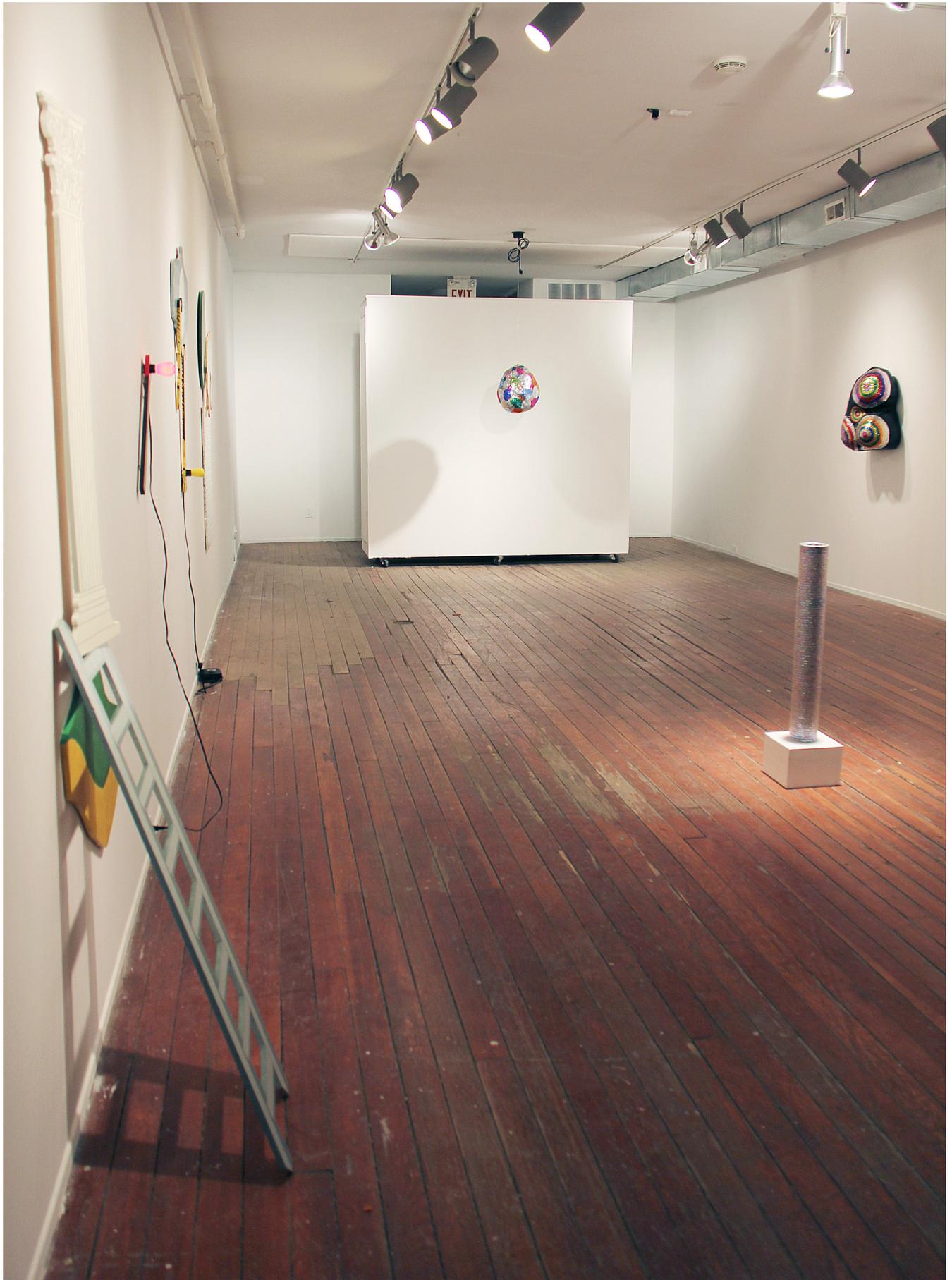
The printed book was once unrivaled as a source of disseminating information. Now with bookstores replacing their reading selections with throw pillows and coffee shops, printed texts are in the state of

decline. Digital screens have begun to replace the page. A tangible book is now an object of affection and nostalgia, a keepsake, a treasure, a monument of the academic.

With billions in existence, it is the task of a bookcover to not only introduce its contents, but to coax. I always judge a book by its outer-layer; the cleverly designed cover page, its only goal to catch the attention of its public long enough to spark their interest. Yet as libraries lose funding and more and more texts are digitized, printed books have become romantic possessions to those who still enjoy flipping through the pages. Zorel's drawings depict only book covers, denying us the satisfaction of fingering through the chapters. Her fictional book-works utilize the pedagogical guise of a book, with a tongue and cheek title that recalls a David Shrigley-esque approach to art making.

Zorel's works entice on an intimate scale, conjuring up feelings of childhood arts and crafts. Through the use of not-quite sharpened pastels, Zorel's work is purposefully clumsy and endearing, a refreshing contrast to the over-designed covers of books from Chapters, which we have become so accustomed to. Yet her wordplay is clever and sharp, specifically appealing to Forest City Gallery's audience of young, happily struggling artists. Zorel's work ironically points out that the common condemnation of a "one-liner" is in itself, a "one-liner."

Zorel's comedy tiptoes a fine line that is dark and honest, sad yet funny. The content of her covers utilize various forms of humor to poke fun at everyday moral dilemmas, tragedy and the humor of being, specifically the struggles of being a young artist. Zorel's works do not shine or dazzle, they are rugged and earthly: a Caspar-David-Friedrich-type of sublime. The artist's three-dimensional books impersonate a real book, but the gashes and apparent wood grain push the viewer back to reality, breaking the illusion. *Exploring on a Small Income* summarizes the contemporary dilemma of the young artist: the desire to adventure and explore, but also the realistic financial constraints of emerging artists. Through laughter and empathy, we can relate to the reality of these titles.



BIOGRAPHIES

Matt King

Matt King is an emerging artist and musician based in Toronto, Ontario. Matt holds a diploma from Ontario College of Art in Integrated Media and a Bachelor of Fine Arts also from OCAD University. His current practice explores the language of visual symbols and the malleability of information conveyed. Slight alterations to an object's expected physical characteristics or visual context can implicate new meanings through a viewer's interpretation. King's focus is the re-contextualization of representation and he aspires to create a disruption between expectation and experience. King continues to exhibit his works locally and nationally most recently in Micah Lexier's curatorial project, *More than Two: It Makes Itself* exhibited at the Power Plant in Toronto. Matt co-currently performs in the art-rock band, *Absolutely Free*.

<http://mattkingdotcom.com/>

Sam Mogelonsky

Sam Mogelonsky is an emerging Toronto-based artist. Her work challenges limits of adornment, contemporary consumption and its tendencies towards excess by using obsessive repetition and process-driven labour. Her painstakingly obsessive sculptures use embellishment to speak to notions of craft production and decoration, while the physical body is referenced through arduous routine repetition used to alter her found materials. Sam's works reference ostentation and design, as well as allude to the dual nature of pleasure and pain, while also engaging the dialogue between the mass-produced and the hand-made.

She holds a BFAH from Queen's University, (Kingston, Ontario) and an MFA from Central Saint Martin's College of Art (London, UK). She has participated in residencies at the Florence Trust (London, UK), the Château de la Napoule Art Foundation (Mandelieu de la Napoule, France), CeRCCa (in Llorenç de Penedes, Spain) and Artscape Gibraltar Point (Toronto Islands). She has exhibited in Canada, the UK, France, Ireland, and Portugal, with exhibitions in artist-run, commercial and publicly funded galleries. Her work is held in Canadian and international collections and she is the recipient of a 2013 Emerging Artist Grant from the Toronto Arts Council.

<http://www.sammogelonsky.com/>

Bree Zorel

Born and raised in Calgary, Bree Zorel is an artist and art educator currently living and working in Toronto. She holds a BFA from Alberta College of Art + Design, and an MFA from NSCAD University. Her artworks utilize diverse media to investigate the relationship between art and everyday life, and explore the performative possibilities of everyday circumstances. Characterized by a self-conscious optimism and a mixture of humour and pathos, her works shift continually, crystallizing in formations of drawing, sculpture, video, textiles, and photographs that alternate between artworks and documentation of actions and activities. Playfully DIY, her use of materials tends towards the provisional, using a makeshift yet heartfelt aesthetic to invite in the viewer an acknowledgment and acceptance of imperfection and the unfinished nature of the human project. The near-failure of the materials symbolically calls attention to the social, cultural and personal failures we experience every day, and thus situates itself at a starting point for rebuilding. In Zorel's current series of drawings, imaginary book covers describe the mundane experiences of daily life, while also inviting modestly magical interventions. Fictional instructional manuals, storybooks, and puzzles interject hope and laughter into the experience of the daily struggles and frustrations of surviving as a young artist in Canada.

<http://breezorel.com/home.html>

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Forest City Gallery Director: Jenna Faye Powell

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LOCATION

258 Richmond Street
London, Ontario N6B 2H7
(519) 434-5875

HOURS OF OPERATION

Wednesday – Saturday 12pm to 5pm

www.forestcity.com

