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FEATURES

Derek Liddington at Daniel Faria Gallery



Installation view at Daniel Faria Gallery from Derek Liddington: *Reclining Nude, Sitting Fruit*. Image courtesy of Daniel Faria Gallery

Reclining Nude, Sitting Fruit, a body of work by Derek Liddington, deals with the documentation of the passing time. His abstract renderings of graphite on canvas manage to seamlessly bind drawing with performance creating dynamic works. While Liddington references the artistic past through the portrayal of the traditional still life and nude, his works demonstrate less concern with the literal depiction of subject, but rather with the flux of the subject's physical qualities. Each live model or arrangement of fruit is draped with a sheet of canvas that folds into the curves of the body or over the shape of the object. Then the artist proceeds to transcribe its form with abrupt hatching on the canvas, trying to go over their forms however impossible it seems since they shift their positions. Revisiting each composition again and again over a prolonged time-span Liddington makes adjustments in the position and details of the subject matter in an effort to expose the inevitability of change.

The work entitled "Osiris' arm reaching for the sun", serves to illuminate the artist's process. Here, a potted plant is cloaked in canvas on which a series of marks have been made. It seems this work is incomplete compared to the others that hang on the walls, separated from their original subjects. It could be perceived as a performance: slowly, the plant is growing upward and outward, changing with every passing moment, awaiting the next artistic documentation.



Osiris' arm reaching for the sun., 2015 from Derek Liddington: *Reclining Nude, Sitting Fruit*, graphite on canvas, plant. Image courtesy of Daniel Faria Gallery

In a similar way, this process is expounded by the rendering of an arrangement of bananas at two distinct moments in time, the first work a visitor encounters upon entering the gallery. Over time the bananas rot but the bowl remains still, untouched by the passing of time. While both pictures depict the same subject, their resulting aesthetic qualities contrast, particularly with regard to tonal variation. Together they demonstrate the effects of time and flux on a ripening banana.

"A man, not unlike me, sitting where I sit, leaning how I lean, drinking from my mug" employs the process on a male model. The autobiographical work appears more dynamic than the others, likely a result of more jarring adjustments in the human form than that of an inanimate object. It is not difficult to recognize a likeness to Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase." Using the simultaneous representation of different views, the work also evokes a certain velocity and sense of direction.

What may not be initially apparent is the baseboard that runs along the gallery's longest wall. Hand-painted watercolour on poplar comprises this work, entitled "There we were looking at the most beautiful sunset ever painted; yet all I could focus on is a sea of red". A similar style echoes on the handmade oak and poplar frames. These accents give the exhibition a sense of warmth and stability, reminding me of the concept of home and its shelter despite the passing of time. The representation of process within the home — growing plants, rotting fruit, and shifting human form — offers an enlightening juxtaposition. The body of work calls for the spectators to be conscious of the time-flux relationship which exists around and even within us all.

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