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See It

## Modestly Spectacular: Grated Expectations

KATHARINE MULHERIN, TORONTO JUN 19 TO JUL 13 2008



Presentation has everything to do with the impact of a work of art. With this in mind, Katharine Mulherin Contemporary Art Projects aptly titled its summer group show "Modestly Spectacular." In it, works by five Canadian and American artists including Annie MacDonell, Rob Hengeveld, the slomotion (aka Shaun Morin), Jared Lindsay Clark and Clint Griffin are spread over the gallery's two exhibition spaces. All play with expectations great and small.

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Annie MacDonell's work is contained inside a tall plywood box. Viewers must climb ladders to glimpse into the never-ending winter wonderland that is *Death by Landscape*. MacDonell has lined the box with mirrors and filled it with fibre optic spruce trees. Accompanied by a lo-fi recording of James Gayfer's *Canadian Landscape: A Tone Poem for Concert Band*, the work seems to comment on stereotypical ideas of the Great White North as it sparkles with eerie funhouse-style illusion.

Like MacDonell's work, most pieces here are built from everyday materials with rough-around-the-edges execution and campy references. Rob Hengeveld explores perceptions of light and sound with a miniature arena-rock light show choreographed to Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Then there are Jared Lindsay Clark's small sculptures, which combine plastic and ceramic found objects in ways that create irreverent and yet elegant formal riddles. In *Thank Goodness for Unicorns III*, a Jesus figurine is arranged with a duck, an upside-down dog, a Santa Claus and the titular unicorns.

To paraphrase Churchill, "Modestly Spectacular" might be a modest show with much to be modest about. But its lightness and quirk make its mood right for the season. (1086 Queen St W, Toronto ON)

\* [www.katharinemulherin.com](http://www.katharinemulherin.com)