

Creativity for Prosperity; Art as Research: *A Partnership between the Martin Prosperity Institute (MPI)*

The MPI is a world class think tank in Toronto; The AGO, Toronto's premier art museum. This partnership seeks to employ multi-media art to stimulate ideas, research, and dialogue over the nexus of creativity and prosperity in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and the world. Our partnership acquires and commissions art from leading, young, emerging Canadian artists. The collection resides in the newly designed MPI space and reflects the purpose and mission of the MPI. All art on view reflects topics of relevance such as the global city; internationalism as identity; the presence of music; and creativity as a driver of community. The collection serves to stimulate the work of the MPI's researchers, students, clients and guests.

The Collection – Curated by Judy Schulich

Carter Kustera

Silhouette Portraits, 2008-2009

graphite and gouache on paper

12" x 9" each

This series of drawings presents a profile of Toronto as a global city. After brief interviews with randomly selected Torontonians, artist Carter Kustera produced these silhouette portraits accompanied by the subject's name and brief self-description. Grouped together, these works delineate the colourful diversity and internationalism of the population of our city and encourage viewers to question how our differences contribute to prosperity and success. They also promote a self-awareness of how our own prejudices influence our judgments about ethnicity, class, and cultural identity. New York City-based Kustera was born in Sault Ste. Marie and educated at the Ontario College of Art and Design. He has been the recipient of many important accolades such as Canada Council arts grants and New York Foundation for the Arts awards and his work has been exhibited regularly since 1986, often at important institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art's P.S.1 and the Aldrich Museum. Included in the most prestigious art-world event, the Venice Biennale, in both 1993 and 1997, Kustera's work also has true crossover appeal and reached mass audiences through a computer animation project he produced for U2's "Pop Mart" world tour stage show in 1997. Collections as diverse as that of SPIN Magazine, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and the Vatican have acquired his pieces.

Jennifer Marman & Daniel Borins

Google, 2009

mixed media (plastic, powder coated metal,
mechanical and electronic components)

29.5" x 64" x 7"

Jennifer Marman and Daniel Borins inject intelligent humour and Pop culture into conceptual art. Working together since 2000, they utilize mass-produced components from the commercially designed and industrially built world to comment on our increasingly digital and consumerist culture. Like much of their work, this piece, titled *Google*, implicates viewers and passers-by, whether they agree to participate or not. Reflecting the manner in which internet search engines watch users and record their behaviour for unclear purposes, these giant, child-like "googley" eyes use hidden electronic technology to watch people as they pass through the hallway. The need for this kind of constant surveillance, in both the physical world and the digital world, seems to increase with growing development. Security cameras are now pervasive in many cosmopolitan cities such as downtown London where they watch practically every corner. Brazenly comedic in its play on words and cute physical gesture, this artwork suggests viewers consider the ambiguous reasons for the omnipresent surveillance and data collection we are subjected to everyday. Though slightly sinister and disturbing, this ability allows our corporations and governments to process information about our culture and behaviours and better understand how to make communities and societies prosper. Marman and Borins graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design in 2001 and their creative collaboration has resulted in exhibitions of their work in prestigious institutions in Canada (including the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa) and around the world in cities such as Sao Paulo, Madrid, and Hong Kong.

Kristan Horton

Cig2Coke2Tin2Coff2Milk, 2006

6 minute stop motion animation

Kristan Horton creates artworks in diverse media that examine aspects of translation, imitation and transformation. In 2008, this animation titled *Cig2Coke2Tin2Coff2Milk* was exhibited at the prestigious White Columns gallery in New York City. The hand-animated sequence follows the alteration, decomposition, reversal and reconstitution of everyday branded objects. The rough and jerky quality of the craftsmanship insists viewers consider the presence of the artist's effort. In this short film, ingenuity and imagination are valued more than any specialized technical expertise. Like cities, the objects in this film continue to change over time in both their physical forms and their associated corporate identities and this metamorphosis suggests that with time, effort, creativity and determination, complex transformations can and do occur, even if they appear somewhat impossible. Since graduating with his Masters in Fine Arts from the University of Guelph in 2006, Horton has exhibited his artwork in many important institutions in Canada and internationally including the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, Mercer Union and the Power Plant in Toronto, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, VOX Contemporary Image in

Montreal, Munchner Kammerspiele in Munich, and the Lofoten International Art Festival in Norway.

Olia Mishchenko

Untitled (from Backyard series), 2009

ink on paper

17" x 22" each

Ukrainian born artist Olia Mishchenko's remarkably delicate ink drawings present architectural fictions and fantasies. Clearly influenced by her degree in history and theory from the University of Toronto's Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Design faculty, this Toronto-based artist's works explore the ways in which we divide, create, organize and utilize public and private space. In these works from her *Backyards* series, Mishchenko's signature overhead perspective allows viewers to peer into the personalized pockets of private space that, when grouped together, form the diverse neighbourhoods of cities. Building tools such as wheelbarrows, ladders, shovels and hoses are intricately rendered in jumbled piles. Though the workers themselves are absent, the results of their industrious creativity are evident in the fences, walls, and structures that constitute this district. Viewers are encouraged to ponder the characteristics of the innovative and productive people who live and work in these neighbourhoods. Though still in the nascent stage of her artistic career, Mishchenko's works have already been exhibited and collected by important institutions such as Toronto's Mercer Union and the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Kristine Moran

Mind-pods, 2010

oil and acrylic on canvas

38" x 48"

The painting is based on an image the artist took of the interior great hallway space of the MPI institute, (see attached reference image). This painting takes place in a utopian future, where colors change based on the mood of people working in the space, the organic forms are mind-pods that can be entered into for increased creativity and flourishing ideas. The mind-pods are completely flexible in form and change shape as someone's idea evolves while inside. These ideas are very much based on the writings of situationist architect Constant Nieuwenhuys and his *New Babylon*.

Additional Works

Marisol D'Andrea

Peruvian Baroque, 2008

Acrylic on canvas

24" x 36"

Marisol D'Andrea

La Condeza (The Countess), 2008

Acrylic on canvas
24" x 36"