



○ **Toronto**
upArt Contemporary Art Fair
 2 — 5 October
 Gladstone Hotel

By virtue of its very novelty, this first instalment of the upArt Contemporary Art Fair deftly dodges the world-weary proceedings of the coinciding Toronto International Art Fair, making for a welcome respite from the usual mercantile mindset. This stimulating shift is owed to the Gladstone Hotel's unique cultural setting as well as its emphasis on site-specific installations in the hotel's second floor rooms, augmented by works displayed in the open corridors as road markers from place to place. François Morelli subtly engages with the Gladstone's historical purpose via the estrangement of a skeletal flying machine hovering from the room's ceiling, its suggestion of travel undercut by the cascade of hand-painted dinner plates scattered like bombs in its wake. Combined with the provisional quality of Morelli's prints-as-wallpaper, the plates unpacking themselves across the floor render this a transient domestic space, a home away from home.

For all that upArt eschews salon conventions, some exhibitors fail to stretch the use of space beyond those terms, with two rooms favouring a rotation of four artists exhibiting on each of the four days in a performance that cannot be perceived in a single visit, leaving the impression of a dissatisfying conservatism. By contrast, Catherine Lane's 'Narrative 2' mounts a successful defence of two-dimensional media as an installation strategy by constructing a lively experience of ink on paper that is anything but staid. Her images,

precisely cut from their white grounds and sometimes folded as three-dimensional objects, engage the viewer in a game of reality and representation by generating a life-scaled environment that eases down into the familiar comfort of small-drawn houses and the surprise of a miniature wolf leaping over a drop of blood blown back to the scale of life.

With its depictions of northerly logging operations, Lane's drawn narrative points a child's toy gun at its own urban space as a consequence of ecological waste, a notion carried to resplendent extremes in Emily Vey Duke and Cooper Battersby's 'Reanimating the Universe with Basic Breathing Exercises'. Duke and Battersby's hotel room is not the only one to employ spectacular manipulations of light and movement, but whereas Rui Pimenta and Kal Mansur's 'Module Existence' reduces their projections of cellular biology to the level of a tired discotheque, Duke and Battersby employ tawdry aesthetics with substantial critical verve, their decorative dressings-up of taxidermy animals lending new meaning to the notion of environmental stewardship.

This uneasy ceasefire between natural and urban living is elegantly realised in the TH&B Collective's sculptural work; the central totem of a utility pole, wood-rough bastion of modern communications, is swarmed by a prickly paranoia of burrs that cling and cluster along the steel cables slicing through the space, charged with the tense ambient thrum vibrating along those wires. Evoking the drone of bees or else the conspiracy of chatter in cleaner spaces than this, the transformation of site achieved here rings anticipatory notes of curiously things to come in further instalments of this new event.

Stephanie Vegh is an artist based in Hamilton, Ontario

○ **Rotterdam**
William Hunt
 13 September — 31 October
 Witte de With

Rotterdam, Saturday 11 October, 5pm. William Hunt must have wondered at some point why he agreed to perform at Witte de With, solo show or no. One floor up, a busload of art critics and art magazine editors are soul searching, pondering frieze editor Jan Verwoert's earlier comments on 'crisis' being inherent to art criticism and why so little of them actually want to be called critics in the first place. They've... (I should say we, but that would spoil the point of view of this review, and besides, using the first person would question my authority as a critic, which 'we' wouldn't want, now would 'we'?) Anyway, they've been at it for three days, but still manage to be 15 minutes late. It's hard to imagine a tougher crowd to perform for.

Not that the public is something Hunt interacts with directly. He enters the room without making contact with anyone, pulls the cover off this afternoon's contraption of choice (a sort of raised bed with a guitar attached to the underside, facing a stripped-down solarium) puts on his solarium goggles and wriggles into position above the guitar. With a buzz, the solarium springs to life, bathing the surroundings in purple light, while Hunt, lying between a Plexiglas plate and a vivid green silkscreen, starts playing the guitar in his curiously Egyptian as well as Elvis Presley-ish position. Thanks to two mirrors, one on the floor and another above Hunt's contraption, the assembled critics

