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Group hug at Angell

Exhibition puts Jamie Angell's excellent curating instincts on display **By DAVID JAGER**



Sway – A Life Of Errors, by Nick and Sheila Pye, joins Angell's Top 10 show.

ANGEL 10: TOP 10 at Angell Gallery (890 Queen West), to December 23. 416-530-0444. Rating: **NNNN**

JAMIE ANGELL CELEBRATES 10 YEARS at his Queen West gallery with an exhibit of 10 of his best artists.

Angell is a collector who goes with his gut, so you'll be hard pressed to find any overarching aesthetic or agenda among these works. They range from lo-fi Art Brut to high-end photographic conceptualism.

Whatever their chosen vernacular, every artist here has a voice. **Kim Dor-**

land opens the show with a muscular painting of a green elk crossing through traffic. There's a new sure-footedness in the way he sculpts and renders forms. With its sizzling sense of colour, this is strong work from an already formidable young painter hitting his stride.

A **Jakub Dolejs** piece sits on the opposite wall posing an elegant and subdued visual paradox: it's a photograph of a set painted by Dolejs, lit by a single stage light. Next to it hang indescribable figures painted by **Kineko Ivic**. In *Still All Alone*, a glum tree-trunk-headed creature with spider

legs wears the painting's title on its chest. Outsider art comes to mind, and yet there's something engagingly clever and warm behind the outlandishness.

Nick and Shiela Pye map out the permutations of marriage and relationship in a cool, almost academic conceptual photo in which they swing toward each other on ropes in front of a constructed set. Against the surreal clarity that surrounds them, they appear weightless.

Geoffrey Pugen pushes the photographic edge even further in *Fat Cat*, a modified print featuring a cat-headed man wearing urban hipster duds who sits in an armchair holding an owl and flanked by a large ceramic bulldog. Its deadpan weirdness and comic attention to detail somehow manage to justify it.

Coop-Housing Cultural Remix, a complex and multi-layered painting by **Jason Gringler**, deserves a room of its own. This very large and ambitious deconstruction of urban landscape in Gringler's distinctive style of bold lines and geometric permutations nearly devours the entire back room.

Kristine Moran's compact and intricately fractured cityscape is another arresting painting musing on modern urban space, hovering somewhere between utopian dream and nightmare.

Two of the artists here were RBC Canadian Painting Competition regional finalists over the last five years, a fact that underlines Angell's intuitive knack for finding and cultivating relevant and exciting contemporary work. ©

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