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ERIKA DEFREITAS & DANIEL HUTCHINSON AT ANGELL GALLERY

June 28, 2017

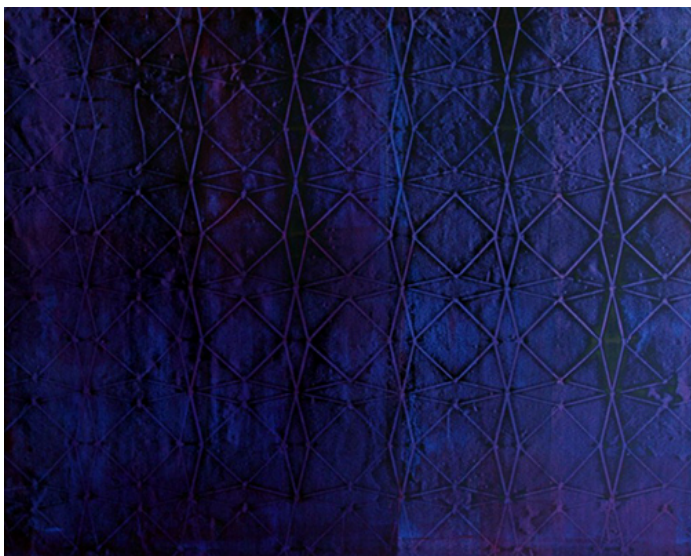
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Some artists spend their careers doing one thing over and over again. Others have solo exhibitions that look like group shows. Neither method is necessarily better than the other, but the difference in their approaches indicates something about the priorities at play in their creative processes. The current two-person exhibition at **Angell Gallery** is a study in contrasts with one artist using a different medium for each piece to capture a wide variety of responses to a particular idea, while the other dedicates himself to a singular technique, returning again and again with slight variations to its specific challenges and evocations.



Erika DeFreitas, (*if you look closely she moves*), 2016, assemblages of thread spools, candle sticks, glass, wood, brass, stones, beeswax, vintage Mary sculptures

If a link can be made among the collected works of **Erika DeFreitas** spread through the gallery, it could be the way that the past resonates through things. Whether she folds and pins fabric patterns that date from a time before her birth or assembles tabletop Madonna sculptures on candlesticks wound up in spools of twine, her choice of objects is inextricably linked to their previous lives. From the grand narratives of history to our personal lineages, we all must come to term with previous lives. For a colonial nation like Canada, it's the repressed trauma of its origins. For the rest of us, it's the death, disappearance, or absence of our parents. Birth, death, loss, and memory are inescapable themes when an artist makes use of found objects. DeFreitas gets to the heart of this confrontation with mortality through her collection of beeswax-dipped obituaries. Stacked in neat piles on a plinth, these small rectangles aren't anyone famous and aren't that historic. They come from a recent, everyday newspaper (the *Toronto Star*) and are perhaps the sole public record of nobodies (like you and I), but are saved from the recycling bin by an artist who understands the tragedy of forgetting and is doing what she can, in whichever way she must, to hold onto what so quickly disappears.



Daniel Hutchinson, *Delta Flowers (united steel)*, 2016, oil on canvas

Daniel Hutchinson responds to a more precise experience of loss in his paintings, but they resonate at a sympathetic frequency to DeFreitas' disparate projects. They originate with his eviction from his studio in Hamilton and record the surfaces of that space's aged wooden floors and antique patterned-metal ceiling. The rough lines and geometric shapes might put one in the mind of abstraction, but his use of frottage to imprint those surfaces on his canvases means that they are actually one-to-one representations of the real world. Mirroring this labourious process of imprinting is the equally intense way in which memory is imprinted on things. Anyone returning to a childhood home or an old school will experience the flashbacks elicited by seemingly mundane things like a bannister, bedroom wallpaper, or the weathered tiles in a classroom. Hutchinson renders his personal connection with this place through an array of colours that is even more striking if you are familiar with the predominantly black paintings he's exhibited in recent years. This tips the scale of his work toward the formal considerations of the medium and away from the conceptual concerns of nostalgia, which might explain why he sticks with painting while DeFreitas roams farther afield.

Angell Gallery: <http://www.angellgallery.com/>

Erika DeFreitas: Impossible Gardens continues until July 8.

Daniel Hutchinson: Delta Flowers continues until July 8.

Terence Dick is a freelance writer living in Toronto. His art criticism has appeared in Canadian Art, BorderCrossings, Prefix Photo, Camera Austria, Fuse, Mix, C Magazine, Azure, and The Globe and Mail. He is the editor of Akimblog. You can follow his quickie reviews and art news announcements on Twitter [@TerenceDick](https://twitter.com/TerenceDick).

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