



## Studio visit

### Artist profile: Alex Kisilevich

Meeting the city's artists, one at a time

|By Sara Titanic

An artist profile of [Alex Kisilevich](#)

#### **Describe your process of creating a piece. What materials do you normally work in?**

I used to have this rigid process where I had an exact idea of what I wanted for my image and its particular meaning. I would draw a terrible drawing and try to meticulously recreate it as a photo. This method worked for a while but I'm quite content that I grew out of it. I've learned to trust myself a bit. I try to go with the flow to allow for unplanned things to unfold – not to say that everything is completely improvised. I'll come in with some sort of idea that could include a location or object or something that connotes a certain feeling or idea and then I take it from there. I just don't try to plan out every detail. This allows me to be more in tune with my surroundings and has generally produced better results. For materials: a camera, a lens, film, a film scanner, computer, Kodak photo paper. Also, anything from second hand stores is fair game.

#### **What projects are you working on? What do you have coming up, any shows?**

I am currently in the middle of an MFA program in Visual Arts at York University. This means that I am working on one specific body of work for a long period of time and hoping that it will turn out okay. I have a show for it scheduled May 2011 at Angell Gallery. In the meantime, I'm doing group shows here and there. One is happening right now at [Angell Gallery](#) (till August 21) and another at the OCAD graduate gallery in September. I will also have a solo show at the Contact Photography Festival's Gallery sometime next year.

#### **When are you most productive?**

When I am exceptionally close to a deadline.

**When did creating art become something important in your life?**

I enrolled into a Colour Photo course as an elective while doing my music degree. When I started skipping my music classes to spend more time in the darkroom, I realized something important was going on.

**What are some of your favourite spots in the city?**

I live right by Trinity Bellwoods park and I walk my old pup there everyday. It's a wonderful neighbourhood and has many of the best shops within a 1km radius. I also like to go to Pho Phuong, this Pho place at Dundas and Brock...only has one veggie dish but it's delicious!

Drinking outside of home/parks/friends places used to occur solely at Bistro 422 since they have the cheapest drinks in the city. Now it seems to only occur at home/parks/friends places.

As for riding my bike, I ride quite a bit since it's my primary mode of transportation. I suppose my favourite places to ride are on the streets with bike lanes (like Harbord Street) where I am less likely to be hit by taxicabs.

**What are you currently obsessed with? Any blogs, pod casts, films, artists?**

When I am working projects that require editing for significant periods of time, like an image that needs 30 hours of editing, I rely heavily on [This American Life podcasts](#) to get me through it. They have insane true stories and interviews for things like two women who were switched at birth and only found out when they were in their 40's, or the story of a TV repairman named Bob who froze people the instant they died in hopes that science would one day be able to bring them back to life – just crazy things that blow people's minds.

**What are your thoughts on the Toronto art scene compared to everywhere else you've experienced?**

I'm still kind of a newbie when it comes to judging scenes since I haven't really been anywhere long enough to know anything about their art scene. I do like the scene in Toronto where it is small and everyone knows everybody, but I also wouldn't mind moving to a city like Berlin, Prague or Helsinki to see what they have going on.

**What is your survival food? Cheap eats for the starving artist?**

Buying groceries and sometimes skipping meals are the greatest ways to save money on food.

**Any last words?**

I really can't believe that this took an entire year for me to send to you.

[alexkisilevich.com](http://alexkisilevich.com)

