

**R.M. VAUGHAN: THE EXHIBITIONIST**

## A dizzying reminder of the fate of words in the e-book age

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**Oath of the Homunculi at InterAccess** *Until Jan. 22, 9 Ossington Ave., Toronto;*  
[www.interaccess.org](http://www.interaccess.org) [<http://www.interaccess.org>]

I have a not-very-secret fondness for art borne of maniacal perfectionism. I also love art made quickly and cheaply, art that embraces the accidental and the messy - but show me a labour-intensive work of art, something that has taken months, or even years to construct, for seemingly no reason other than the doing of the thing, and I'm sold.

The centrepiece of InterAccess's new group show *Oath of the Homunculi* (that title alone ought to tempt you through the front door) is a work so staggeringly overdone it fills me with wonder and plinks every one of my obsessive-compulsive triggers. The best part is, at first glance, the whole thing looks like not much at all.

Created by the artist collective Soft Turns (Sarah Jane Gorlitz and Wojciech Olejnik, two Canadians currently living in Sweden), the installation, entitled *Enclosed*, is comprised of two looping, slow-motion videos projected onto the gallery walls. With a robotic precision, the videos trace, around and around, two levels of a nondescript public library; a library empty of people, and not overly burdened by décor (or, for a library, books). So far, so boring. But the more you watch the video, and the more it loops over the same spaces, you begin to notice that the scale of the shelves and the walls is just a bit off, and that parts of the library appear to be too clean, unmarred by human use. The next thing you notice is that the books on the shelves have no words or numbers on their spines, and are suspiciously spotless and bright as well.

Naturally, by about round three, I assumed that Soft Turns had made a digital animation, because everything was so crisp and tidy. Then co-curator Alex Snukal informed me that the entire *mise en scène* is actually a miniature library, a doll library, handmade from bits of discarded and shredded books. Every little book, every little shelf, every little wall, banister and stair, was once part of a book now deemed unnecessary. Such exuberant displays of work-for-work's-sake (Soft Turns could have faked the whole thing with a desktop animation program, or just found a real public library and given it a good vacuuming), not to mention the excellent craftsmanship on hand, make my head spin, as does any act of supreme stubbornness.

As a writer, I found the video to be a bald reminder of the likely fate of my own works, and perhaps all printed matter in the e-book age. According to the didactics available at InterAccess, the goal of the video is to "[deny] us a consistent representation of space," which it certainly does (near-exact

miniaturizations of reality mess with the eyes, which can detect, before our brains process, disruptions in scale). But I couldn't help reading the video as a kind of memorial for the printed page, a fond (to the point of re-enactor-like obsession) tribute to a dying information-distribution system. Perhaps that's why the mini-books had no titles, because physical books are already half-invisible.

**Creation at Queen Gallery** *Until Dec. 22, 382 Queen St. E., Toronto; [queengallery.ca](http://queengallery.ca)*  
[<http://queengallery.ca>]

Right on time for the Nativity Scene season, Queen Gallery's *Creation* is a smart, multilayered group exhibition that examines the universality of origin mythologies - from African and aboriginal fables to Jewish Kabala and Zoroastrian theology to Japanese and ancient Greek mythologies, plus many hybrids of all of the above.

Featuring over a dozen artists, *Creation* is by design a mixed bag. Curator Oscar Wolfman (whose gorgeous and blunt photo-based work *Adama* recasts the Adam story as a transgender radical fairy tale) specifically sought out works made by artists who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and employ an equally varied assortment of practices. Photography hangs easily beside packed graphic works, etchings and prints cozy up to murky paintings.

*Creation* reminded me of the blockbuster "theme shows" that big museums love to put on, because selling the idea is often easier than selling the art - but Wolfman pulls off the same spectacle vibe in a space about the size of a condo living room. If nothing else, this show gives the viewer plenty of visual terrain to explore.

My favourites were Firoozeh Tangestanian's acrylic on canvas depicting the world being born as one melded mass of human, animal and fish flesh; Natalie Clark's Darwin-inspired imagining of early life forms, featuring a pink, fuzzy acrylic pool populated by mutating (and procreating) molecules rendered in deftly applied pen; and Annette Seip's photograph (printed on canvas) of a diamond-hard (and bright) chunk of ice slowly melting in a shallow stream - a photograph so dappled with liquid light, it could be mistaken for a Mary Pratt painting.

**K.I.A. Internet gallery** *Ongoing, at [www.nu4ya.com](http://www.nu4ya.com)* [<http://www.nu4ya.com>]

Toronto artist Kirby Ian Andersen (a.k.a. K.I.A.) hosts ever-evolving exhibitions of his kinetic, madcap sculptures - both in his studio (by appointment or via his regular parties) and in an online gallery that allows you to see the works being made, step by step. Visiting K.I.A.'s site is like going to an artist talk without having to leave the house.

K.I.A.'s latest work, *Acceleration/Still*, is a giant, wasp's-nest-shaped painting/sculpture combo that references butterfly wings, fuselages and airplane blueprints, via over 300 painted panels. As the weeks progress, the object will grow, change shape and "re-combine," to paraphrase K.I.A.'s own description.

Watch the layers accumulate, alongside K.I.A.'s other shape-shifting projects, at [www.nu4ya.com/K.I.A.\\_-Art](http://www.nu4ya.com/K.I.A._-Art) [[http://www.nu4ya.com/K.I.A.\\_-Art](http://www.nu4ya.com/K.I.A._-Art)].

### ALSO SHOWING

**Krampusnacht at Resistor Gallery** *Until Jan. 10, 284 College St., Toronto*

The Xmas group shows get into full swing with this multimedia celebration of Krampus, St. Nicholas's child-traumatizing devil sidekick. Naughty brats beware.

**Justyn Klym Travels Through Europe: 1956 to 1960 at Dylan Ellis Gallery** *Until Dec. 31, 105 Vanderhoof Ave., Toronto*

Klym's photographs of a world attempting to rebuild itself, to recover the glory (and glamour) lost during the Second World War, are melancholy, twinkling snow globes.

**Dan Dubowitz at Bau-Xi Photo** *Until Dec. 18, 324 Dundas St. W., Toronto*

Dubowitz's images of urban "wastelands" and wrecked interiors blend a documentarian's eye for detail with a painterly appreciation for light and texture.