



TORONTO

TERENCE DICK**DAVEANDJENN & PA SYSTEM AT GENERAL HARDWARE CONTEMPORARY**

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When Lux Interior of the Cramps sang about searching for "some new kind of kick" way back in 1981, he was probably alluding to recreational drugs or some transgressive fetish, but he could have just as easily been talking about art. Even after forty years, I'm still in pursuit of the same kicks I got hooked on when I heard the Stooges or Diamanda Galas and saw Cady Noland or Mike Kelley for the first time. There are those experiences that hit you deep within the reptilian brain and they register as a confusion that elicits a unique kind of pleasure. It isn't the same delight associated with witnessing beauty or simply feeling happy, and it inevitably subsides as familiarity sets in or another level of appreciation takes over (criticism, interpretation, connoisseurship, etc.). And so we keep on searching.

Some artists and movements provide more kicks than others. Louise Bourgeois has kicks. Luanne Martineau kicks. Valérie Blass? Kicks. Kent Monkman? Kicks. Ian Carr-Harris? No kicks. Michael Snow? Some kicks; others, not so much. Surrealism tends to kick, but not always. Hans Bellmer? Kicks. Jean Arp? No kicks. The list could go on. Conceptualism? Not a lot of kicking. Post-conceptualism? Some kicks kick in – not always, but the window is open. The general rule is there has to be a strong visual stimulation that initiates the first response and that response has to be felt in the innards initially, not the intellect. Think of it like a gut punch that leaves you woozy and then take it from there.



DaveandJenn, *Play Bow*, 2018 (photo: M.N. Hutchison)

Art partners **DaveandJenn** might easily be mistaken for makers of pleasant things, but in truth they deliver kicks. Their current exhibition in the back of **General Hardware Contemporary** is as good a place as any to get a taste of what this tastes like. For those of us more familiar with their layered paintings on glass, the sculptural works featured here add a new dimension to the world they've been creating over the past fifteen years. They share a similar combination of delicacy and dream-logic with Shary Boyle (who kicks, FYI), but there's less psycho-sexual meandering and more bio-morphic post-botanicalism. The precious materials with which they work and the fine detail of their rendering tricks you into leaning in so you examine the coral forms and flowery petals alongside bleached skulls and phallic tentacles. It's a trick that David Altmejd (another master of kicks) deploys with equal finesse. There is something about works working with minutiae that elicits vertigo and hits you where you live. Combine that with uncanny imagery that fluctuates between the living (wood, feathers, plants) and the dead (gold, ceramics, bone), and you've got me hooked.

DaveandJenn: *Whenever It Hurts* continues until February 23.

General Hardware Contemporary: <http://generalhardware.ca/>

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