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LEE HENDERSON AT GALLERYWEST | SUSY OLIVEIRA & LAUREN HALL AT ERIN STUMP PROJECTS

July 15, 2014

Like 60



Bob Dylan sang "Death is not the end" on *Down in the Groove*, one of his least popular LPs, but **Evan Tyler** wasn't listening. The soon-to-be-former proprietor of the four-year-old **gallerywest** – which was originally on Queen West West West but fought the tide of gentrification and actually moved east in 2012 to sit in the shadow of loftminiums on Queen West West – marks his last exhibition with **Lee Henderson's** mortality-themed *The Museum of One Thing After Another*. The artist-run gallery (Tyler being the artist here), as opposed to the artist-run centre, has become something of a rarity (Andrew Harwood, whose Zsa Zsa space was part of the pre-history of this strip, recently shut down Zsa Zsa West in Winnipeg), and it's easy to finger harsh urban economics as the culprit, but I'd argue that these creatures have naturally short lifespans. The idea is resilient and will manifest itself with different hosts in different locations as long as there are ambitious, community-minded artists willing to sacrifice sleep, cash, and space in the name of art.

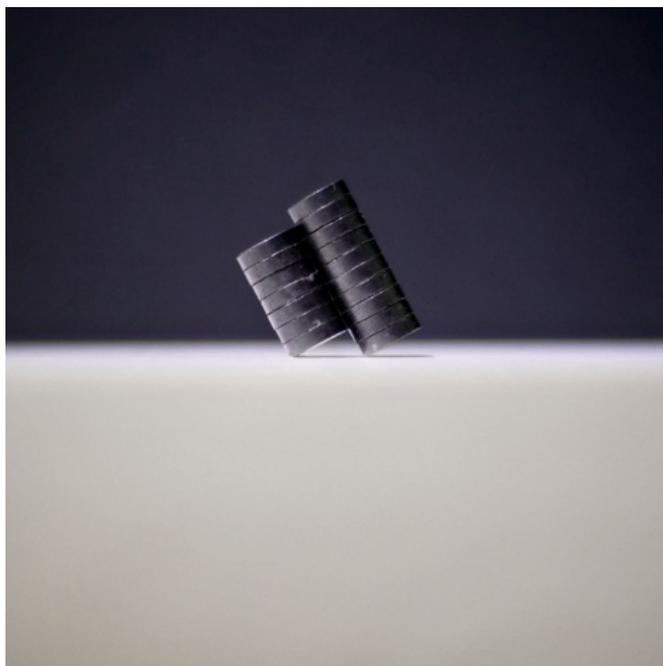
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Lee Henderson, *Aimants*, 2014, magnets, float shelf

Tyler made his mark with idiosyncratic shows that didn't always play the game according to art world etiquette. The space was rough around the edges, but the works were serious (even when they were hilarious). Henderson's collection of images, artefacts and videos leans toward the dour but has an inescapable undercurrent of humour that emphasizes the need to laugh in the face of death. The first work is a text piece in the window that spells out "We must never forget that Eadweard Muybridge was a killer", while the final act, in the back room, is a short video titled *The Suicide of a Wireless Mouse*. It is the only new media work that has ever made me smile

and, as a literal suicide (not simply a depiction of one), has stuck in my head for the past week. The other pieces all play on various subtle twists of representation to reflect not simply our experience of the world, but also to suggest something of its (and our) fragility, randomness, and temporality. Which, in the end, is a perfect way to reflect upon the new beginnings (if Dylan is to be believed).



Lauren Hall, *Dried Animals, Don't Bother*, 2014, sea sponge, pearl jewellery

Maybe it's my age, but I see mortality in almost everything these days. **Susy Oliveira's** photographs of pressed flowers at **Erin Stump Projects** lead me to think about how we kill things in order to possess them (a metaphor for art if there ever was one) and how the timelessness of photos remind us of our inevitable demise (see Roland Barthes for more on this). The dialectic of her sculptures is the battle between the chaos of nature and the order of gardens. Her works exceed their vases while also taking on their geometry. What this has to do with romance (as suggested by the computer-generated artist's statement) is beyond me.

Upstairs, **Lauren Hall** sticks to the world of the living (despite having the corpse of a sea sponge stuck to the wall) and explores the alchemy of various found objects in combination or with minimal artistic interventions. The two lampshade carriers mounted horizontally at eyelevel are all you need to feel like the work is looking at you as much as you look at it. The engraved Zippo hand warmer is a personal accessory made more personal. Add in Epsom salts, essential oils, and bespoke golf umbrellas and Hall's arcane categorical logic expands geometrically.

**gallerywest:** <http://www.gallerywest.info/>

Lee Henderson: The Museum of One Thing After Another continues until July 27.

**Erin Stump Projects:** <http://erinstumpprojects.com/current-exhibitions>

Susy Oliveira: There's something about Bouquet continues until July 26.

Lauren Hall: Felt continues until July 26.

**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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