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TORONTO

**TERENCE DICK**

**REPAIR CENTRE AT THE PETER MACKENDRICK COMMUNITY GALLERY, TORONTO**

August 04, 2015

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Blink and you'll miss it. And you'll be sorry because sometimes the smallest gestures can resonate long after they've disappeared. Excellent art does this whenever it can. You recognize it when the work is still ping ponging around your head days after you've left the gallery. A solid exhibition can have the same effect. The simple (as in uncomplicated, but not un-complex) pieces that combined to make the compact but impactful *Repair Centre* at the **Peter MacKendrick Community Gallery** (found at the eastern end of the Wychwood Barns) continue to ricochet through my thoughts despite their straightforward circumstances. Unfortunately, coincidentally, and appropriately, the brevity of their gestures was matched with a brief display period, and the experience that elicited my response was over in little more than a week – which is also a lesson in keeping on your toes. You probably blinked.



Amanda Rataj, *Barbara's Socks*, 2013, wool, modern sock wool

This exhibition of ideas instigated by objects was held together by a theme both elementary and evocative: repair. Former Akimblog correspondent **Steven Cottingham** went back to philosophical basics with his appropriated chunks of cobblestone and asphalt to consider the identity of a road under repair and at what point it stopped being the same road it had always been. On a reduced scale **Amanda Rataj** darned modern wool into ancient socks to create an abstract patchwork that illustrated our relation to the past. The past reared up again in **Danny Custodio's** photographs of trees pruned to make way for hydro wires. Instead of immediately coming to nature's defence, you might just want to revisit the question of origins here. **Rebecca Jane Houston** did just that with her reclaimed planks of wood revived through representation (that is, they had the appearance of being alive). **Lee Henderson** shifted things into the realm of artistic restoration and attempted to mend past wrongs by incinerating books writers never intended to see the light of day (think about that for a minute – repairing through destruction – then go read some Nietzsche, then go read about Nietzsche's sister). Lastly, **Jaclyn Quaresma** got literally elemental with an installation of melting beeswax designed to return the very air we breathe to a pollution-free state. All you had to do was inhale, but in doing so the exhibition became a part of you. If that isn't a metaphor for the artistic experience, then I don't know what is.

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**Peter MacKendrick Community Gallery:** <http://atthebarns.org/gallery/about-the-gallery/>  
Repair Centre was on display from July 22 until August 2.

**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](#).

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