

Office Work: Kim Kennedy Austin / Ryan Quast / Neil Wedman

Office Work is the first curated art exhibition to take place at Dr. Zenon Trylowsky's office since 2007. For approximately ten years prior to 2007, the office would on occasion be transformed into Trylowsky Gallery to showcase art work by local, and at times international, artists. As clients of this dental practice know, even when there are no exhibitions happening in the space, the waiting room and treatment rooms are always filled with contemporary art by clients of the practice. The art that normally activates these walls, along with the work Trylowsky has collected for the past three decades, has been transported to the Griffin Art Projects in North Vancouver to be included in the exhibition ***Teeth, Loan and Trust Company, Consolidated: The Trylowsky Collection***. This exhibition can be viewed by the public Fridays to Sundays between September 24th and December 11th (www.griffinartprojects.ca).

Having lent his art collection to Griffin Art Projects, Trylowsky was left with a small problem. For the first time in the office's history, the walls would be more or less bare. With this in mind, I, the curator of the exhibition at the Griffin, was asked to once more transform the dental practice into the Trylowsky Gallery. **Office Work** presents artwork by **Kim Kennedy Austin, Ryan Quast and Neil Wedman**. The audience for this exhibition is reserved for those having booked dental appointments or who happen to come to the exhibition's two days of public viewing. Without too much interference from the curator, each of the three artists have contributed work that they feel suits the context.

Perhaps we can read **Neil Wedman's** choice of six watercolour paintings installed throughout the the treatment rooms and waiting room depicting "Complaint Departments" as a response to his painting *Laughing Gas* having been removed from the office. Or maybe they hint at some more serious issue to complain about such as a cracked tooth. **Ryan Quast's** beautiful landscape collages also help to distract us from the business at hand. Maybe a sly reference to the kind of generic landscape prints that tend to occupy doctors' offices, these crafty collages are accompanied by his sculptural work that appear as easily ignored readymades or found objects such as a Styrofoam cup and a plunger but are in fact laboriously constructed using layers of paint as the sole material medium — a process that in some ways mimics either the build-up of plaque or careful moulding and reconstruction of a tooth. **Kim Kennedy Austin's** work is all smiles — albeit a rather distinct showing of teeth. Her silver-point drawings of "winning smiles" of people and animals are based on research into late 19th century magazine illustrations.¹ In this way they evoke the act of reading magazines while waiting for the dentist. Like Quast's work, they also have a metonymic reading as the scratching onto a prepared surface evokes the scratching of dental instruments and silver fillings. In these ways Austin's work is as intriguing as it funny and creepy.

You may ask yourself why I chose these three particular artists to make work for the office. Let's just say that going to the dentist is no laughing matter. Yet these three artists have an uncanny ability to make you smile with work that is not only funny and intelligent, but laboriously and beautifully executed. For those in the know, these artists also each share a reputation of having a very distinct laugh.

Patrik Andersson Guest Curator

¹ The sources for Austin's silver-point drawings are *New Physiognomy* (1889), *Canadian Grocer* (1898), *Canadian Forest Industries* (1909), *The American Florist* (1907) and *The Dog's Medical Dictionary* (1907)