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Miniatures make a big impact

Sasha Pierce brings together sculptures that go from silly to profound

By DAVID JAGER



ART: TO EASE CRAPPY CONVERSATION at Loop Gallery (1174 Queen West), to December 22. 416-516-2581. Rating: NNNN

NOW RATING: **N N N N**



Curator Sasha Pierce has hit pay dirt with her ingenious and quirky sculpture show at Loop Gallery.

She solicited miniature sculptures from artists across Canada with only one stipulation: each piece could be no larger than 10 inches square and weigh no more than 10 pounds.

Fifty responses later, Loop is now home to one of the oddest and most diverse assortments of art objects in town.

The sculptures range from silly to conceptual to crafty. Some are laugh-out-loud funny, and others verge on being precious. Modified trophy figures stand alongside tiny chests filled with broken shards of patterned china.

There are bright neon model horses and two Rubik's cube installations (one handmade, one store-bought), as well as a plaster chocolate cake and a cartoon ghost kissing its own reflection. There's a miniature garden complete with music boxes, a tiny metal heart nestled under glass and a portable forest.

Many objects – lipstick, a lighter and a human ear – are cast in bronze. Some sculptures are just cheeky, like the Brown knit penis, or a fan of text suggestively interwoven with hundreds of wiry black threads.

The pleasure of seeing so many odd miniatures is akin to what you get when sculptures have the feel of rare second-hand treasure. Many of the strongest pieces apply very subtle manipulations of scale and form to the stuff we carry around in our pockets.

There's also something touching in objects this small. Eschewing monumentality, they could be toys, and many of them have the naive presence of a favourite childhood Hot Wheels car or action figure. With each sculpture priced at \$200, you might just find the right inexplicable something here to give someone else or put on your own mantelpiece. □

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