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The city's hot young artistic talents can be found with all the other hot young types on Ossington

Leah Sandals, National Post
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In the space of just a few months, Ossington Avenue has gone from artist hangout to controversial hot spot, with the city slapping a much-debated moratorium on new bar licences. Fortunately, the ban doesn't apply to galleries, which still have plenty of shows on the go.

1. Hunter and Cook

15 Ossington Ave.

Nestled at the back of vintage boutique Silver Falls, Hunter and Cook gallery complements a quarterly art magazine of the same name. Both are run by local artists Tony Romano and Jay Isaac, who often offer up the gallery to young artists with a psychedelic hipster bent. The current show of work by acclaimed graphic novelist Keith Jones fits the bill impressively. Jones's massive cityscape drawings pull you in with an incredible level of manic detail and an eye-popping fluorescent-neon palette. At first, the concept and layout recalls childhood chestnuts such as Richard Scarry's *Busy Town* -- if everyone in *Busy Town* were obsessive, psychotic or overwhelmed by modern life. In Jones's can't-look-away drawings, would-be mathematicians tinker with theorems while madmen spray bullets on subway platforms. Every surface is covered with random words and objects, mirroring contemporary stimulus overload. Overall, Jones has the mix of concerning and compelling in pretty perfect tension here. To July.

2. Mkg127

127 Ossington Ave.

The stresses of contemporary life get quite a different treatment in the exhibition I Can't Stop This Feeling: Crisis, Comfort and Craft by artistic collective Shake-n-Make. Comprised of artists Claudia B. Manley, Liss Platt and Steph Rogerson, Shake-n-Make explores the kitschy objects, techniques and images that provide nostalgic comfort in times of global crisis. We're talking about the sedative effects of pre-remote control television here, such as *Laverne & Shirley*, *The Beachcombers*, and *Welcome Back, Kotter*. Shake-n-Make embroiders scenes from all these shows on beige oval hoops, creating a kind of perverse family portrait for kids of the 1970s and '80s. Also getting the craft-tribute treatment -- this time in Shrinky Dink (!) format -- are of-the-era figureheads like Phil Donahue, Jimmy Carter, Wonder Woman and Gloria Steinem. Fondue-recipe cards and string art; felt banners of *KISS* and *Charlie's Angels* round out the offerings. This exhibition sincerely delights kids raised on that strange 1970s combination of commercial TV and homemade macrame. To June 27.

3. Show & Tell

1161 Dundas St. W.

Show & Tell, the newest gallery in the Ossington district, focuses on artists with experience in the worlds of graffiti and street art. Toronto artist Ryan Dineen here offers paintings based on city-street sights. Though many of Dineen's images are interesting--particularly his studies of locked-up bicycles and rusted-out cars -- it seems he's still learning how to paint on canvas rather than concrete. More compelling to hard-core contemporary art lovers, perhaps, are Matt Janisse's prints of city streets. The prints are actually made when cars drive over paper that Janisse tapes to local laneways, providing a nice conceptual twist on "street art." His grey-toned prints can be remarkably lovely, morphing from cloudy sky to abstract landscape in one viewing. To June 28.

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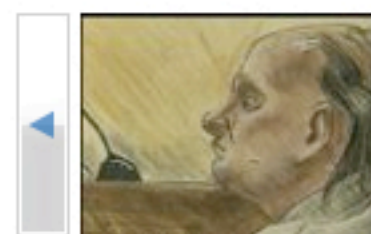
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