



So it goes: Another Astounding Exhibition at Lora Reynolds Gallery

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I walked into what appeared to be an unpolished exhibition when I saw Susan Collis' 'So it goes' at Lora Reynolds Gallery. Collis, a London-based artist, uses seemingly simple, common objects in the many works that comprise her second solo show with the gallery. (Her first solo exhibition for Lora Reynolds, which opened in 2008, was actually the inaugural show for the gallery's new space.) Collis strips down the notion of what it means to be an artist by returning to the very basic tools an artist uses: paper and graphite. Before progressing to video works, sculpture or even oil paints, students of art generally tackle paper with pencil. The fundamentals of line and shading are first taught in this medium. So I was surprised to see an artist return to these rudimentary materials. As with any good exhibition, once I began exploring the individual works, as well as listened to Collis discuss several of her pieces, the complexity of the show as a whole was astounding.

Two of the most visually striking works in the show juxtapose one another on the same wall, allowing the viewer to glance back and forth. The first work is *Dark Grows the Day Dearie*, which from afar definitely recalls the tempestuous London skies. However, the piece is also about time. Collis spent approximately one year working on this, spending varying amounts of time each day depending on her mood. Her temperament was also a factor as seen by the shade gradients throughout the drawings. Collis professes to have a problem with frames, but also feels it is necessary to frame some of her works in order to exhibit them. She rebels against the boundaries of the frame by placing the work against a large white paper background, allowing her to continue drawing. Ironically, this itself acts as a nebulous frame.

Anything really seems to reflect the tiny crosshatches of *Dark Grows the Day Dearie*, when in fact it is composed of thousands of 0.9mm mechanical pencil leads. The image shifts depending on the position of the viewer, which suggests a sculptural work. As a framed piece hanging on a wall, however, *Anything really* is presented as a two-dimensional piece. Like *Dark Grows the Day Dearie*, this work is about the time an artist spends with her materials. The thousands of pencil leads bound together suggest the potential hours, days, weeks the artist could spend working that very material. Collis' show provides a sense that you have walked into an artist's studio and are watching the process unfold. Paper pedestals with various objects are part of the show suggesting there is a long road ahead until "perfection" is achieved, if that is in fact the goal. Several crumbled pieces of paper can be found in the back left corner of

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the gallery and are almost overlooked as one might dismiss a leaf strewn yard. Therefore, *On second thoughts* is deceptively simple—the waded up papers are in actuality uniformly covered in graphite. Also, the jewel encrusted walls and platinum staples are not to be missed.

Tom Molloy's 'Woman' opened concurrently with 'So it goes'. Molloy, an Irish artist based in France, also utilizes graphite and crosshatching to render the eight works in the Project Room of Lora Reynolds Gallery. Each work mimics a Johannes Vermeer painting with one key difference. While each Vermeer painting has at its center a woman in various poses, Malloy has deliberately left her out of his pieces. His drawings, while accurately detailed, become a haunting framework devoid of a true subject. We as viewers are forced to focus on background details more deliberately than if a woman were actually present.

'Woman' is on view until June 18th while 'So it goes' will remain up until July 16th.