



TORONTO
TERENCE DICK
NETHERMIND AT ST. ANNE'S CHURCH
 October 16, 2012

It's rare occasion that I am so excited by an exhibition that I stop in my tracks and phone someone to tell them to come right away and join me in the experience, but after a day of lackluster gallery visits, I could not resist the urge to punch out some digits and exclaim (or, truthfully, text in as enthusiastic a manner as possible), "You should see this art show! Come to the church on Gladstone, north of Dundas."



Mirabilia, installation view of Mary Catherine Newcomb and Lyla Rye

Timed to coincide with the sesquicentennial celebrations at **St. Anne's Church**, *Mirabilia* is a group exhibition and a reunion of sorts for the local artist collective **NetherMind**. They first emerged in the dark days of the early nineties when established venues for up-and-coming artists were on the decline, so creative types would band together and stage one-off shows in unique locations. Recent graduates from art school at the time, many are now teachers and well known for their individual work.

Brought back together under a Byzantine dome decorated by members of the Group of Seven, they have done an exceptional job of integrating their installations and sculpsures into an environment that, due to its pre-existing aesthetic and spiritual presence, dominates. Things start off quietly but dramatically with **Tom Dean's** *The Ten Commandments*, a stack of glass plates etched with the titular directives, greeting visitors on entry. Given the cavernous interior of the church, three large works by **Mary Catherine Newcomb**, **Max Streicher** and **Garnet Willis**, and **Lyla Rye**, manage to maintain a subtlety that would not be possible in a plainer enclosure. Newcomb's field of wheat among the pews is both a visual evocation of parishioners and an olfactory trigger for the barns of your memory. Rye's *Sanctuary* is temporary zone of contemplation within the larger, imposing structure: a fragile roof patterned like stained glass under a stone ceiling decorated like the heavens.



Max Streicher & Garnet Willis, *Tree Organ*, 2012, inflatable sound installation

Streicher and Willis' tangle of inflatable branches near the organ add an undertow of humming fans to the musical pipes that are revealed to be part of the tree itself – each branch ending in a different pipe so that as you move around the somewhat monstrous creation the notes shift and rearrange themselves. It reminds me of the best of Tim Hawkinson's work and is the clear crowd-pleaser in this strong assembly.

Catherine Heard's gilded busts at the altar have already accumulated a layer of wax from the candles they support, and I plan to return next weekend to see how they have transformed. A map leads me to **Greg Hefford's** videos under the floor grates and down a back stair to a creepy basement that **John Dickson** has incorporated into his disorienting live feed video. Streicher has left a trio of glowing horses in the unfinished recesses; they pulse with the buried heart of this transcendent experience. Do yourself a god deed and visit before the exhibition closes - far too soon! - next weekend.

NetherMind: <http://nethermindcollective.tumblr.com/>

St. Anne's Church: <http://www.stannes.on.ca/>

Mirabilia continues until October 20.