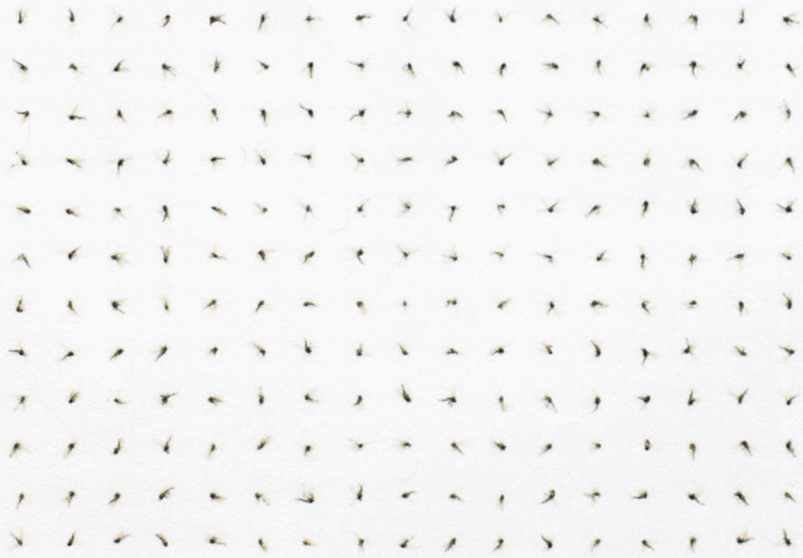


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## K. Nicol -- or so we think -- at MKG127



It opened last Saturday at [MKG127](#) on Ossington, and I'm just getting around to it (such is the life of a multi-tasking journalist; last week was swallowed up by my spending [quality time with uber-condo-broker Brad J. Lamb](#)) but K. Nicol's A Room Full of Stuff I Made (and collected) is exactly the kind of show that gets my motor running. Quizzically playful, mildly obsessive all while gleefully skewering artistic pretension, Nicol presents us with a tidy grid of dead mosquitos, among other stuff, all of it presented specimen-like -- sort of ordering the detritus, to get a better handle on it.

It's not a bad metaphor for our throwaway culture, and you could choose to read it as a cheeky reminder. But this isn't even slightly pedantic work. Nicol reminds us that art can, and should, be fun, for heaven's sake, even while challenging us emotionally and intellectually -- which, incidentally, is what the folks at MKG127 have been doing with steadfast consistency when they first opened their doors not quite two years ago.



My first recollection of the place was in summer 2007, when its front windows (see above) were filled with a collaborative text effort between [Christian Bok](#), a Toronto sound artist/experimental poet/folk hero and [Micah Lexier](#), who is one of our best artists, period. Lexier wrote a brief text; Bok threw every character and piece of punctuation into a hat and rewrote it, using every last bit, for his own work. It might have been my favourite piece that year; seeing as I can't recall another one off the top of my head, let's just give it the title.

Anyway, my point is: MKG127 is a breath of the freshest air the Toronto gallery scene has seen in a long, long time. Their M.O. is part conceptualism, part [Dada](#) (not that there's a hug gap), and there's never a desultory moment -- wracked with self-importance as so many art spaces are -- where they fail to engage in a puckish, yet genuine way.

That in mind, I'm tempted to think K. Nicol might be MKG127's in-house [R. Mutt](#) (I admit to not knowing his work, and I missed the opening; he's also entirely absent on Google, so I can neither confirm or deny his existence). But I suppose we'll have to wait for his next show to find out.