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## Going home again: School of Art @ MKG127

Michael Klein breaks the summer-show trap of dusting off whatever's in storage, just to keep the walls covered, with the curious curatorial conceit of going back to his roots for [School of Art, which opened on Saturday.](#)

Klein, who went to art school in Winnipeg, convenes here a selection of works from his various teachers, some of whom continue to teach at [his alma mater, the University of Manitoba's School of Art.](#)

And these people have cred: One of them, [Rita McKeough](#), now based in Calgary, was a Governor General's Award winner this year; [David McMillan's](#) photography series, [Chernobyl Exclusion Zone](#), of exactly that, is a widely-published and respected ongoing project.

The image seen above, of a man subtly but unnervingly askew in scale from his surroundings, and himself, bears the series' hallmarks: Decades post-disaster, an everyday life continuing with small but undeniably unnatural alterations.

But for me, the gem of the show is a selection of charcoal-drawn panels by [Jeff Funnell](#). Chosen from his epic Artist Anonymous project, the panels are excerpted from what amounts to the story of Funnell's artistic -- and by association, often very personal -- life. It unfolds as a graphic novel, charting Funnell's -- or 'J's', as he's known in the strip -- progression in life (his divorce, for one thing) and art (from Winnipeg to New York).



It reads as a loose personal history of the



interconnectedness of the art world, either Western Canadian, national, or even international, and part of the fun is trying to figure out who J is referring to in his first-initial-only regime ('Y' is [Ydessa Hendeles](#), the famed Toronto collector; a famous artist, never referred to even by initial, proves to be [Chris Burden](#), who Funnell brought to Winnipeg, to the pre-emptive terror of the University; Burden, famous for crucifying himself on the hood of a VW Bug and having himself shot in the arm in the gallery, did a quick, blood-free performance and left).

The drawings have warmth and personality that, coupled with the narrative, makes for enthralling work. Alongside them, two large paintings from [Sheila Butler](#), and small, delicate gouache works -- cityscapes, figures -- from [Robert Achtemichuk](#), now the director of the [Clay and Glass Museum in Waterloo](#), complete School of Art's lesson, which is: Remember where you're from. Especially if you're in the art game. And especially if you're from Winnipeg.

School of Art continues to Sept. 5.