
VISUAL ARTS » REVIEW



**GARY MICHAEL DAULT
GALLERY GOING**

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DAVID R. HARPER AT MKG127
\$250-\$9,800. Until April 17, 127
Ossington Ave., Toronto;
647-435-7682, www.mkg127.com

Noblesse Oblige, by artist David R. Harper – who is a recent graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) and is now pursuing an MFA at the Art Institute of Chicago – is a farrago of sly wit and aesthetic restlessness in the service of what the gallery calls “object collecting, crypto-zoology and historical perceptions of the curio.”

Central to this destabilizing exhibition is the work actually called *Noblese Oblige* – a kind of table-top vitrine, or at least it would be a vitrine if a vitrine could be made of lacy gauze embroidered with a frieze of heraldic crowns. On the gauzy, insubstantial faux-vitrine stands lightly a supine, knitted white bear (with its great jaws agape) – a sort of bloodless, mannered, high-aristocratic version of a bear-rug. The effect is that of a tepid diminishing – for the sake of decorative delicacy – of the vigour once embodied, somewhere in the aesthetic past, by real vitrines, real curios, real patronage, real collecting and real bear rugs. *Noblesse Oblige* is a really quite impressive, inventive exhibition – albeit an almost terminally arch and overrefined one.
