



TORONTO

TERENCE DICK
JOHN MARRIOTT AT MKG127, TORONTO

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While there are still some arch-Modernists and aesthetic purists out there who expect the art experience to be an unmediated interaction between viewer and work, most gallery-going proles are open to locating the object of their ardour within a web of material conditions and intertextual references. Doing so recognizes that it is part of the world, which, depending on your inclinations and upbringing, can be a fall from grace or simply a better accounting of the truth.



John Marriott, *Place Holder*, 2015, metal backhoe bucket on Eames Eiffel base

John Marriott falls into the latter camp and the laminated list of works at the front desk of MKG127 is a necessary accompaniment to any viewing of his soon-to-close exhibition *I'll Be your Mirror* not simply for pricing information but for the additional clues as to how to make sense of his elliptical creations. For example, the bright orange backhoe scoop sitting prominently in the front window only begins to evolve beyond a Duchampian readymade when one realises that its support is an Eames chair frame. High design and the contest between form and function, let alone a familiar story of gentrification and destruction, become the reigning themes of a once simple gesture.

Marriott is a master of the delayed twist, undercutting initial impressions with sly rejoinders. His *Zombie Economy* series shifts from the obvious financial reference to an art historical one (last year's "zombie abstraction" meme) to a pop cultural one (from George Romero to *World War Z*) and back again. Sometimes the gag gets the upper hand (as in the emoticon-featured bronze bust "selfies"), but the ground drops away from the better works (or the walls come apart as with the wonderfully named structural intervention *Spoiler*) and the world gushes forth in all its chaotic and impure glory.

MKG127: <http://www.mkg127.com/>

John Marriott: *I'll Be Your Mirror* continues until April 18.

Terence Dick is a freelance writer living in Toronto. His art criticism has appeared in Canadian Art, BorderCrossings, Prefix Photo, Camera Austria, Fuse, Mix, C Magazine, Azure, and The Globe and Mail. He is the editor of Akimblog. You can follow his quickie reviews and art news announcements on Twitter @TerenceDick.

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