

Ram Samocha @ Red Head Gallery — Toronto



“Action” until Jan 30, 2010

Ram Samocha makes artwork like it is a sport. Completing a drawing the Samocha way should not be undertaken without a bit of cardio and muscle training.

Watching Samocha work, I'm enthralled by his level of engagement. The drawing seems more about coordinating his movements together than a strong concern about where the markings land. The sound that his crayons make as he scrapes the canvas (firmly attached to the wall behind) has the rhythm of spontaneous productivity.

The process of creating the work is what Samocha's art practice is about. You need not be there watching him work to appreciate his process. All the works on display are accompanied by videos documenting their making. The videos are cleverly produced performance videos. For *Hairy Up*, Samocha's video plays in six parts (shown above) documenting the various stages of work simultaneously.

Although Samocha's art practice is reminiscent of the post-war American Action Painters, whose poster boy is Jackson Pollock, much like their work Smocha's emphasis is not on the finished drawing, but with the act or process of the creating the painting. With the Post War action painters the form of their work was expressing the angst and anxiety prevalent at the time. In a contemporary context, Somacha's work addresses the process of time and the frenzied repetitive tasks most of us engage in.

But I have to say I found the final products aesthetically appealing in themselves. Perhaps, it is the memory of the action that I see on the canvas that draws me into the beautiful frenzy of physical markings.

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