

5 MUST-SEE WORKS OF ART AT THE BIENNALE



From Charles Gaines' *Manifesto*

The Montreal Biennale, expertly explained [here](#) by Lisa Sproull, is such a large event that at the MAC alone, there's an overwhelming number of works — too many to take in in one visit, or cover in 10 articles. Just in time for this week's [Nocturne](#), here are five more pieces worth seeking out and spending some time with:

Mikko Canini's *Untitled (Interview)* and *Untitled (Lecture)*: Almost hidden at the entry to the maze of galleries that is the MAC's second floor, this installation of two slide projectors is easily missed. Which would be a shame. They're essentially two essay films presented as still fragments unfixed in time, with subtitles that seem to clash with the images. It's tempting to risk whiplash by trying to watch both at once and understand how (or even if) they speak to each other.



From Richard Ibghy and Marilou Lemmens' *The Prophets*

Charles Gaines' *Manifesto*: A seemingly simple installation consisting of four hand-drawn reproductions of radical manifestos embedded in sheet music, and four corresponding screens, each displaying the manifestos as simple white-on-black text set to music, the magic of this piece lies in the origins of the soundtracks: Gaines first codified the alphabet as musical notes, then translated the manifestos according to his musical code. The results are lush, quiet pieces of music that strip away the bombast usually associated with the word "manifesto," asking the viewer to be still for a moment and simply experience the ideas in play.

(A word of warning about an unrelated but adjacent work: If you are sensitive to scenes of animals suffering, and find yourself in front of the sheet music, do not look down and to the left. Turn to your right and focus on the music instead.)

Richard Ibghy and Marilou Lemmens' ***The Prophets***: Essentially miniaturized, 3D data visualizations, each of these painstakingly rendered models has something provocative to say about globalization and our current economic and social models. If you are the kind of person who engages in Facebook arguments through pie charts and Venn diagrams, this alone is worth the price of admission.

(Another word of warning, like the one above: If you leave this gallery and move towards the Andrea Bowers piece, do not look down and to the right on your way out. Look left instead and check out the amazing sledge skeleton and other activist pieces from the Arctic Perspective Initiative.)



From Susan Norrie's *Rules of Play*

Simone Jones and Lance Whim's ***End of Empire***: I don't know how I missed this, but enough people have raved about it to me that it's on my must-see list for my next visit. The 15-minute-long piece takes Andy Warhol's *Empire*, mostly known for being an eight-hour static shot of the Empire State Building, and puts both the building's image and the projection itself in motion, displacing and eventually disappearing the building in the process.

Susan Norrie's ***Rules of Play***: An activist video exploring the environmental and social impact of oil and gas rig development in the seas between northern Japan and Russia, this short documentary is so beautifully shot it is almost like watching a newly discovered Michael Glawogger film. Hidden away in a screening area that's practically an alcove around the corner from the Gaines piece, I was tipped off to it by a friend, and the two security guards pretending not to watch from the passageway seemed to be as taken with it as I was.

I wish I had had more time with most of these, and more time to explore others. Luckily the Biennale runs until January, so it's possible to take in as much and as many of these as you like at your own pace, and to explore the other venues hosting Biennale works. ■