



Ropes of red and yellow latex track Montreal movements in Maps In Doubt show.

Art Reviews

Every step of the way

Duo test the limits of measurements and their own materials

By David Jager

GWEN MACGREGOR AND SANDRA RECHICO at Mercer Union (1286 Bloor West), to November 29. 416-536-1519.

Rating: NNN

A century-old architectural relic that was once a movie theatre designed by E.J. Lennox and most recently a grubby dollar store has been converted by Mercer Union into a handsome new gallery space on Bloor West, part of the northward expansion of the Queen West art and design district.

The fitting inaugural show at the new location is Gwen MacGregor and Sandra Rechico's *Maps In Doubt*. The collaborative duo recorded their movements through four cities using different recording devices – MacGregor a GPS positioning system, Rechico a notebook. The two then compiled their results into visual data.

The results analyze their movements over various periods of time using different algorithms, methodologies and techniques. Their time in Toronto is made visible by mapping software, the entire distance travelled through Kassel's Documenta festival in lines of graphite (an impressive 82 kilometres for MacGregor, resulting in a dense graphite mass). Distance covered in Montreal is conceived as ropes of candy-red and yellow latex.

Their obsessive, almost endurance-based methodologies test the limits of measurement and materials while producing coolly abstract, often pleasing visual results. The punchline – required, given the snoozy title of the show – is that disparities between subjective experience and our endless attempts to measure it are inevitable. The map, to wit, is not the territory.

Fair enough. But, contemporary post-structuralist critiques of topography are hardly novel and have been more richly and imaginatively treated elsewhere by artists like Bruce Nauman and Tracy Emin.

Conceptual work like this has its place in a rich vein of current and engaging thought. I found myself more drawn, however, to the antique stamped tin ceiling of the gallery itself, which serves as its own understated map of lives lived over the last 100 years.

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