Kelly Mark has exhibited widely across Canada and internationally. Her work is represented in public collections of The National Gallery of Canada, The Canada Council Art Bank, Canadian Foreign Affairs, The Art Gallery of Ontario, and many other corporate and private collections. She is the recipient of numerous grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council and Toronto Arts Council as well as the KM Hunter Artist Award, and Chalmers Art Fellowship. She lives and works in Toronto. Kelly Mark is represented by Diaz Contemporary, Toronto.

www.kellymark.com

Roula Pantheniou Inventory
Kelly Mark
108 Leyton Ave

For two decades, Kelly Mark has been making art inspired by a keen interest in everyday routines and rituals. Her multidisciplinary work incorporates numerous such routines: from punching a clock when working in the studio, compiling lists of uncommon phrases for text-based works, and appropriating film and television content in her videos. Mark makes art in response to her immediate environment. 108 Leyton Ave is one of her most uncompromising works, a precisely staged performance in which the artist literally talks to herself while playing solitaire.

KM: Everything could have been different between us.
KM: Nothing could be further from the truth.

Filmed over several months, and staged using familiar items from the artist’s apartment-studio, the high-definition video is titled after the Scarborough address of a house the artist owned for several years. The video frames a specific place and time in the artist’s life after she gave up her much-loved downtown studio and moved east of the Don Valley Parkway. After moving in to this modest suburban house, the artist began to feel disconnected, isolated from her peers and the downtown art scene she had long been a part of, so she reemerged into herself as a coping mechanism.

KM: You think you know everything don’t you?
KM: No. Only that I’m nothing without you.

The script is a bifurcated monologue, a call-and-response between artist and self. Mimicking a dissociative break or split personality, the artist turns the absurdity of the situation to her advantage. Mark’s writing precisely reflects her interests and observations. Each sentence is constructed around the recurring use of the words everything and nothing—a motif that can be found in several text-based works by the artist. An affirmation followed by a negation that operates like a circuit continuously opening and closing.

KM: Look, don’t worry. Everything will be all right.
KM: But nothing will be as it was.

The result is like watching an existential Ping-Pong match. The volley between the mirrored versions of the artist as she drinks, smokes and argues with herself is alternatingly tense, funny, exasperating and surprisingly tender. The surrogates remind us of an old couple that doesn’t appear to get along but can’t bear to live apart. Ultimately, 108 Leyton Ave is a clever and unblinking portrait of an artist’s internal struggle.

— Ivan Jurakic

List of works
108 Leyton Ave, 2014
Single-channel split screen video w/ sound, 10 minutes 13 seconds.

Trying to Remember, Sometimes Wishing I Could Forget, 1996/2015
Single-channel split screen video, 33 minutes

The artist would like to acknowledge the Canada Council for the Arts for their generous financial assistance.

In neurological terms, we take in a lot more information than our visual cortex can process. It processes only a fraction of the data we observe on a daily basis so there is a gap between what we see and what we perceive. Researchers refer to this as an attention-related bottleneck.

Our brains are constantly bottlenecking or limiting the processing of visual input in a way that is essential to paying attention to details. The visual cortex responds by freeing up more bandwidth to process this data. Otherwise, moment to moment, our perceptual apparatus would be overwhelmed.

The effectiveness of the deception is remarkable. A similar effect is used in mime to mimic an 8 ½ x 11 inch sheet of paper on a clipboard. In this case, the clipboard is real. These subtle dissonances occur throughout the installation. The artist provides us with just enough information to confound our perceptual apparatus. Two lengths of masking tape are used to create a believable facade. The artist provides just enough visual detail to make each item convincing without resorting to slavish duplication. It has been closely matched to suggest a reasonable facsimile. The artist provides just enough visual detail to make each item convincing without resorting to slavish duplication. It has been closely matched to suggest a reasonable facsimile. The artist provides just enough visual detail to make each item convincing without resorting to slavish duplication. It has been closely matched to suggest a reasonable facsimile. The artist provides just enough visual detail to make each item convincing without resorting to slavish duplication.

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