



Whittaker Gallery
2477 Whittaker Dr.
Burlington, ON
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Monday 1-1:45
<http://geocities.ws/whittakergallery/>

Real Man, Sports Nut: A 2-Month Retrospective and Solo Show

Roger Galvez

December 23rd, 2014

“I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.” Michael Jordan

For his only exhibit in 2014, the massive 2-month retrospective and debut solo show *Real Man, Sports Nut: A 2-Month Retrospective and Solo Show*, Roger Galvez enters new territory in his exploration of masculine identity, both materially and theoretically. Through sculpture, as well as video and photography, Galvez challenges the presupposed notions of what makes “a man,” and explores how those constraints are reflected onto him today.

In childhood we are often confronted with societal pressures and demands that force us to introspectively secure our identities. For males, an inability to play sports may imply that the subject is a weaker and therefore less masculine one. In his piece *Heavy Ball (deflating)*, Galvez presents a weighted soccer ball perched on a piece of foam. The weight of the ball, though it appears to be deflating, is enough to push down into the foam, raising its edges and leaving an imprint of the stitch work debossed onto it. A deflated ball impedes play, yet here the weight of that impediment is enough to molest the soft cushion it rests on, possibly permanently. Much as a flat ball hinders sport, a deflated self-esteem hinders mental growth and strength. Similarly, the piece *Floppy Handlebars* in which the bars of a bicycle have been replaced with a rubber tube, exhibits how these damaged goods also sustain failure. Though the bicycle appears to be in working order and has no missing parts, the flexibility of the crucial component makes operating the two-wheeler impossible.

In his other works, Galvez offers an optimistic alternative reality in which the cumber is embraced as a characteristic and not a flaw. *Skate Vid* celebrates vitality over skill. The performance documents Galvez getting back on a skateboard after years of neglect and attempting to recreate the session videos popular in skateboard culture. Though his skill set is very weak, he rides on with a smile on his face, and even receives an ovation from fellow skaters. His

persistence in attempting to skateboard like a professional is humorous in its failures, but endearing in its honesty. He shows no signs of frustration in his inabilities, and instead accepts his small successes. In the final piece, *thinkin of you*, Galvez poses with crossed arms and his hands in a “devil horns” gesture, has cartoonish hearts superimposed over his head, and short lines of poetry typed on the image. Here he displays the marriage of the emotional creative housed in the masculine exterior. The superimpositions seem to suggest that the whole show is farcical anyway. The heart and emotion outshine the masculine shell; it is the “soft” side that has the loudest voice.

The works operate in a delicate balance between irony and appearance where the appearance, inherently untrue or unjust, always succumbs to failure. Defining masculinity through a set of expectations leaves too much of a grey space to be ignored. Galvez seems to operate exclusively in that grey space where even stereotypically masculine or aggressive performances are entrenched in stereotypically feminine emotion and thought.