



TORONTO

TERENCE DICK

SAMUEL ROY-BOIS &amp; ROULA PARTHENIOU AT OAKVILLE GALLERIES

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Unless they have deep pockets like Damien Hirst or Larry Gagosian, the denizens of the art world learn to work within and make the most of their limitations. While these limits are often financial, they can be spatial as well. **Oakville Galleries**, for example, must wrestle every season with not one but two oddball spaces in which to mount their exhibitions. One is an actual cottage in the midst of a lakeside garden on the outskirts of town and the other is a single bunker in the city centre under the same roof as a library and a performing arts centre. Both locations are usually rendered your standard white cubes of varying dimensions, but the exhibitions currently on display do a bang up job of using the spaces as given.



Samuel Roy-Bois

Oakville's cavernous Centennial Square site is normally set up in a way to add walls and bring down the ceiling, but **Samuel Roy-Bois'** *Not a new world, just an old trick* stretches high up into the rafters and sits implacably as the only entity on display. The white-painted wooden architectural oddity is in fact its own display container and, once the entrances are identified, visitors can make their way inside to view a selection of works from the gallery's collection tied to barren landscapes, collapsed structures, and refuse. The one exception is a piece I noticed missing from the majestic willow it usually encircles at Gairloch Gardens: **Fastwürms'** charm bracelet is hung inside Roy-Bois' plexiglass tower as an emblem of shoddy value. The low made high could be an alternate titled for the overall experience.



Roula Partheniou

That could also be the by-line for **Roula Partheniou's** installation at the aforesaid cottage. Rather than simply displaying her quotidian sculptures as art objects, she scatters them as if they were remnants of an unfinished renovation. Blurring the line between her approximations of everyday things and the things themselves, she constructs a room within one room out of faux insulating panels and real wood, thus making the box the work and the viewer the inhabitant. She inverts this (and continues the play with windows she started with the [Convenience Gallery](#) window gallery in Toronto) by also building an inaccessible room outside one window and furnishing it with a box topped by an assortment of inscrutably innocuous items that had me desperately attempting to decode their underlying logic. Partheniou's purposeful reduction of detail leaves one to discover the wonder of form and unexpected details (like the pink and green glow given off by the painted ends of two upright planks of wood) both in the collected works and the space they occupy.

**Oakville Galleries:** <http://www.oakvillegalleries.com/>

Samuel Roy-Bois: Not a new world, just an old trick continues until May 24.

Roula Partheniou: House & Home & Garden continues until May 24.

**Terence Dick** is a freelance writer living in Toronto. His art criticism has appeared in Canadian Art, BorderCrossings, Prefix Photo, Camera Austria, Fuse, Mix, C Magazine, Azure, and The Globe and Mail. He is the editor of Akimblog. You can follow his quickie reviews and art news announcements on Twitter [@TerenceDick](#).

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