

## IMAGE CREDIT

### Cover

Claire Scherzinger, *the zenith of my understanding is like water in a thimble*, 2016, site specific installation: oil on canvas, oil on panel, found objects, plaster, linen, gel medium, plastecine, wood, clay, liquid graphite, paper, variable dimensions, approximately 12' x 12'.

### Inside

Claire Scherzinger, *the zenith of my understanding is like water in a thimble* (detail), 2016, site specific installation.

## ARTIST TALK

Saturday, March 5, 1 pm

## XIT-RM

The XIT-RM is a project space dedicated to showcasing the work of emerging artists in the GTA and Mississauga region. Artists are selected annually by the gallery's curatorial team to exhibit work that honours the mission and mandate of the AGM, with an emphasis on contemporary art and critical engagement.

The XIT-RM is generously sponsored by the RBC Foundation.



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Engage. Think. Inspire. This phrase opens the dialogue at the AGM. The Gallery connects with the people of Mississauga through the collection and presentation of relevant works from a range of periods and movements in Canadian art. Expressing multiple ideas and concepts, this visual art translates into meaningful cultural and social experiences for all audiences. The AGM employs innovative education, artist projects and other forms of dialogue to advance critical enquiry and community connection to the visual arts.

### Staff:

Mandy Salter – Director | Curator  
Kendra Ainsworth – Assistant Curator  
Weijia Feng – Communications

Reagan Kennedy – Community Activator  
Sadaf Zuberi – Business Operations Manager  
Laura Carusi – Volunteer Coordinator | Curatorial Assistant

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# CLAIRE SCHERZINGER THE ZENITH OF MY UNDERSTANDING IS LIKE WATER IN A THIMBLE

FEBRUARY 25, 2016 – APRIL 10, 2016

AGM  
ART GALLERY OF MISSISSAUGA



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The AGM is proud to present Claire Scherzinger's *the zenith of my understanding is like water in a thimble*, her first solo museum exhibition, in the gallery's XIT-RM Project Space. An emerging painter, Scherzinger explores new territory, stretching the boundaries of her painting practice to include sculpture and installation. Her unexpected, cross-disciplinary intervention creates an exciting dialogue between Fiona Kinsella's exhibition of new paintings in the AGM's Freeman Gallery and the mixed media and installation work in *Change Makers* in the Main Gallery.

Thank you to Kendra Ainsworth for curating this exhibition and for the collaborative support of AGM staff members Sadaf Zuberi, Laura Carusi, Reagan Kennedy, William Brereton, Emily Kovacs, Weijia Feng, and our incredible roster of volunteers.

Mandy Salter  
Director | Curator

## ARTIST BIO

Claire Scherzinger is an artist and writer with a BFA from OCAD University. She was a winner of the 17th Annual RBC Painting Competition and has upcoming projects at Easter Edge Gallery in Newfoundland and at Forest City Gallery in London, Ontario. She lives and works in Toronto.

## CURATORIAL STATEMENT

In *the zenith of my understanding is like water in a thimble*, Claire Scherzinger continues on her quest to "know everything about everything" when it comes to painting and drawing. However this quest is inherently futile, as the title suggests, and indeed extends beyond medium-specific boundaries. Along with many of her contemporaries, Scherzinger, who has been recognized for her painting by the RBC Canadian Painting Competition, is exploring the significance and relevance of painting today, in an era in which cross-disciplinary practice is common. She has begun to view drawing, painting, and sculpture as a spectrum across which information is exchanged – information that takes the form of line, colour, shape and texture – in varying degrees of abstraction and representation.

In particular Scherzinger is interested in the concept of the still life – that longstanding trope of drawing and painting. What is traditionally considered an ordinary, obvious grouping of objects is unpacked, questioned, and put back together in new ways. Historically, the objects that might be depicted in a 17th century Dutch still life, although ordinary, often served an allegorical function; here Scherzinger uses objects which may refer to the artist's studio and creative process, but which also occupy a similarly uncanny function as those used to convey meaning in historical work.

Scherzinger presents items which might otherwise be components represented in an oil still life as part of odd assemblages – found objects, broken bottles and ceramic pieces – and covers them with linen, liquid graphite, gel medium and other substances. Here the subject (object?) becomes surface ripe for intervention, and the once two dimensional medium (linen, graphite) becomes sculptural. A found ceramic vase is covered with 'lines' of plastecine and gel medium; the lines that might have formed a decorative pattern on a painted vase have become three dimensional, they are no longer smooth, matte ornamentation. Must a vase be perfectly smooth and polished? Scherzinger speaks of making things "awkward" and "ugly," and placing in proximity seemingly unrelated objects. Her paintings echo and/or exhort these configurations with their layered, reworked, bold, sometimes restless compositions.

While this installation has perhaps shifted more in the direction of sculpture and assemblage, Scherzinger does not feel that this is so far removed from painting. Her thinking and practice have been informed by the recent focus on what Raphael Rubenstein has defined as 'provisional painting' in his now oft-cited essay of the same name, paintings that "look casual, dashed-off, tentative, unfinished or self-cancelling."<sup>1</sup> Ideas of covering and uncovering, and leaving things unfinished are all at play in Scherzinger's work as she searches for a more open, porous relationship between form/object and image/painting/drawing, exploring assemblage and installation as an extension of, and/ or an inspiration for painting. Sharon L. Butler has similarly dubbed this trend "the New Casualism,"<sup>2</sup> and her description is particularly apt; these artists "are looking for unexpected outcomes rather than handsome results... If the viewer leaves a show of their paintings agitated by their abrupt shifts, their crosscurrents, and their purposeful lack of formal cohesion, the work has succeeded."

Kendra Ainsworth  
Assistant Curator

<sup>1</sup> Raphael Rubenstein, "Provisional Painting," *Art in America*, May 2009

<sup>2</sup> Sharon L. Butler, "Abstract Painting: The New Casualists," in *Brooklyn Rail*, 2011