

ARTIST BIOS

Murray Favro was born in Huntsville, ON in 1940. He moved to London, Ontario as a teenager where he studied art at H. B. Beal Technical and Commercial High School. With Jack Chambers, Greg Curnoe, Ron Martin and others, Favro was part of the generation of London artists who became nationally recognized in the 1960s. He is also well known as a founding member of the Nihilist Spasm Band, which was crucial to the development of his artistic approach. Favro is widely regarded for his highly original exploration of invention, perception and cognition. Working in drawing, sculpture, performance and installation, he often incorporates slide and film projections, lighting effects, and computer and electronic technology. His work involves inquisitive play and studied observation. The everyday objects that he designs and builds raise serious questions about art, technology and the nature of representation. Around 1965 he abandoned painting for other-than-art interests – guitars, machines, airplanes, experiments with film images and inventions. Known for his multi-disciplinary practice, Favro's artwork has been the subject of a major retrospective organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1983 and in 1998 at the London Regional Art & Historical Museum. Murray Favro received the Gerhson Iskowitz Award in 1997 and the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts in 2007.

Keith Shearsby lives and works in Brantford, Ontario. In the 1980's he studied at the Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology in Sault Ste. Marie, and at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto. He produced numerous exhibitions directly after his studies, both as a painter and a sculptor; however, he took a break from art making in the late 90's. Since then he has returned to his practice with a new body of sculptural objects and performances, and has shown at the Judith and Norman Alix Art Gallery (Sarnia), the Living Arts Centre and the Art Gallery of Mississauga (Mississauga), Glenhyrst Gallery (Brantford), Latcham Gallery (Stouffville), Twist Gallery and Propeller Gallery (Toronto), Cambridge Galleries and the Cambridge Centre for the Arts (Cambridge), the Agnes Jamieson Gallery (Minden) and the You/Me Gallery (Hamilton), receiving several awards for his work including multiple OAC emerging artist grants.

Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant

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Gallery Hours:
Tuesday – Friday 10am – 5pm | Saturday/Sunday: 11am – 4pm
Closed on Mondays

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Glenhyrst
Arts. Culture. Beauty.

The Look of Things: Murray Favro & Keith Shearsby

SEPTEMBER 30 – NOVEMBER 26, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION: OCTOBER 5 AT 7PM



Keith Shearsby, *Multi - Axe*,
wood and cast steel, 16" x 7" x 7"



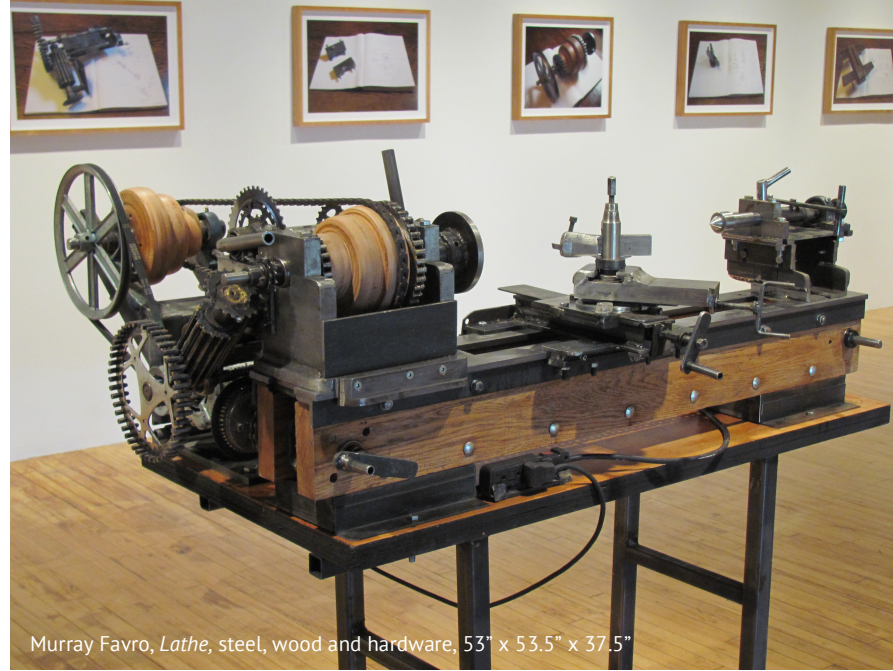
Murray Favro, *Lawn - Mower*, wood and metal, 99" x 73" x 5"

In “The Look of Things,” artists Murray Favro and Keith Shearsby engage with the idea of usefulness, of functionality, and of value. As such, they complicate the curious relationship between art objects and working instruments, between artistic expression and tools. Each sculptural object in the exhibition can be—or once was—used in a purposeful way to manipulate the physical world as we know it, yet in the gallery it exists as an art object—not to be handled, touched, or manipulated. This is precisely where some of the work’s tensions lie with intrigue; though, it does more than that—it also throws uncertainty at the ways in which we perceive and manipulate the tangible world around us, both physically and visually. In short, Favro and Shearsby seek to unhinge the fabrication of art in an age of mass-production, the logic of visual perception, and the dynamics of everyday items.

Murray Favro is considered one of Canada’s most important contemporary artists. Working primarily in drawing, sculpture, performance, and installation, he is associated with the important Canadian art movement known as “London Regionalism” in the late 1950s and 1960s. In “The Look of Things,” Favro contributes a number of works that specifically reduce the size and scale of objects to functional things. In effect, they operate as modified objects, versions of everyday objects, or tools that derive from the past—things that make, construct, and build without the use of electricity, breathings masks, or goggles; they are essentially tools and instruments that need not be plugged-in to an outlet to be functional, and can be picked up and used at will. However, when placed in an art gallery environment, their functionality and context changes into fine art objects to be looked at and contemplated, thus eliminating their practical utility. In this way, Favro examines the meaning of art / objects and the way that audiences perceive (and consume) them. Moreover, he seeks to emphasize the value of the artist’s hand, of the maker, by creating original sculptural objects with real-life applications, rather than intervening in readymade, mass-produced materials.

Keith Shearsby is one of Brantford’s best-known artists, producing a larger series of works titled “Useful Things” that investigate the troubled connections between usefulness and the physical object. Driven by how usefulness affects self-perception and our environment, Shearsby’s sculptures and installations attempt to “make objects that *almost* work or look like they *could* work,” pushing them to their absolute limits wherein they work so well that they don’t work at all. By doing so, he, much like Favro, disrupts the audience’s pre-conceived notions of the functionality and use-value of art / objects, thus calling attention to the ways that expectations and reality are always on the verge of transformation. Part of this process involves the use of humour, since when audiences are confronted with the unexpected, with something they don’t readily understand, their response is amusement, of delight. Yet closely bound up in this notion of perception is the uncanny, which Sigmund Freud used to describe something that is strange, unanticipated, and even supernatural. While the visuality of Shearsby’s work remains fundamental to his practice, it is difficult to deny that many of his pieces unsettle audiences in order to disrupt their predetermined habits and behaviours, to interrupt the everyday flows of their life.

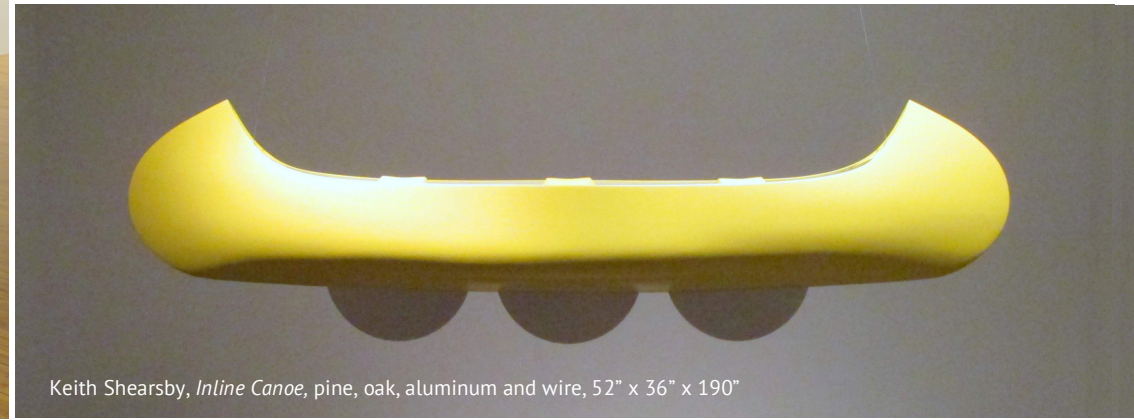
This exhibition looks at the ways that we can (or should) use things but cannot pick them up; these are things that invite us to touch but we are denied in doing so; these are things that we see but that we should feel as well. “The Look of Things” fundamentally explores these complex interactions, paradoxes, and differences; in doing so, it also questions the context of materials inside the gallery as opposed to beyond it, looking at the variations between very different worlds.



Murray Favro, *Lathe*, steel, wood and hardware, 53" x 53.5" x 37.5"

“The relation between what we **see** and what we **know** is never settled. Each evening we see the sun set. We know that the earth is turning away from it. Yet the knowledge, the explanation, never quite fits the sight.”

- John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (1972)



Keith Shearsby, *Inline Canoe*, pine, oak, aluminum and wire, 52" x 36" x 190"