

A PORTION OF TORONTO BLOG INTERVIEW WITH DEREK FLACK 2009

The 'project' in The Beverly Owens Project speaks to the open-minded approach that defines this newly opened gallery on [West Queen West](#). Although it's only been around for a month or so, already the current show (its first) should be taken as an early indication of the degree to which Owens hopes to take an unconventional approach to exhibits and installations in the space. Working with encaustic and photographs, her contribution to [CONTACT](#) is one of the few mixed media exhibits in this year's festival.

But perhaps the most significant characteristic of the unconventionality of her approach - at least considering the gallery's location in the heart of Toronto's fine art scene - is that most (if not all) exhibits will feature Owens own work. That's not to say that others won't show here as well, but that dual and group exhibits will also see contributions from Owens. That's not too common for galleries along Queen, which are far more likely to exhibit a wide array of artists. So how is it, you might ask, that a gallery prominently featuring the owner's work could be considered open-minded? Well, in speaking with Owens, I got the sense that her primary purpose in opening this gallery was to respond to the challenge of exhibiting both consistently and in conjunction with other artists working in completely different styles and media. Although she's shown pretty widely in the past, it's quite another thing to be on the hook month in and month out. Combine that with working with different artists, and you have a recipe for maximizing creative energy and output in various unscripted directions.

Indeed, the whole idea sounds both ideal and a little terrifying. It'd be difficult to find many artists who wouldn't like the idea of taking significant curatorial control of their work. But, of course, the flip side is that such an ongoing project requires one to be virtually prolific in his or her output. Not only that, curators aren't just obstacles; they're often genuinely helpful and astute when it comes to guiding and evaluating talent. Towards this end, Owens doesn't plan on going it completely alone. Her current show, for example, is co-curated by herself and Michelle Cox, and future shows will also see collaboration with others in this department. Not only that, prior to opening The Project, Owens also spent time working at the Eastern Front Gallery developing her own 'front-of-house' skills