

## Slang inspires art exhibit



Staff photo by Rob Beintema  
Artist Anthony Burnham's *Mobile Perspective* piece is as part of the ongoing exhibition at Blackwood Gallery at the University of Toronto Mississauga.

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Inspired by a quirky hip hop song, *The Way I Are* is a new visual arts exhibition at Blackwood Gallery at University of Toronto Mississauga.

The descriptive text reads, "In which slang is proposed as a means through which to consider elaborations and modifications of visual imagery and formal methods within various art practices."

If that causes you to scratch your head and say, "huh?," that just may be the point.

The show is intended to excite curiosity and provoke discussion. Each piece catches the eye through form, colour or perspective, yet leaves the viewer slightly off balance, wondering what message – if any – the artist is trying to convey.

The paradigm shift idea was conceived by Katie Bethune-Leamen, curator of the show, after she was intrigued by a song by Timbaland; she found herself repeatedly stumbling over the title.

"Slang is like that. When you encounter a new word, there's this push and pull. You don't know what it means or where it's coming from, it's just some thought you may not be privy to, but you want to be," she said.

Pieces in *The Way I Are* range from sculpture to oil painting to photography, but each was chosen for its arresting quality. Valerie Blass' creation, for example, a slender, multi-coloured column rather like a stylized tree trunk, is constructed of small toys encased in tubing and cast in plaster.

It draws visitors from across the room for a closer look at its unusual shape and texture.

Anthony Burnham, an artist from Montreal's Darling Foundry, a contemporary art centre, describes his twin oil paintings as the dual phases of his work – the conceptual phase and the hands-on, development stage.

But his view is that people don't have to understand that; they can just let themselves be seduced by the paintings themselves.

"There's a kind of magic that happens with art," Burnham said. "Kids understand it really well. They don't ask 'Why?' or 'What does it mean?' They just say, 'I like that!'"

*The Way I Are* opened last night and runs until March 1. Blackwood Gallery is located inside the Kaneff Centre.

Hours are Monday to Friday from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday from 1-4 p.m. Admission is free.