

Alex is Back

To many of you Alex Kisilevich's name may ring a bell, but probably don't know what this gentleman has been up to lately. And some of you may wonder who he is. So meet the national winner of the [BMO Financial Group's 1st Art! Invitational Student Art Competition 2009!](#)

Kisilevich is an OCAD graduate and former exponent here at XPACE. This year it was his *Untitled (Legs)* piece from the series ... *and then you die*, a digital print that won him this honour. Kisilevich's work was recently at show (Oct. 7 – Nov. 1), amongst the works of twelve other provincial winners in the West Gallery at the [Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art](#) .

Kisilevich's *Untitled (Legs)* isn't a traditional photograph, and one might have difficulty trying to understand this bizarre image when standing in front of it. However once defragmented into composition, colours, and formal content, it's easier to get a feel of what Kisilevich is trying to communicate through his picture; then recurrent themes such as alienation, abandonment, rejection, detachment, might come to mind. I personally find that Kisilevich's work challenges the viewer's perception. That's not to say that his print does not convey meaning at first glance, Kisilevich himself suggests that "when faced with a work like this, one is flummoxed by conflicting responses" and then he adds, "...to smile or feel disturbed". Whatever the case may be, this is not the type of image one may find in an exhibition often. And by being so out of the ordinary, it can hold you up for a while as you try to make sense of it.



Untitled (Legs), from the series ... *and then you die*, 40×40 in.

There is also a kind of tension happening between these assisted prosthesis legs, which is a sad topic to touch on, and the vivid colours of the walls that the 'legs' sit in front of. To be honest, this isn't an image that I felt attracted to at first glance, and that's again, because of its great

degree of strangeness. Nonetheless, getting into those components that make up the picture, and trying to make sense of it through what the image itself offers, can be as fun as playing a board game in the company of good friends.

Looking back at Kisilevich's work from the group show *We Have a History* that took place at XPACE at the end of February of this year, the type of approach taken then, is fairly similar to what he's done in his *Untitled (Legs)* print. By constructing compositions where the main object is portrayed as cut off from any type of action, but still attached to the world by extremely inanimate contexts, Kisilivich invites the viewer to create connections that will ultimately create a personal narrative is that is based on the objects and contexts that make up his images; and therefore the those still objects start to become dynamic.