

## **Peter Dykhuis at the Red Head Gallery**

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This exhibition – Odds (and ends of the earth) – is the strongest I've seen to date from Peter Dykhuis. As a long-time resident of Halifax (and currently director/curator of the Dalhousie Art Gallery there), Dykhuis has regularly availed himself of a conceptualist rigour in his art – frequently incorporating in his work, shards of printed ephemera (especially the mail addressed to him), Google Earth maps and landscapes, and all sort of identity-verifying material.

For this small but powerful – and deeply enjoyable – exhibition, Dykhuis has constructed horizontal, bar-like wall-mounted collages made up of his usual Google Earth landscapes, “painted images based on geo-spatial digital maps,” envelopes addressed to him and a mosaic of hotly coloured Post-it notes (“Peter: where is the nozzle for the hose”) and “to-do” lists (“chicken / exit signs / tape / check out faucets and water filters...”) – all of which create, in accumulation, “layered portraits of person [Dykhuis himself] and place [Halifax].”

The sweetly rearguard secret that lies at the heart of this amiable work, however, is the artist's recourse here to the age-old pleasures inherent in the spatial, formal excitement offered simply by colour and composition. Dykhuis's panoramic pictures – filled though they may be with charts and charmingly cryptic messages – are, first and last, deeply satisfying abstract works, full of balance, radiance, the clashing and resolution of juxtaposed hues and shapes, and an unfurling, unfailing visual vitality. There's no getting around it: We love patterns as well as we love stories.