

4 questions with

KYLE BEAL

It's a classic cartoon gag, and one that somehow never gets old. In the middle of a chase sequence, the gang ends up in an endless hallway lined with doors

on either side, popping in and out of them in ways that defy both logic and physics. In his latest installation at the TRUCK Gallery, artist Kyle Beal aims to recreate that seemingly impossible visual joke in real life.

Using a combination of everyday materials and electronic triggers, his *Roulette* transforms its mundane corridor into a fun-house of slapstick surprises. In the lead-up to the installation's April 3 opening, Beal chatted with Swerve correspondent Peter Hemminger about cartoons, laughter and the problem with calling art "serious."

Can you remember where you first encountered that "hallway roulette" visual gag? I can't remember specifically,

but I keep referencing *Scooby-Doo* when I talk about this piece. I don't know if it's actually a commonly used *Scooby-Doo* trope or not, but that's where I reference, and I remember it being in the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine* movie, and then physical comedy. I don't know how old you are, but when I grew up, Benny Hill was still on TV late at night, and so that kind of physical comedy is what I think about, too. Or Chaplin.

What is it about that joke that stuck with you, and that you wanted to explore? I like the surrealist nature of the whole enterprise. In the cartoon, there's a certain amount of surrealism going on that obviously doesn't exist in the real world, but I like the idea of suspending one's disbelief and engaging in that logic, maybe. It's a bit of make-believe, in what's otherwise pretty ordinary architecture.

Has humour always been important to your work? I think of humour as a kind of critical activity. At the best of times when you're telling jokes or engaging in laughter, you're criticizing or deconstructing an idea or a set of values. The laughter is in part recognition of that absurd construction. So for me, that kind of humour is an important feature in understanding the world.

With that in mind, how do you feel about the phrase "serious art"?

I think this is a serious piece of art that doesn't necessarily have to be approached in a serious way, if you know what I mean. It depends on how you read the word "serious." If you read serious to mean a kind of humourlessness, then it's probably not that. If you mean serious like, this is a kind of exploration of a sort of architecture we all encounter all the time that is pretty dehumanizing, then it's a serious piece.



2028, yukyuks.com.

until sun april 5

Mike Dambra

At The Comedy Cave, 9206 Macleod Tr. S.E. Performances at 8 and 10:30 p.m. \$10. 403-287-1120, comedycave.com.

tue april 7

John Roy

Until Sunday, April 12. At The Comedy Cave, 9206 Macleod Tr. S.E. Performances at 8 and 10:30 p.m. \$10. 403-287-1120, comedycave.com.

ongoing

Comedy Monday Night

Every Monday night. A showcase of stand-up comedy. At Broken City, 613 11th Ave. S.W. 8 p.m. \$5. comedymondaynight.com.

The Comic's Room

Every Tuesday night. Professional comedians bare their art. At the end of the performance, the audience pays what they think it was worth. At Scotsman's Well, 116 12024 Symons Valley Rd. N.W. 8 p.m. Pay what you think. 403-274-9355, facebook.com/thecomicroom.

Dirty Laundry

Mondays until May 18. Season 15: Clean Cut. Completely live, improvised soap opera. At Lunchbox Theatre, 160 9th Ave. S.E. 7:30 p.m. General, \$16; students, \$10. 403-701-1284, dirtylaundrycalgary.com.

Going to Hell Sundays

Sundays. Calgary's only weekly dirty/dark comedy show. Professional comedians do their edgiest material. At Juliet's Castle, 440 16th Ave. N.E. 8 p.m. gthsundays.com.

Jupiter Comedy

Every Wednesday. Open mic comedy with professional headliner. At Oak Tree Tavern, 124 10th St. N.W. 8 p.m. \$5. facebook.com/jupitercomedy.

Open Mic Stand Up

Sundays. Aspiring comedians book a time slot and show the audience what they're made of. At Creekside Bar & Grill, 1065 Canyon Meadows Dr. S.W. Mic opens at 5 p.m. 403-457-2411, creeksidebar.ca.

Past Your Bedtime

Every Friday night until Friday.

Roulette: Friday, April 3 to Saturday, May 2 at Truck Gallery