

Towards
87 Wade Ave
Unit B1
Toronto ON

Liam Crockard

Breadwinner

April 6–April 28, 2018

Opening reception: Friday, April 6, 6–9pm



Kafka's Watch

Raymond Carver (1985)

I have a job with a tiny salary of 80 crowns, and
an infinite eight to nine hours of work.
I devour the time outside of the office like a wild beast.
Someday I hope to sit in a chair in another
country, looking out the window at fields of sugarcane
or Mohammedan cemeteries.
I don't complain about the work so much as about
the sluggishness of swampy time. The office hours
cannot be divided up! I feel the pressure
of the full eight or nine hours even in the last
half hour of the day. It's like a train ride
lasting night and day. In the end you're totally
crushed. You no longer think about the straining
of the engine, or about the hills or
flat country, but ascribe all that's happening
to your watch alone. The watch which you continually hold
in the palm of your hand. Then shake. And bring slowly
to your ear in disbelief.

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Gallery Hours  
Thurs–Sat, 12–6pm  
or by appointment

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When Carver's poem was originally published by the New Yorker, it was criticized by some studious historian because the work was almost entirely cribbed from a letter by Franz Kafka to his father. The letter is edited, formatted with breaks, and then a few lines are added at the end. In his later collected poems, *All of Us*, there is a subtitle – *Kafka's Watch: From A Letter*. I suppose this satisfies some curiosity, but I would never have read the letter the way I read Carver's poem.

At the time the letter was written, Kafka was working in insurance claims for workplace accidents and writing in the off-hours. I imagine this is where the dreams of idyllic country and cemeteries come from. In his response, his father encourages his son's writing career, and refers to the insurance job as "*Brotberuf*", a "*Bread Job*", something done just to put food on the table. Comparatively, Breadwinner is a funny term for being gainfully employed. It seems to imply some element of chance and reward – like there's a raffle and then a prize. A lottery.

The last time I was home I was having breakfast with my parents and talking about steam whistles. When my mom was growing up in Sault Ste. Marie she could remember the sound of the whistle from the steel mill, signalling the day's end. A little while later you'd see all your neighbors coming home.

My dad said: "We have a buzzer at the shop."

"Really?" my mom said.

"Yes. Every morning at 6:59 a buzzer goes. One minute to start time. At 7:00, the buzzer goes again: time to start work. At 9:45 The buzzer goes. Time for your break. 9:59? One minute left in your break. 10:00? Back to work. At lunchtime the buzzer goes and the boss stands in the window, high up on the wall, and leans into a PA system: "Lights, please." You have to make sure the lights are off in the shop before you can leave. Same thing, all day. It's someone else's time."

March 2018

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Since graduating from OCADU in 2010, **Liam Crockard** has been building a multifaceted career of sculpture, collage and photography works examining the nature of work itself, with a particular emphasis on "jerry-rigging" and improvisation as both a symptom and a strategy for art-making and survival alike. He has had solo and group exhibitions at Cooper Cole, Clint Roenisch, MKG127, Roberta Pelan, and internationally at Gestalten Space (Berlin), West Cork Arts (Ireland), Scott Projects (Chicago), and was recently a featured artist at the 2017 Material Art Fair in Mexico City. His work has been reviewed and published in *Artforum*, *Canadian Art*, *Border Crossings*, *C Magazine*, *Elephant Magazine* and the *Toronto Star*. He is currently co-director of The Loon in Toronto and *Paper Local*, a freely distributed newspaper project.

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