

Laura Moore: The Memory of Things
Curatorial text by Renée van der Avoird
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Laura Moore's third solo exhibition with Zalucky Contemporary, *The Memory of Things*, features a suite of recent drawings complemented by intricate soapstone carvings and a large-scale wooden log sculpture. Continuing the acclaimed Toronto artist's investigation into our complex relationship with technology, the exhibition focuses on the USB key as both a stand-in for connectivity and memory, and an imagined extension of the natural world.

Seeds—acorns, maple-tree keys, and magnolia pods—populate the majority of drawings on view. In addition to their formal elegance, these “gifts from trees” (as the artist calls them) contain, like USBs, genetic information meant to be passed along. With astute technical skill, Moore traces the seeds on paper and adds a life-like USB to the spot where they were previously attached to their mother tree. This point of connectivity feels natural, as Moore's scavenged objects are perfectly scaled to the USB. One can imagine inserting the acorns and maple keys back into the trees from which they fell.

Another drawing depicts an elaborate grouping of human fingers with USBs for nails. They are tightly bunched and army-like, their anthropomorphic “eyes” all facing forward. Amusing and irreverent, Moore's reference to the body alludes to our ever-intensifying dependence on technology. She muses, “if the human body had a USB key, where would it be?”

Among the sculptures on view is an exquisitely carved soapstone rosebud with a USB stem. As she chisels, the artist cannot plan how the stone's natural veining will interact with the sculpture's physical form. Here, the circular patterning in the rock fortuitously accentuates the subtle curves of the rose petals, resulting in a completely satisfying visual experience.

Eight other carved specimens accompany the rosebud, amongst them a lotus seed pod, a pine cone and an apple, all with USB stems. Their presentation in compartmentalized shelves recalls a cabinet of curiosities; the plant-machine hybrids themselves are reminiscent of science-fiction stories of genetic deviation, such as John Wyndham's *The Chrysalids*. However, instead of post-apocalyptic, the artwork's tone is good-humoured and gratifying, tinged with Moore's signature wit and genuine curiosity about technology and temporality.

A tree trunk occupies the centre of the gallery floor. Moore recovered the six-foot log from her home town of Chatham, Ontario after an ice storm. At either end, she inserted custom-fabricated, enlarged steel USB keys. The double-ended USB evokes ideas of infinite connectivity and never-ending dataflow, relating to not only to our high-tech reality, but also to the steady storage of memory within the rings of an all-knowing tree.