

Media Advisory for Immediate Release

Broken Steps and Haunted Screens

With a project by **Penelope Umbrico**

Curated by **David Winter**

**Presented by the University of Toronto Art Centre and
the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival**

April 28 – May 30, 2015

Curatorial Tour and Opening Reception: Wednesday, April 29, 6:00 – 8:30 pm

Artist Talk with Penelope Umbrico: Thursday, April 30, 5:00 – 6:30 pm

Presented in two separate but interrelated parts, this exhibition explores the widths and depths of vernacular photography. Since the beginnings of photography, the camera has been used in service of a wide range of scientific pursuits, including medicine, physics, forensics, criminology, and botany. It has brought the news of the world and the glint of ice in a glass of whiskey. It has mapped every crater on the moon and spotted the Loch Ness Monster. None of this was done with the intentions of fine art, but contemporary artists have been deeply influenced by the tropes of vernacular photography.

The first part of the exhibition offers a look at the astonishing panoply of this photographic genre. Drawn from flea markets, personal albums, and private collections, the exhibition presents several coherent groupings of pictures, such as mugshots, insurance evidence, amateur self-portraits, psychic research, UFO sightings, and many others.

The second part presents a series of recent works by Toronto-native, New York-based artist Penelope Umbrico, who uses photographic imagery downloaded from the internet. Intimately involved with current vernacular photography, Umbrico employs traditional photographic techniques and methods of appropriation, extraction, multiple production, and intervention to explore how we, as a culture, make and use images.

Together, the two parts of this exhibition present a certain arc across the history of vernacular photography. When culled from the proliferating archives—at the curatorial hand of the artist or the artistic hand of the curator—the compulsion toward photographic evidence that underpins this history comes up haunted by the vicissitudes of time, belief, prejudice, and ultimately, the betrayal of control and intention.

A Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival Primary Exhibition.

Justina M. Barnicke
Gallery

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Public Programming:

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Followed by the Opening Reception: Wednesday April 29, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

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Justina M. Barnicke Gallery
7 Hart House Circle
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University of Toronto Art Centre (UTAC)
15 King's College Circle
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416-946-8687
www.utac.utoronto.ca

Gallery Hours

Tuesday - Saturdays 12-5pm
Wednesday 12-8pm
Sunday and Monday closed

Admission is FREE to all exhibitions.

The Galleries are wheelchair accessible.

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