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THE NEXT 7 DAYS: EVENTS (15) + OPENINGS (9) + DEADLINES (14) + CLOSINGS (25)

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TORONTO
TERENCE DICK
 COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AT JUSTINA M. BARNICKE GALLERY | HARD TWIST AT THE GLADSTONE HOTEL
 February 04, 2014

Like 23

Perhaps it was paranoia on my part, but the more time I spent working my way through artist/curator **Charles Stankievecch's** encyclopedic *CounterIntelligence* exhibition at the **Justina M. Barnicke Gallery**, the less coincidental it seemed that, on my drive over, CBC radio had been broadcasting a special on how video games surreptitiously harvest data from iPhone users. The confluence of visual culture and intelligence communities turns out to have a much longer history than our immediate present and this gathering of evidence in the form of artworks, documents, artifacts, ephemera, and architecture reveals how often our looking is cover for an entirely other kind of watching



Amir Yatziv, *The Inflatables #1*, 2009, C-print

Amongst the nearly one hundred items gathered here are some obvious artists who've already staked a claim in this territory (**Harun Farocki**, **Mark Lombardi**), some unlikely candidates for inclusion (**Peter Paul Rubens**, **Gordon Matta-Clark**), and a whole bunch of pieces to a puzzle that goes from 18th Century plein air painting to Wikileaks and Edward Snowden. The mastermind behind this grand conspiracy contributes his own visual clue with a redacted postcard from his time in the Canadian Forces Artist Program, but Stankievecch's hand is most present in the curatorial theorizing that links Abstract Expressionism and the Cold War to Post-Structural Theory in the Middle East through extensive didactic notes and a dense accompanying text. This connect-the-dots analysis owes a lot to paranoid writers like Thomas Pynchon and William S. Burroughs (both also name-checked in the exhibition) who turned the last century into a game of endless interpretation with the former disappearing into the shadow world while the latter explicitly outlined his resistance to forms of control. The one irony in this peek into the underworld of military surveillance is that the curator resists relinquishing a master narrative with his ever-present commentary. Some of the delight and free agency in discovery is lost if you spend too much time reading and not enough looking, so I recommend visitors first make their way through the exhibition without reference to the text, leaving themselves open to their own conclusions about what links **Amir Yatziv's** photos of decoy rocket launchers to **Arthur Erickson's** models for the Canadian embassy in Washington, before immersing themselves in Stankievecch's expert testimony.

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PIERRE TREMBLAY

BLACK STAR SUBJECT: CANADA

January 22 – April 13, 2014
 Salah J. Bachir New Media Wall
 Ryerson Image Centre
 Guest Curator: Don Snyder



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Marie De Sousa, *Depends*, 2010, adult diapers, thread, rivets, laces on metal hook

Hard Twist, the **Gladstone Hotel**'s annual exhibition of textile and fibre arts, weaves a non-metaphorical web from a variety of materials including dress shirts, adult diapers, jute, and twine. The layout is always a bit of an oddity to navigate – it being a hotel and all, plus I had to work my way through a photo shoot during my visit – but the surprises around each turn make the experience worthwhile. The twists in this collection are both literal – just follow former Akimblogger **Deborah Margo**'s knitted wool mega-scarves as they wind their way down the hall – and figurative – as the messages embroidered in **Miriam Grenville**'s *Confiscation Garments* suggest. I tend to gravitate to the more clearly representational work such as **Amy Bagshaw**'s bound journals, **Philip Hare**'s terrorist quilt, and **Marie De Sousa**'s funny/sad boxing gloves made from the aforesaid protective undergarments. Each one alludes to a possible story just waiting to be told. There are plenty of other threads to follow over these two floors, just make sure you also stop in one level down to view **Wedge Curatorial Projects** new exhibition with its focus on **Jon Blak**'s photographs of Toronto's Caribbean community. The installation plus documentary on grocery stores is a great slice of life from our far-flung metropolis.

Justina M. Barnicke Gallery: <http://www.jmbgallery.ca/index.html>

CounterIntelligence continues until March 16.

Gladstone Hotel: <http://www.gladstonehotel.com/spaces/hard-twist/>

Hard Twist: This is Personal continues until April 27.

Terence Dick is a freelance writer living in Toronto. His art criticism has appeared in Canadian Art, BorderCrossings, Prefix Photo, Camera Austria, Fuse, Mix, C Magazine, Azure, and The Globe and Mail. He is the editor of Akimblog. You can follow his quickie reviews and art news announcements on Twitter [@TerenceDick](https://twitter.com/TerenceDick).

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