

Winter Exhibitions at KWAG Explore Safe Spaces in Troubling Times

23 January 2018, Kitchener ON – The Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery launches its 2018 exhibition year exploring themes of hospitality and home with the opening reception for *Emanuel Licha: Now Have A Look At This Machine* and *Halcyon Days*. All are welcome to attend a free Artist Talk featuring Québec-based artist and filmmaker Emanuel Licha this Friday 26 January at 7:00 pm, to be followed by the public opening reception at 8:00 pm.

Now Have A Look At This Machine is an immersive multimedia experience curated by Lesley Johnstone of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal that examines the role of hotels in war zones as sites where news and images of conflicts are fabricated and broadcast to the wider world. Central to the exhibition is Licha's creative documentary *Hotel Machine*, filmed in hotels that housed foreign war correspondents in Beirut, Sarajevo, Gaza, Kyiv and Belgrade. While embedded in conflict, these war hotels are slightly detached sites of provisional safety, populated by journalists and other players that collectively shape the public face of war.



Emanuel Licha, *Hotel Machine*, 2016 (stills). HD film, colour, sound, 64 min, looped. Courtesy of the artist and Les Contes Modernes.

“Projects such as *Now Have A Look At This Machine* provide us with insight into themes that we encounter with startling frequency in today’s media landscape: authenticity in journalism, the image of security, and the different realities that can coexist in zones of conflict,” explains Crystal Mowry, KWAG’s Senior Curator. “Emanuel Licha’s work, like much of the work that we will be supporting throughout 2018, contributes to a timely discussion on the politics of hospitality and by extension, what it means to feel safe.”

Curated by Crystal Mowry to expand upon these themes, *Halcyon Days* borrows its title from a Greek myth of ill-fated lovers transformed into kingfisher birds and granted asylum from the harsh adversity of the Aegean Sea. “We see real-life echoes of that story in news of migrant families traveling across the Mediterranean in search of asylum,” says Mowry. “It’s a peril that can be difficult to imagine when your home is free of conflict.” (*continues on page 2*)

Featuring historical and contemporary works from KWAG's Permanent Collection that feature stories of risk and sanctuary, *Halcyon Days* also marks the public debut of a newly conserved Tom Thomson painting following its recent return from the Canadian Conservation Institute. "Our painting by Tom Thomson – the only one known to be in a public collection in Waterloo Region – is a prime example of how an unstable condition can prevent an artwork from living a comfortable life," explains Mowry. "We are especially thrilled to reintroduce our public to this painting after a period of extensive conservation."

Now Have A Look At This Machine continues to 1 April 2018 and is organized and circulated by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal with the financial support of the Government of Canada. *Halcyon Days* remains on view until 4 March 2018.

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ABOUT THE KITCHENER-WATERLOO ART GALLERY

Established in 1956, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG) is Waterloo Region's oldest and largest public art gallery with an emphasis on contemporary art, offering creative and accessible experiences for all ages and segments of society. KWAG connects people and ideas through art, drawing the community into a shared experience of art that moves from sight to insight. The Gallery and its Permanent Collection of more than 4000 works is located within Centre In The Square.

The Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery acknowledges that we are located on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. We are on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral Confederacy), Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples.

MEDIA CONTACT

Stephanie Vegh, Manager, Media & Communications
E: svegh@kwag.on.ca | 519.579.5860, ext. 218

KITCHENER-WATERLOO ART GALLERY

101 Queen Street N, Kitchener
kwag.ca | 519.579.5860

HOURS AND ADMISSION

T-W 9:30 am-5 pm, Thu 9:30 am-9 pm, Fri 9:30 am-5 pm, Sat 10 am-5 pm,
Sun 1-5 pm
Open before most Centre In The Square performances

Admission to KWAG's exhibitions is free, courtesy of



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