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O'BORN CONTEMPORARY presents:

BACKSCATTER

A solo exhibition of recent work by

KATE MCQUILLEN

JUNE 21 – JULY 27, 2013

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Backscatter III and Backscatter I © KATE MCQUILLEN, 2013.

DATES:

FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2013, 6 – 9 p.m.

Exhibition Opening and Reception
Artist will be in attendance.

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2013, 2 – 4 p.m.

New Paradigm/Forever War: An Artist/Curator Talk

LOCATION:

131 Ossington Avenue, Toronto.

GALLERY HOURS:

Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6 and by appointment.

TELEPHONE:

416.413.9555

EXHIBITION STATEMENT

Responding to the War on Terror and the security procedures imposed by our governments as a counter-measure, artist Kate McQuillen's latest body of work ruminates on mass surveillance, data mining, and security theater.

The works comprising *Backscatter* address these issues in a variety of ways—an intimation that history's current socio-political moment is an extremely complex one. A set of pipe bombs cast in porcelain counter-poses fragility of material with violence of function, an absurdity which regards the futile fear of terrorist attacks that may never occur. Continuing this dialogue, McQuillen irreverently acts out the very behaviours that Homeland Security is charged with monitoring through the creation of her pressure monoprint series. Personal items of clothing with cutout paper weapons concealed within their folds are run through a printing press, the results of which bear distinct resemblance to x-ray scans. The prints reveal the duplicitous appearance of harmless objects and present the personally invasive and voyeuristic aspects of security procedures. Still others take inspiration from backscatter x-ray machines: collages in which explosive lines radiate from the figure's chest and core. With these composite silhouettes, McQuillen alludes not only to suicide bombers, but also to the idea that by combining pieces of information about an individual, one might be able to assemble their unspoken thoughts or intentions.

In *Backscatter*, McQuillen expresses her concerns about the climate of fear that counter-terrorism has produced and suggests that as we pass through security routines we are each, for a moment, a suspect. The exhibition discusses the restrictions, both real and imagined, that now weigh upon one's freedom to read, research, and create on the topic of terrorism. Given her frequent investigations into these topics, the artist often wonders at which point her research will deposit her name firmly in the government data mine of potential terrorists and push her over the line from citizen to suspect. Recognizable visuals such as x-ray images, body scans, explosions, and precious porcelain objects are used in an inverted fashion to expose the invasion of personal privacy that McQuillen feels as a citizen today. The work asserts a desire to live without fear of terrorism, overreaching security procedures, suspicion of fellow citizens, and the cooptation of the public as active contributors to government surveillance.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kate McQuillen is a Chicago-based artist working in print, installation, and sculpture. She has shown in Toronto, Chicago, Montreal, and Boston, and has works in public and private collections in Europe and North America. Writings about her work have been included in such publications as *Material Assumptions*, *Paper as Dialogue* (Columbia College Chicago, 2012) and *Lift Off: Earthlings and the Great Beyond* (Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2011).

In recent years, McQuillen has attended residencies in the U.S. and abroad: Ox-Bow in Saugatuck, Michigan, Open Studio in Toronto, Frans Masereel Center in Kasterlee, Belgium, the Center for Book & Paper Arts in Chicago, Elsewhere Collaborative in North Carolina, and the Ragdale Foundation in Lake Forest, Illinois. Mass surveillance, data mining, and "security theater" are all sources of inspiration for her artwork.

For media information:

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