For more than a decade, Adad Hannah has been exploring the conceptual possibilities of tableau vivant. Inspired by the 19th century pastime of living statues, Hannah developed an impressive body of multidisciplinary work that ranges from photography and video to installation. Often using friends, family and colleagues as models, the artist stages complex and yet subtle situations by directing his models to stand still while he records them. The resulting videos reveal a mesmerizing disjunction between the static poses and the slippage that occurs as the models inevitably begin to shift uncomfortably during the course of a typical 5-7 minute pose.

Inspired by the vivid digichromatography of Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii (1863–1944), in the summer of 2010, Hannah traveled to St. Petersburg to begin shooting his subjects in situ and ended up with enough footage to compose a suite of fifteen videos and an accompanying series of photographs. The Russians—ironically, the woman’s companion is wearing the same patterned suit that he wore to work that day. Some of the models seem preoccupied or are easily distracted. Hannah staged each scene by the vivid digichromatography of Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii (1863–1944). In the summer of 2010, Hannah traveled to St. Petersburg to begin recording aspects of daily life in Russia much as Prokudin-Gorskii had done a century earlier. Armed with two cameras, Hannah and his assistant scouted the city and surrounding areas looking for subjects and locations. Shot in both urban and rural settings using models of varying ages found through local contacts and by word-of-mouth, the artist began shooting his subjects in situ and ended up with enough footage to compose a suite of fifteen videos and an accompanying series of photographs. The resulting videos reveal a mesmerizing disjunction between the static poses and the slippage that occurs as the models inevitably begin to shift uncomfortably during the course of a typical 5-7 minute pose.

Inspirations:

- The Empire That Was Russia: The Prokudin-Gorskii Photographic Record Recreated

List of works:

- Young couple at a Playground, 2011; HD Video, 7 min 01 sec
- Teen Resting on a Bench, 2011; HD Video, 4 min 27 sec
- Russian KAMA3, 2011; HD Video, 5 min 00 sec
- Six Russians Eating Ice Cream, 2011; HD Video, 3 min 31 sec
- Girl on a Balcony, 2011; HD Video, 5 min 07 sec
- Guitarist in a Hammock, 2011; HD Video, 5 min 07 sec
- Mother Holding a Plum, 2011; colour photograph, 100 x 134 cm
- Chess with Grandson, 2011; colour photograph, 100 x 134 cm
- Six Russians Eating Ice Cream, 2011; HD Video, 3 min 31 sec
- Cyclist Stopped on a Path, 2011; HD Video, 4 min 17 sec
- Teen Resting on a Bench, 2011; HD Video, 4 min 27 sec
- Young couple at a Playground, 2011; HD Video, 7 min 01 sec
- Graphy: 2011
- Old Woman Looking Out Window, 2011; colour photograph, 100 x 134 cm
- Young Family, 2011; colour photograph, 100 x 134 cm
- Young Soldier at Training Ground, 2011; colour photograph, 100 x 134 cm
- Young Soldier at Training Ground, 2011; HD Video, 7 min 01 sec
- Young Soldier at Training Ground, 2011; colour photograph, 100 x 134 cm
- Cyclist Stopped on a Path, 2011; HD Video, 4 min 17 sec
- Teen Resting on a Bench, 2011; HD Video, 4 min 27 sec

These self-conscious elements cleverly shift the focus away from the documentary and anthropological objectives central to Prokudin-Gorskii’s work. He set out to record life in the Russian Empire under Tsar Nicholas II. Hannah’s work has been funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, the National Gallery of Canada, the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Prince Museum. His work is represented in the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Canada, Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, and the Guggenheim Museum, New York. He is known not only for his conceptual and technical experiments around the globe, but his video and photographic works have been included in numerous exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Polizei Gallery Two, Berlin, November 8–December 22, 2012. These self-conscious elements cleverly shift the focus away from the documentary and anthropological objectives central to Prokudin-Gorskii’s work. He set out to record life in the Russian Empire under Tsar Nicholas II. Hannah’s intentions while not as grand nevertheless capture a surprisingly compelling portrait of contemporary life in Russia.

— Ivan Jurakic
Poleski

Having lived and worked abroad and travelled extensively during the last decade, Matthew Carver began to notice the increased presence of local law enforcement at public gatherings. Intuitively, he noticed that police were not only increasingly monitoring public protests but that they had adopted military protective gear and crowd control tactics. Carver made similar observations during extended residences in Germany, Malaysia, England, China and Canada—Tornoto, specifically, during the G20 protests in June 2010—and found that not only police but the whole environment in which he travelled. Inevitably, he started to incorporate these observations into his work. Carver had been painting professionally since the mid-90s and even worked for a spell as a scenic painter. He began to incorporate anamorphic elements into his work early on, using the historical technique of perspective anamorphosis. This allowed Carver to manipulate linear perspective to create paintings that demand either a fixed point of view or a specialized experience. The use of such an ordinary object gives the work an immediacy that grounds us in the here-and-now. So why are we spying on the police? Instead of capturing a triumphant march or victory the artist depicts scenes of riot police evoking the scale of historical painting, and anamorphs, which require the use of a reflective device. Eviction Day In Friedrichshain, 2011

Along University At Toronto G20, 2010

The techniques used in Photoshop beg us to consider Carver’s bending of perspective in a contemporary context. The complex perspectival techniques, including the use of digital technologies such as Photoshop, serve to dehumanize and distance police from the very people that they have sworn to serve and protect.