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Highlights and Lowlights Revealed in CONTACT Photography Festival Lineup

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(Photo: Doug Ischar, MW 1, 1985 / 2009)

The world's largest photography festival, the **Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival**, released its 2013 programming, Tuesday, with a line-up revealing an international roster of artists, both established and emerging, and a number of exhibitions that will underscore strong curating, this year. While a few lowlights – or shall we say, easy points - are present on the list, the ambitious annual event (featuring 200 venues in the Greater Toronto Area, and running May 1 – 31), doesn't lack for variety. CONTACT boasts a survey of artists spanning the acclaimed and international to the local and emerging; a diverse array venues, from museums to commercial galleries and rented billboards; and an embrace of public, as well as private, space.

CONTACT's overarching (and necessarily featherweight theme), "Field of Vision," and its mélange of group exhibitions suggests a loose focus on the archive – both that of the constantly accruing catch-alls of media sites like Instagram and Flickr, and those of the historical, the recorded and the neglected. Contemporary street photography and public

space design will go tempered by high profile exhibitions featuring the likes of **Michael Snow** and **Arnaud Maggs**; but it's the curatorial efforts directing group shows that will garner this year's accolades, we predict.

Here is the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival line-up, with a little color commentary, and stars beside our must-see hits:

Of the primary exhibitions, we're most anticipating **MOCCA**'s "Collected Shadows," a historical narrative amassed from the unparalleled **Archive of Modern Conflict (AMC)**, an organization based in the UK and Canada whose collection of more than four million images juxtaposes time periods, geographies, techniques, and subject-matter. Collecting at "a pace that can only be described as frenetic," the AMC archive has been reigned in and reduced to two hundred images that will be presented in a salon hang (adjacent to the NGC's reveal of new work by Michael Snow). Legends like **Robert Frank** and **Gustave Le Gray** will be shown alongside the underrepresented and unknown to create narratives spanning time, and the every inch of the gallery walls.

This year's public installation programming errs on the side of bad pedestrian art, with one-who-should-know-better, Britain's **Jason Evans**, photographing **AGO** staffers in "unreadable" postures (calling them human sculptures is certainly a stretch), and titling the series, "A Long, Long Time AGO." Its placation is a touch too much. But we're looking forward to German photographer **Michael Schirner**'s billboard series, "Pictures in Our Minds (1985 – 2011)," which will captivate the streets with a provocative marriage of reading and visual interpretation in white-on-black photo captions (such as "Naked Vietnamese child fleeing after a napalm attack," a description conjuring the infamous 1972 photograph of **Phan Thi Kim Phuc** taken by **Nick Ut**).

Of the featured exhibitions, which dot the city's private and commercial galleries, there is myriad good work. We're most anticipating Toronto and Krakow-based **Mark Filipiuk**, at the **Art Gallery of Mississauga**, who wields photography with a painterly brush and charts the ungainly years of emergent adulthood in a haunting series of portraits; the **Campbell House Museum** (already a fascinating venue) presenting a group show "Occupational Portraits" that depicts traditional tradespeople in contemporary contexts using the 19th-century photographic process of the tintype; Vancouver-based collage artist and sculptor, **Elizabeth Zvonar**, showing in a commercial context for the first time at **Daniel Faria Gallery**; the survey of American photographer and filmmaker **Doug Ischar** at **VTape**; and the wall-sized, **J.G. Ballard**-inspired photographic installation by Italian duo **Botto + Bruno**, at **Pari Nadimi Gallery**.