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## ARTS & CULTURE

### Adad Hannah encounters our intimate city



COURTESY PHOTO

After a Gentle Storm (2012) by Adad Hannah

By **Scott Andrews**  
 PUBLISHED: SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

Though many art works declaim loudly about the acts of perception, Canadian photographer Adad Hannah's exhibition sited within the small gallery just beyond the museum gift shop in the San Antonio Museum of Art whispers quietly. A cursory glance at the pieces representing four bodies of work might easily leave one with the impression of yet another small retrospective detailing classicism — several pieces roughly mimic compositions of famed works such as Théodore Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* (1819). But linger awhile to let this far from common work do its job. It takes time to see these pieces, and indeed, time is their essence.

There are a number of large photographs, but hone in on the videos first. Displayed on flat-screen monitors, they appear to be backlit stills — no one

moves. But yes, they do. Here a tremor, there a quaver, a shake — then, eyes roll. *Eros and Aphrodite* (2008), taken at Spain's famed Museo Nacional del Prado, presents a woman and a man reaching to kiss the Janus-headed statue. Human lips approach marble, a meditation on erotic love. Running for more than seven minutes, the tableau — known as a "video snapshot" — draws attention to the radical difference between unmoving stone and quivering flesh. Pieces — such as the masterful *The Encounter* staged at SAMA this year with local artists as models — reveal even more movement within the almost-static scene, the poses chosen seemingly to emphasize classic notions of balance (and perhaps, stasis). Inspired by rooms in the museum's Asian collection, the tableaux of models in vivid surroundings seem about to enact (or, in other pieces, are recovering from) encounters of the most intimate sort. And again in the videos, there is tremulous movement of the sort one hopes is suppressed in public — little glitches that disrupt the polished facade we present to others. What is the artist doing?

Recalling that photographs are thought to capture a moment, stealing time for prosperity, he intentionally reverses the affect. For many, snapshots of childhood outings are kept to compare with the same family members pictured cutting wedding cakes, then taking their own children, and eventually grandchildren, to vacation spots visited by generations. Photography freezes time, we say, but in that saving act it also points towards our death. In Hannah's videos, the viewer notices the little unrestrained tremors of the almost-frozen models, something else is in play. Though documented in another time, the blurring of still photograph with movement inexorably draws attention to oneself, rather than away to personal memories or, even though the sets are exoticism itself, the escape of fantasy. There is movement occurring in the videos, but it is dramatically different from the motion that happens in film. Unplanned, the motion is impossible to scan. It disrupts, rather than drives the narrative implied by the scene. After some minutes staring at the

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 In his book *Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America*, award-winning ¡Ask a Mexican! columnist and author Gustavo Arellano combines cultural criticism and

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several videos in the room, step back, and see the (truly) still photographs. They seem like video-capture stills, outtakes, from a film we are yet to see — but very anxious to encounter.

### Adad Hannah: Intimate Encounters

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10am-6pm Sun  
San Antonio Museum of Art  
200 W Jones  
(210) 978-8100  
[samuseum.org](http://samuseum.org)  
Through December 30

> Email [Scott Andrews](mailto:scott@adad.com)

### RECENTLY IN ARTS & CULTURE

**Don Pasquale at The Josephine** The show began with a chair squeak. High pitched and quickly echoed throughout the intimate Josephine Theatre, it served as starting gun for an... | 9/12/2012  
**Adad Hannah encounters our intimate city** Though many art works declaim loudly about the acts of perception, Canadian photographer Adad Hannah's exhibition sited within the small gallery | 9/12/2012  
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#### Pick of the Day: Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America

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#### Pick of the Day: Fotoseptiembre: "It Might Have Been Midnight When Last We Talked"

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I want chicken fried steak and baked potato.

**Pick of the Day: Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America** · 15 minutes ago

**Cow Thief**

Ask a Mexican but he dresses like a half crazed white boy! But a Real Mexican would not put up with the odd questions, too busy working. Me? I am part German, part Spanish, part Arab. However I...

**Pick of the Day: Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America** · 54 minutes ago

**Richard Steinberg**

Dear Editor, Your writer Michael Barajas only told one side in his story in "How judges, probate attorneys, and guardianship orgs abuse the vulnerable" (San Antonio Current, Sept. 5, 2012). There...

**How judges, probate attorneys, and guardianship orgs abuse the vulnerable** · 1 hour ago

**mike**