

BONA FIDE WEST SIDE

August is traditionally a sleepy time in the art world. Most galleries are either closed or showing leftover inventory. Likewise, most collectors are either relaxing in cottage country or gelato-ing their way through another Grand Tour. But these dog days have also become an ideal, low-pressure time for galleries to test out new ventures. This week, we check out a few in the Queen West area — where creativity rarely sleeps, or even, for that matter, goes to the beach.



BY LEAH SANDALS

1. INDEGX Galleries

50 Gladstone Ave.
Since its inception in 2006, INDEGX has innovated on traditional haute-gallery models by offering a range of art forms and price points — everything from \$5 one-inch buttons and \$30 limited-run print editions to \$10,000 original artworks. Now, they're branching out further, reversing the business model of the nearby Gladstone Hotel. That is, rather than bringing art into the hotel experience, INDEGX is bringing the hotel experience into the gallery. The IN-DEGX B&B, launched in April, offers five well-appointed rooms at the top of its building, with breakfast served daily in the gallery. At the bargain rate of \$100 nightly, its summertime

success is no surprise. And having toast and tea with the likes of original art from the young, whimsical Z'otz collective? That's way tastier than mints on a pillow. INDEGX's art comes from afar, too. Watch for the Canadian premiere later this month of a mother/father/daughter art team from Japan.

2. The Drake Hotel

1120 Queen St. W.
The Drake has had that whole "art, food and lodging" thing down for a few years. But rarely has it featured art from just one commercial gallery — let alone one Quebec gallery. But all summer long the hotel's spaces have hosted just that: a transplant show of artists represented by Montreal's Pierre-François Ouellette Art Contempor-

ain. Drake curator Mia Nielsen is a big fan of Ouellette, who represents some of the biggest names in Quebec (and consequently Canadian and international) art. Nielsen's innovation in designing this Ste-Catherine Street-meets-Queen West collision is no rare insight. She once ran one of Canada's first internet-only art dealerships. Best: Adad Hannah's videos-cum-still photographs, set in the Prado, which received big props from the Spanish press this year; Luc Courschene's spinning self-portraits, which show the transcendence and separations of geography; and Dil Hildebrand's terrific *trompe-d'oeil* set paintings.

3. Board of Directors

1080 Queen St. W.
Katharine Mulherin may be an art-



COURTESY THE DRAKE HOTEL

**Adad Hannah's
A Moment of Reflection.**

scene fixture, but that doesn't mean she can't switch it up every once in a while. After 10 years in the independent gallery biz, she's teaming with former assistant Erin Stump to create Board of Directors, a collaborative venture managing exhibit space at 1086, 1082 and 1080 Queen West. Specially designed to both cushion the recession-fuelled slump in the art market and reduce the prolonged stress of helming a gallery all alone, Board of Directors hopes to collaborate with everyone from international curators to local MFA students. First off the bat is the just-opened Strip Stories, a show of comic and comic-influenced art co-presented with the 2008 Doug Wright Award for Canadian Cartooning. Emily Holton's Karl Lagerfeld spoofs are to die laughing for, and Chester Brown's Louis Riel sketches are fast becoming part of the Canuck canon. Watch for Decade, featuring work from the 600 artists Mulherin has shown since '98, is just more evidence that one doesn't have to go it alone.