

koffler gallery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Koffler Gallery presents Montréal-based artist 2Fik's first solo show in Toronto

Toronto, ON, March 9, 2017 – The **Koffler Gallery** proudly presents the first Toronto solo exhibition of Montréal-based artist and performer, **2Fik**. ***His and Other Stories*** offers a survey of recent bodies of work – as well as new work created for the Koffler Gallery – that examine cultural legacies and identity constructs.

His and Other Stories is a Primary Exhibition of the **2017 Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival**.

Running from **April 6 to June 4, 2017**, the exhibition opens with a free public reception on **Thursday, April 6, 2017 from 6 to 9 PM**. The **Koffler Gallery** is located at **Artscape Youngplace**, 180 Shaw Street, Toronto.

Assuming the multiple roles of artistic director, photographer and performer, 2Fik stages elaborate tableaux that re-enact familiar compositions derived from famous paintings. Toying with reality, his constructed images destabilize the viewer's assumed points of reference, playfully orchestrating scenes that comment thoughtfully on current society.

Born in Paris to a Moroccan Muslim family, 2Fik moved to Montréal in 2003. His encounter with the city's multicultural environment inspired him to examine issues of identity and its socio-political ramifications. Drawn out of this diverse backdrop, the recurring characters featured in his photographs are all interconnected and stem from the artist's life experiences and personality:

- **Abdel:** born in Casablanca, moved to Montréal, and now works as a property manager, turning to religion out of loneliness rather than genuine faith.
- **Fatima:** abandoned her university studies to follow Abdel as his good wife and remains devoted to him even though they married out of family pressure, not love.
- **Kathryn:** an overconfident, spoiled young woman from Montréal's West Island, who is juggling many lovers, including Abdel.
- **Firas:** fled his native country and asked for refugee status in Canada, motivated by a well-founded fear of persecution based on his sexual orientation.

These are only a few of the lively, fictional individuals embodied by 2Fik in his beguiling photographs. Dismantling stereotypes, they compel viewers to question their own sense of self and reflect on acquired notions of gender, sexuality, belief, universality, and difference.

As 2Fik's first solo show in Toronto, *His and Other Stories* offers a survey of these recent bodies of work to examine cultural legacies and identity constructs. The exhibition's centrepieces are his latest compositions that reconfigure allegorical representations of nationhood.

A new work created for the Koffler Gallery exhibition reinterprets Benjamin West's 1770 painting, *The Death of General Wolfe*, an emblematic example of Canadian history represented through a colonial lens. The original dramatically depicts the General's fall during the 1759 Battle of Québec, celebrating him as a hero and a symbol of British dominance. Subverting this patriarchal, whitewashing viewpoint, 2Fik's vibrant characters of mixed genders, ethnicities, and faiths infuse new meaning into this iconic image. Raising irreverent questions, his critical reinterpretation disrupts nationalistic discourses, opening conversation on today's pluralistic realities. Shot at Honest Ed's just before its demolition, the photograph recalls this site's significance to Toronto and its diverse inhabitants, honouring both present and historical loss, mourning across time and cultural dimensions.

For more information and a full list of the Koffler's Spring 2017 programs, please visit kofflerarts.org

Regular exhibition hours: Tuesday to Friday, 12 PM to 6 PM; Saturday and Sunday, 11 AM to 5 PM. Closed Mondays and statutory holidays. Admission is free.

**HJF HAL JACKMAN
FOUNDATION**



2Fik: *His and Other Stories* is generously supported by the Hal Jackman Foundation and is a Primary Exhibition of the 2017 Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival.

The Koffler Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the Toronto Arts Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

ABOUT 2FIK

Equally artistic director, photographer and model, 2Fik stages elaborate tableaux in which he single-handedly plays a cast of characters, both male and female. His photo and performance based works toy with reality, destabilizing the viewer's assumed points of reference. Born in Paris to a Moroccan Muslim family, 2Fik moved to Montréal in 2003. Set against this multicultural backdrop, his recurring, fully developed characters stem from the artist's personality and life experiences. Playfully humorous, the scenes 2Fik orchestrates examine identity and its socio-political ramifications. Dismantling stereotypes, they compel viewers to question their own sense of self and acquired notions of gender, sexuality, belief, universality and difference. 2Fik first explored these topics by mining the daily life of his characters in the series *2Fik Or Not 2Fik*, presented in Montréal, Toronto, Regina and New York. In *2Fik's Museum*, which premiered at The Invisible Dog in New York, he undermined the sacralisation of fine arts by positioning his characters into famous historical paintings reinterpreted through a contemporary viewpoint. In 2013, with a residency at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, Croatia, 2Fik began restaging and photographing emblematic paintings that reflect on national identity.

ABOUT THE KOFFLER CENTRE OF THE ARTS

The [Koffler Centre of the Arts](#) is a Jewish cultural organization that presents a contemporary cross-disciplinary arts program encouraging inquiry and exploration. We promote an inter-cultural dialogue that engages our Jewish identity with diverse perspectives and global voices. The Koffler Gallery and its administrative offices are located at Artscape Youngplace, in Toronto's vibrant downtown West Queen West art and design district.

Koffler Centre of the Arts acknowledges the support of the Koffler Family Foundation, Cultural Season Sponsor CIBC Wood Gundy, the Ontario Arts Council through the Community and Multidisciplinary Arts Organizations Program, our patrons and donors.

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For further information and high resolution images, contact:

Tony Hewer

Director of Marketing, Communications and Archives

Koffler Centre of the Arts | Koffler Gallery

180 Shaw Street, Suite 104-105, Toronto M6J 2W5

647.925.0643 x224 | E-MAIL: thewer@kofflerarts.org | WEB: kofflerarts.org