

“Somebody Blabbed”

Christina Battle at the Foreman Art Gallery



ic date, or place. That, along with the humorous labels on the filing cabinet, some of which read “this man talked too much” almost conflict with the supposed seriousness of the exhibition.

The message that Battle is conveying through all of this is that surveillance is a practice that affects everyone, and the information gathered can shape our understandings of the past... or at least that is what is communicated

BY CHRISTIAN MATHEWS-GAGNE

Christina Battle’s *Filing Memory* is the latest exhibition on display at the Foreman Art Gallery. Originally from Edmonton, Alberta, Christina has been actively involved in Toronto’s artistic culture for the past ten years as an educator, jury member and curator among various other functions. At the moment, she is an Assistant Professor in the film studies department at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Filing Memory addresses the relationship between archives, public memory and practices of surveillance through the

exposure of declassified FBI files. The exhibit itself is composed of numerous quotes on the walls taken from the documents of archives, all regarding the relationships between what is public and what is private. Joining these are several artifacts that look as if they’re straight out of some secretive government office, such as an old telephone and a filing cabinet with labels placed sporadically on a select few of the drawers. The centerpiece of the exhibit is a three-frame video installation that dominates the only wall void of quotes or artifacts. Aside from the video, everything is pitch black. The only noises

are ominous overtones that make the whole experience mysterious and unnerving; it is as though the viewer isn’t supposed to be there at all.

The film playing is entitled “Wandering Through Secret Storms”, the premise of which is that a secret government archive has been uncovered. Two frames of Battle’s film depict workers sifting through mountains of files, while the middle frame shows random text from the documents. All of it is in black and white and adds to the authenticity of the experience. Specifics however, are left out of every piece of text that is shown be it a name, specif-

on her website. This message isn’t overly apparent to someone who chooses to walk in without any background information on the exhibit, especially with the humorous labels on the filing cabinet and the missing text being displayed on the screen. That being said, it’s hard to walk in and not become curious as to what this elaborate mise-en-scene is about.

PHOTO BY KAI BARKER