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THE AMBIVALENT NATURE OF THINGS AROUND US: NEW WORK BY JUSTIN FARKAS & MILES NEIDINGER

La Esquina | 1000 West 25th Street | 816.221.5115

First Friday opening reception: July 4, 6-9 pm

Additional evening hours: Friday, July 11, 6-9pm; Friday, August 1, 6-9pm

July 4-August 7, 2008

Hours: Thursdays & Saturdays, 12-5 pm

Urban Culture Project's La Esquina gallery is pleased to present an ambitious exhibition of new work by Kansas City based artists Justin Farkas and Miles Neidinger. The exhibition features several large-scale installation-based pieces by each artist, completed on site, in addition to a selection of smaller-scale sculptures and flat works.

Both artists work with readymade, everyday materials, which they manipulate and combine to create objects and installations of surprising, often stunning beauty. Neidinger's material palette here includes car bumpers, neon yarn, drinking straws, twist ties, and florescent duct tape, while Farkas employs items including plastic, blue vinyl tarp, orange construction fencing, wooden 2x4s, window panes, venetian blinds, lightbulbs, bungee cords, and metal wiring. In both cases, the artists are interested first in recognizing (and affirming) the inherent functional and aesthetic properties of these materials and then in enacting a shift of context in order that they might be considered anew and re-purposed toward different ends.

A recent graduate in Painting from Kansas City Art Institute, Justin Farkas sees these materials as means to construct artwork



that “maintains ambiguity yet teeter totters on purposefulness.” Employing “hunter/gatherer and tool-making instincts every person is born with,” Farkas identifies and approaches his materials in a partly utilitarian manner: “clamps for securing wood, lights for seeing, and constructed wooden frames as a table for working.” This general construction then “serves as an outlet to keep building upon...The drive of the work itself is my own physical limitations; by creating scaffoldings, and wooden planks, the scale of the work can get progressively bigger, and in the end monumental in scale.” In a sense, the work begins to build itself.

Throughout this constructive process Farkas is attentive to aesthetic and conceptual as well as cultural and spiritual concerns. Merging Dadaist and Abstract Expressionist influences, and citing contemporary artists including Richard Tuttle, Jessica Stockholder, Angela De la Cruz, Matthew Ritchie, and Neo Rauch as important inspirations, his works are the product of spontaneity and intuition as well as careful deliberation and calculated juxtaposition, and they exemplify a painter’s eye for color, gesture, texture, and composition. “The fascination of creating new ideas has become a stadium of cataloging and appropriating different styles, movements, and ideas of past works,” writes Farkas. Contextualizing his work within boarder artmaking trends, he notes: “For many artists appropriation evolves into a transformation process that turns from utilizing another’s idea to making it into their own... tr(ying) to encounter something unique from merging elements together... Eclectic choices become our palette.”

A graduate of Kansas City Art Institute in Sculpture (2000) and Charlotte Street Award recipient (2005), Miles Neidinger presents several major new works that continue his investigation and inventive reconxtualization of “mundane” household materials as he seeks to disrupt culturally imposed hierarchies, categorizations, and compartmentalizations. “Hot dogs were never to be found anywhere other than the meat drawer in my mother’s refrigerator. Nor was the “crisper” compartment ever contaminated with foods having “non-produce” qualities,” Neidinger writes. “This early implementation of ‘organization’ in my life, physically and mentally, has greatly affected the way I perceive life as a father and a husband in a typical suburban setting, along with constituting a great deal of the way I approach art making.”



Works with titles such as *We are inhabiting places of lavish color and texture* and *This person among us realizes a malleable association between disjuncture and hyphenation* encourage viewers to shift perspective in order to “witness the world around us that is filled with beautiful junk.” Whether a sprawling, swirling installation composed solely of colorful scavenged automobile bumpers, or a labyrinthine aerial network of metallic twist ties, drinking straws, and electric-colored yarn, Neidinger hones in on the unique qualities of these everyday items to posit a reconsideration of “order” and to coax a new sense of attentiveness, possibility, play, and wonder.

An initiative of the Charlotte Street Foundation, Urban Culture Project creates new opportunities for artists of all disciplines and contributes to urban revitalization by transforming spaces in downtown Kansas City into new venues for multi-disciplinary contemporary arts programming. For more information, visit www.urbancultureproject.org or email info@charlottestreet.org.