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For immediate release

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Charlotte Street Foundation's Urban Culture Project presents:

***diaLog* - A SERIES OF PRESENTATIONS BY AREA TREE EXPERTS**

HOSTED BY ARTIST KURT FLEKSING

Saturdays May 2, 9, 16 & 23, noon

Paragraph gallery, 23 East 12th Street KCMO

Organized in conjunction with the exhibition *Happy Tree Friends Part II*

Free and open to all

As a component of *Happy Tree Friends (Part II)*—an exhibition featuring contemporary artworks that that depict, reference, incorporate, document, and otherwise derive or draw inspiration from trees, on view at Paragraph gallery April 17-June 4—participating artist Kurt Fleksing will host a series of public programs on Saturdays in May. These presentations, by leading area arborists, will take place within and is core component of the artist's installation, *diaLog*, which includes functional seating made from local and/or area trees.

"*diaLog* offers the public, artists, and local tree specialists an opportunity to examine the place and methods of art exchange, and learn about tree-care in the process," writes Fleksing. "In addition, I am creating a participatory, educational environment supported by (literally) seating designed for this exchange." The wood used for this work was donated by Kevin Smith, and was harvested as part of the Johnson County Tree Maintenance Program.

diaLog events hosted by Kurt Fleksing:

Saturday, May 2, 2009, noon:

Ivan Katzer – "The History of Arboriculture"

Ivan Katzer is a consulting arborist and the owner of Professional Tree Care, Inc., providing expert tree care services in the Kansas City area since 1948. Katzer has more than 45 years in the tree care industry, is a member of the American Society of Consulting Arborists, and is a Board Certified Master Arborist. Katzer's presentation, "The History of Arboriculture," will address the importance and use of wood and wood products in the daily lives of ordinary people from the Middle Ages to the present day. Historical references and archival footage will illustrate how tree care has evolved and where we might be heading in the future.

Saturday, May 2, 2009, noon:

Kevin Smith – "Urban Forestry and Pruning"

Kevin Smith began his Horticulture career helping his parents take care of their yard and a big garden near his home north of Hutchinson, Kansas, where he also climbed trees and had a treehouse. While in college he worked at a Garden Center, then after graduation as a salesman for Massen's Greenhouse, Inc. in Linwood Ks., and later moved to Euless, Texas to be the City Horticulturist from 1981-1984. Smith has worked with the Johnson County Park & Recreation District the past 25 years, first as Supervisor for the Shawnee Mission Park Crew and then as District Forester overseeing the Forestry and Horticulture Maintenance program for all the County-run Parks, Golf Courses and Recreational Facilities. He received a B.S. in Landscape

Horticulture from Kansas State University in 1978 and has been a Kansas Arborist Associate Certified Arborist since 1990. Smith has taught and conducted workshops for the Kansas Forest Service, Kansas Dept. of Agriculture; Johnson County Community College, Kansas State University Dept. of Landscape Architecture and Community Planning, Heartland Tree Alliance, and other civic and volunteer groups.

Saturday, May 16, noon:

Bob Haines - "How to Kill a Tree"

Bob Haines is a self-employed professional Consulting Arborist and an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist. His previous work includes appraisals and projects for the Kansas City Royals, Chiefs, GSA Bolling Building and City of Independence as well as many individual property owners. Haines was previously City Forester of Overland Park, KS. and Assistant City Forester of Lakewood, Colorado. He has also operated a greenhouse, worked as Nursery Manager for AG Saudia in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, and held positions in line clearance tree pruning, interior plantscaping and landscape maintenance and design. He graduated with a B.S. in Horticulture from Virginia Tech in 1977. Haines is a member of the International Society of Arboriculture, an ISA Certified Municipal Specialist, an ISA Certified Tree Worker and Evaluator and Certification Proctor, and a Kansas Certified Arborist and Certified Commercial Pesticide Applicator. Past President, Editor and Program Chair of the Midwestern Chapter of the ISA, he is currently serving as Executive Director and Director on the International Board of ISA. He received Kansas State Forester's Award in 1994, Midwestern Chapter Award of Achievement in 2002, and President's Commendation Award from ISA in 2006.

May 23, noon:

Angela Schreffler – Heartland Tree Alliance

Angela Schreffler is Program Manager of Heartland Tree Alliance. Her work includes building relationships with other individuals and organizations in the Kansas City region who are passionate about healthy trees and a healthy community, supporting the Board of Directors, and coordinating training workshops and special events. Schreffler worked as a Program Coordinator for Literacy Kansas City and as the ECKAN Volunteer Center Director in Ottawa, Kansas prior to coming to Bridging The Gap. She received her MPA degree with an emphasis in non-profit management from UMKC.

About the exhibition:

Curated by Kate Hackman, Associate Director, Charlotte Street Foundation, *Happy Tree Friends (Part II)* is the second component of a two-part exhibition project featuring artworks that depict, reference, incorporate, document, and otherwise derive or draw inspiration from trees. The project has been organized in partnership with the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, which is concurrently presenting *Trees and other Ramifications: Branches in Nature & Culture*, on view through May 25, 2009. *Happy Tree Friends Part I* remains on view at Urban Culture Project's la Esquina venue through April 18.

Happy Tree Friends (Part II) at Paragraph, April 17-June 4, features work by Kurt Flecksing (Kansas City), Ke-Sook Lee (Kansas City), Hmh Services (Kansas City), Sarah Vandersall (Kansas City), BJ Vogt (St. Louis, MO), and Chris Wildrick (Syracuse, NY). The exhibition focuses primarily on exhibition-specific installation-based works, creating an immersive, interactive, multi-sensorial experience.

In addition to Flecksing's *diaLog*, works include *Root*, a new installation by St. Louis based artist (and KCAI alumni) B.J. Vogt, which incorporates motion sensors and tree limbs to form a connection between the synaptic connections in the brain and the branching structures of trees; and a new multi-media wall installation by Sarah Vandersall relating to organic growth and "psychic tree energy." *Tree Woman* and *Tree Woman Leaf*, two new related installations by Ke-Sook Lee, explore personal and cultural memory and lived experiences in nature, employing leaves and bark gathered by the artist as sculptural elements and surfaces for drawings. These pieces reference Lee's recollections of growing up in Korea, including memories of "the Mudang (female shaman) shaking her body under the big tree to connect to spirit world," and of "Sig-Mok-II" Holiday (National Tree Planting Day), after the Korean War. Also featured is an installation by Hmh Services (Neal Wilson and Lacy Wozny), who employ an associative process to connect a network of tree-related histories and references, blurring fact and fiction. And Syracuse, NY-based artist Chris Wildrick

presents several works from an ongoing, multi-faceted project titled *The Best Tree in the World*, through which he has developed a range of measures, means of documentation, and systems of analysis toward determining exactly that.

HAPPY TREE FRIENDS (PART II)

PARAGRAPH | 23 EAST 12th Street | KANSAS CITY, MO 64108 | 816.221.5115

APRIL 17-JUNE 4, 2009

Opening reception: April 17, 6-9pm

Third Friday May reception: May 15, 6-9pm; talk with curator & artists at 6pm

Hours: Thursdays + Saturdays, 12-5pm and by appointment

And on view through April 18:

Happy Tree Friends (Part I) at la Esquina, 1000 West 25th Street, includes works by: Barry Anderson (Kansas City), Jeff Badger (Portland, Maine), Carnal Torpor (Kansas City/Omaha, NE), Mark Cowardin (Kansas City), Jeanna Darby (Chicago), Dominique Davison + Robert Riccardi (Kansas City), Kristina Estell (Duluth, MN), Cari Freno (Richmond, VA), Diane Henk (Kansas City), Michael Krueger (Lawrence, KS), Sarah Luther (Milwaukee, WI), Kacy Maddux (Kansas City), Johnny Naugahyde (Kansas City), Benjamin Potter (Portland, Maine), Shawn Sanem (Kansas City), Margaret Shelby (Kansas City), Carlos Rosales-Silva (Austin, TX), Deanna Skedel (Kansas City), Jesse Small (Kansas City/China), Corine Vermeulen-Smith (Detroit, MI), Maranda Stebbins (Kansas City), Davin Watne (Kansas City), and Jennifer Whiteford (Kansas City).

***Trees and other Ramifications: Branches in Nature and Culture** is an exhibition project curated by Steve Goddard, Senior Curator and Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Spencer Museum, in collaboration with the University of Kansas Natural History Museum / Biodiversity Research Center.

Trees and other Ramifications offers an open-ended look at some of the many ways that trees are meaningful to humanity and important in the natural world. The exhibition, predominantly of prints, drawings, books, and photographs drawn from University of Kansas and area collections, is not limited to works of art that were inspired by trees, but also includes images from the arts and sciences in which trees have served as a metaphor for real and imagined branching systems (ramifications). In alliance with other spring exhibitions and programs concerning climate change, the Natural History Museum/Biodiversity Research Center has contributed research on the species of trees seen in some of the exhibited works that allows us to predict the future geographic distribution of those species under different climate change models. Visit www.spencerart.ku.edu for complete information.

This project is made possible with support from the Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts, Commerce Bank Trustee.

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 CSF's NEW website at www.charlottestreet.org.

KU SPENCER
MUSEUM OF ART
The University of Kansas

