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CHARLOTTE STREET FOUNDATION'S URBAN CULTURE PROJECT presents

MYTHMAKERS

Curated by Megan Mantia

Artists: Drew Bolton, Spencer Brown, Cody Critchelo, Kyle Devine, Ariel Hart, Hooliganship, Lamano, Dustin Maberry, Rah! Booty, Leone Anne Reeves, Elisha Stetson, Ryan Tacata, Jaimie Warren, Ariel Williams



Opening Reception: Friday, November 20, 6-9pm

Curator's welcome: 6pm; performances throughout the evening

At Urban Culture Project's PARAGRAPH GALLERY / 23 East 12th Street, KCMO

Exhibition runs: November 20, 2009-January 2, 2010

Hours: Thursdays + Saturdays, 12-5pm / 816.221.5115 charlottestreet.org

Featuring work by some 14 artists and collaboratives, *Mythmakers* embodies the youthful, make-your-own-fun, do-it-yourself-and-together spirit of the Kansas City art scene. Organized by artist/curator Megan Mantia, the densely packed exhibition will showcase a cross-section of emerging artists who place themselves at the center of their work, constructing mythic personas and fantasy narratives that fuse autobiographical aspects with illusions of grandeur, typically with a sizeable dose of humor thrown in as well.

While expressed through diverse media and formats, this personal mythmaking frequently involves performative elements, which this exhibition will emphasize. Opening night will feature "scheduled activations of personalities and installations," says Mantia, who also notes that the collaborative nature of many of these artists' work will encourage audience participation.

“These artists offer sharp pop-culture commentary, and are proud of their Midwestern origins, writes Mantia, who is herself a member of Rah! Booty, Whoop Dee Doo, and Ssion. “They start with something personal, and twist it until even the oddest attribute is admirable and accessible. Most distinctively, this art takes fantasy and fabricates it for interaction -- each artist involves the community in their work, and lavishes thought and attention on their potential audience. And all of these artists work fast and energetically--the excitement is in trying to keep up.”



A few highlights:

Opening night will afford a rare opportunity to see live musings from the experimental, gallery-shattering group Y-NOT. Generally headed by Jaimie Warren, Y-NOT's origins date back to KCAI, when Warren met when the group's creators Rachel Helm and Cody Critcheloe. Most recently Leone Anne Reeves joined in the fun, when she, Warren, and Critcheloe performed together in Athens, Greece. This particular happening culminated with Warren screaming at the top of her lungs into a very loud microphone until every last gallery attendee left the building. What Y-NOT will do on November 20' not even the curator can predict.

Elisha Stetson, a master craftsman of the fiber arts known for his superhero-esque lycra bodysuits, is developing a new body of work for *Mythmakers*. Young children will be running wild in the gallery opening night, transformed into rambunctious, fictional animals. Some will resemble electric octopi, some hairy wild misfits complete with wagging tongue. Visitors may have to wait for a giraffe or crocodile crossing their path while navigating the gallery, so should keep an eye on their feet!

Rah! Booty doesn't make fun of cheerleading, they just do it better. For 7 years now, the fluctuating group of performance artists have entertained and accosted audiences all over Kansas City. Formed by dirty KCAI feminists in Spring of 2003, Rah! Booty has gone on to perform for the Kemper and Nelson-Atkins Museums, the ACLU, the YWCA, All Souls Unitarian Church, Late Night Theater, and many more. For *Mythmakers*, Rah! Booty will be inducting visitors into the group as they pass through Paragraph's front door, like it or not.

***Mythmakers* features:**

Megan Mantia graduated from Kansas City Art Institute in 2006 with a BFA in printmaking and art history, and is an obsessive documenter of artists and events in Kansas City.

Drew Bolton is a 2006 graduate of Kansas City Art Institute. Chief Editor of the recent Grand Arts Film, *SSION's BOY*, he lives and works in Kansas City.

Spencer Brown is a 2006 graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy. Based in Kansas City, he is currently touring with The Kinsey Sicks, America's Favorite Dragapella Beautyshop Quartet.

Cody Critcheloe is a 2003 graduate of Kansas City Art Institute and a 2007 Charlotte Street Visual Artist Award Fellow. Founder/director of Ssion, he lives and works in Kansas City.

Kyle Devine is a 2009 graduate of Kansas City Art Institute and a sought-after drag performer. He lives and works in Kansas City.

Ariel Hart is a 2007 graduate of Kansas City Art Institute currently pursuing her MFA in experimental animation at The California Institute of the Arts. She lives and works in Valencia, CA.

Hooliganship is comprised of Peter Burr and Christopher Doulgeris. They are graduates of Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA. Currently are on tour in Europe, they are based in Portland, OR.

Lamano is Kyle Chapman and Jessie Laino. They attended Kansas City Art Institute from 2004-06 and now live and work in their native Miami, FL.

Dustin Maberry is currently pursuing his BFA at Kansas City Art Institute in Graphic Design.

Rah Booty! is currently comprised of 4 members: Nichole Hobbs, Megan Mantia, Mary Nichols and Anna Zimmerman. This radical cheerleading performance troupe has lived and worked in Kansas City for almost 7 years.

Leone Anne Reeves received her MFA in performance from School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is a leading member of local Whoop Dee doo who recently relocated to Kansas City.

Elisha Stetson is a 2009 graduate of Kansas City Art Institute and head dancewear patternner at KC Costume. He lives and works in Kansas City.

Ryan Tacata is a graduate of School of the Art Institute of Chicago in performance. Currently pursuing MFA at Stanford, he lives and works in San Francisco, CA.

Jaimie Warren is a 2002 graduate of Kansas City Art Institute, a 2009 Charlotte Street Visual Artist Award Fellow, and founder/co-director of Whoop Dee doo. She lives and works in Kansas City.

Ariel Williams is a 2006 graduate of Kansas City Art Institute. She lives and works in Dallas, TX.

For more info visit www.myth-makers.org.

Photos: Dustin Maberry, *Greyhound Portrait #1*, digital collage, 2008; Leone Anne Reeves, *Leone's Thirtieth Birthday Party*, live performance, 2009; Jaimie Warren, *Self-Portrait*, digital photograph.

Urban Culture Project is an initiative of the Charlotte Street Foundation, an organization dedicated to making Kansas City a place where artists and art thrive. 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.charlottestreet.org.