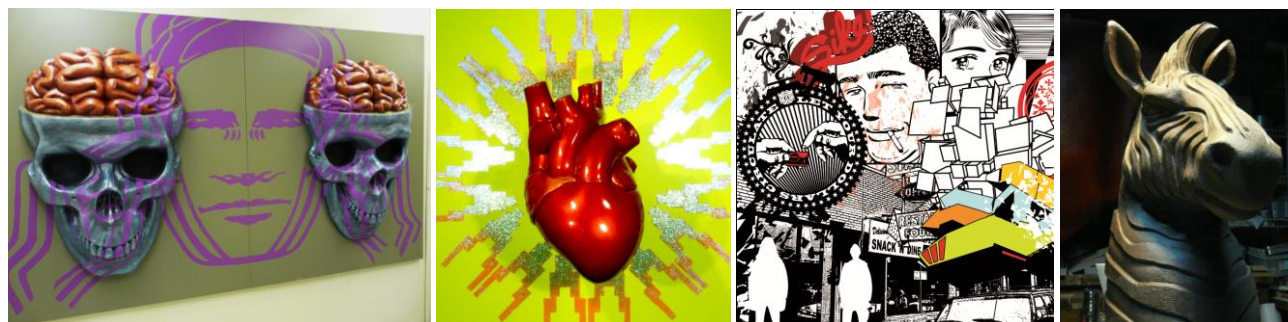


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Contact: Kate Hackman  
Associate Director Charlotte Street Foundation  
816.994.7731 | [kate@charlottestreet.org](mailto:kate@charlottestreet.org)  
[www.charlottestreet.org](http://www.charlottestreet.org)



\*print quality images available

## Charlotte Street Foundation's Urban Culture Project presents



### ***PLENTY OF ACTION, NO CONTROL*** ***NEW AND COLLABORATIVE WORK BY MIGUEL RODRIGUEZ AND PHIL SHAFER***

**OPENING FRIDAY, MAY 20, 6-9PM**

**Artists' talk: Saturday, May 21, noon**

**PARAGRAPH GALLERY**

**(a Charlotte Street Foundation Urban Culture Project venue)**

**23 EAST 12<sup>TH</sup> STREET, KANSAS CITY MO 64105**

(Kansas City, MO) - - Charlotte Street Foundation's Paragraph gallery (an Urban Culture Project venue), 23 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, presents ***Plenty of Action, No Control***, an exhibition of new individual and collaborative work by Miguel Rodriguez (Las Vegas, NV) and Phil "Sike" Shafer (Kansas City, MO). It opens with a free public reception on **Third Friday, May 20, 6-9pm**. The opening will be followed by an artist talk on **Saturday, May 21 at noon**.

With this exhibition, Rodriguez and Shafer, peers and friends since studying together at Kansas City Art Institute in the late 90s, combine efforts to shape a dramatic, multi-media environment in which issues surrounding identity, race, politics, and pop culture are confronted. The mix of work featured—from digital prints and murals by Shafer, to sculptures and wall pieces by Rodriguez, to collaborative installation—takes cues from the entertainment industry, including cinema, theatre and club venues; from graphic design; and from the streets.

"Popular culture, politics, current events and social archetypes are a life-long obsession of mine, all of which I take to heart in ways that create persistent anxiety," writes Miguel Rodriguez, who studied ceramics at Kansas City Art Institute, and went on to pursue his MFA at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, where he studied with ceramic artist Mike Burns and artist historian/critic Dave Hickey, among others. His work was later shaped by the experience of working for a year at casino sign fabrication company, where he was introduced to EPS foam sculpting, rubber mold making, and auto-body paint.

He continues: “My vision is one of grandeur, where themes of socio-political commentary, mortality and emotional drama are woven into iconic imagery that expresses an innate sense of populism and vernacular aesthetic. Yet I am genuinely trying to capture something sublime... by using bright complimentary color and smooth sparkling surfaces I hope to endow my sculptures with an inner light and luminescence inspired as much by Bernini and the Illuminated Manuscripts as by custom Hot Rods and Low-Riders.”

Phil Shafer’s work, and his identity as an artist, graphic designer, and individual, is similarly hybrid. “I am the product of clashing cultures, and being bi-racial gives me a unique perspective on society and design. I grew up in Brooklyn in the 80’s when the city was saturated with hip-hop culture; when I came to the mid-west I missed the smell of rain on the city streets and the look of a freshly painted tag on a brick wall. Being cognizant of the dualities in my own life inspires me to mix messages and double meanings into my art. In my print, web, and t-shirt designs, I make visual mash-ups by ripping themes from pop culture and the nightly news and mutating them to reflect my reality.”

Currently based in Las Vegas, **Miguel Rodriguez** received his BFA from Kansas City Art Institute in 2000, and his MFA from University of Nevada-Las Vegas in 2003. He has taught ceramics at UNLV, curated numerous shows, and shown his work at a range of venues, including Las Vegas Art Museum and Contemporary Arts Center, Las Vegas. He has also completed several public and private commissions, include three sculptures commissioned by Clark County Wetlands Park. Clark County, NV. Rodriguez was awarded a fellowship grant from the Nevada Arts Council in 2009.

**Phil Shafer** graduated from Kansas City Art Institute in 2000 with a degree in photography and digital media. He is a graphic designer for KU Medical Center and owner of Sike Style Designs, where he makes apparel under the Sikenomics brand name. Recent exhibitions include *Where it’s At*, a solo exhibition at University of Central Missouri gallery, Warrensburg, MO, 2011; *KC Hustle 2*, Third Eye Gallery, Kansas City, 2010; *The Proper Assortment*, Emerald Space, Kansas City, 2009; *Opposition*, KC Artists Coalition Underground, Kansas City, 2008; and an untitled solo show at Mercy Seat Gallery, Kansas City in 2008. Shafer is a current Charlotte Street Foundation Urban Culture Project Studio Resident at Town Pavilion studios. Visit [www.sikestyle.com](http://www.sikestyle.com) for more information.

*Charlotte Street Foundation is dedicated to making Kansas City a place where artists and art thrive. Through its Urban Culture Project initiative, Charlotte Street supports artists of all disciplines and contributes to city’s vitality by transforming previously vacant spaces into dynamic venues for multi-disciplinary contemporary arts programming. For more information, visit [www.charlottestreet.org](http://www.charlottestreet.org).*