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Charlotte Street Foundation's Urban Culture Project Presents

THE FASCINATORS

The Inaugural Charlotte Street Biennial of Regional BA/BFA/MA/MFA Candidates



From left: Neil Griess, *Placemats (Charrette)*, 2011, 25 x 32.5 inches, oil on panel; Matthew Blache, *Gambit*, 2011, 12 x 10 x 10 feet, steel, maple, pine, lead, paint; Marie Dougherty, *Becky and Bonnie*, 2011, 24 x 36 inches, digital c-print.

THE FASCINATORS: The Inaugural Charlotte Street Biennial of Regional BA/BFA/MA/MFA Candidates

Opening reception: Friday, September 2, 6-9pm

Panel discussion with jurors, artists, and project advisors*: Saturday, September 3, noon

Location: La Esquina (a Charlotte Street Foundation Urban Culture Project venue)

Address: 1000 West 25th Street, Kansas City MO 64108

Exhibition runs: September 2-October 15, 2011

Gallery hours: Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays 12-5; Thursdays 11-6

All free and open to the public

(August 8, 2011 – Kansas City, MO) – Charlotte Street Foundation is pleased to present *The Fascinators: The Inaugural Charlotte Street Biennial of Regional BA/BFA/MA/MFA Candidates*. This biennial is a new effort designed to showcase the work of outstanding artists emerging from colleges and universities within a 200 mile radius of Kansas City, and to connect these up and coming artists with Kansas City's arts community.

The exhibition opens with a free public reception on Friday, September 2, 6-9pm at Charlotte Street Foundation's la Esquina gallery, be followed by a panel discussion with the jurors, artists, and project advisors on Saturday, September 3 at noon.

Rather than a broad survey, this exhibition provides a substantive view of the work of six promising young artists who are either 2011 Bachelor of Fine Arts degree recipients or candidates (completing their BFA degrees this fall), or are currently enrolled in Masters of Fine Arts programs. They are: **Jacob Banholzer** (BFA, University of Kansas), **Matthew Blache** (MFA, University of Nebraska-Lincoln), **Monica Dixon** (BFA, Kansas City Art Institute), **Marie Dougherty** (BFA, Kansas City Art Institute), **Neil Griess** (BFA, University of Nebraska -Lincoln), and **Marcus Miers**

(BFA, University of Missouri-Columbia).

These artists-to-watch were selected from nearly 100 applicants by jurors **Katherine Pill**, Assistant Curator, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, and **Francesca Wilmott**, Co-Director, Los Caminos, and Assistant Registrar, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, MO. The selection process included online application reviews followed by in-person studio visits by the jurors to a shortlist of 13 semi-finalists from Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska.

“We saw no end of engaging work in a variety of media, and selecting the final six artists was no easy feat,” write Pill and Wilmott in their juror’s statement. “It was not our goal to provide a theme that encompassed the intricate concepts of each exhibited artist, but certain parallels could not be ignored,” they note. “The artists included explore ideas of function, the role of personal narrative in their art, and the draw of everyday, accessible materials. The result is works that deftly bridge material and concept into unique visual vocabularies.”

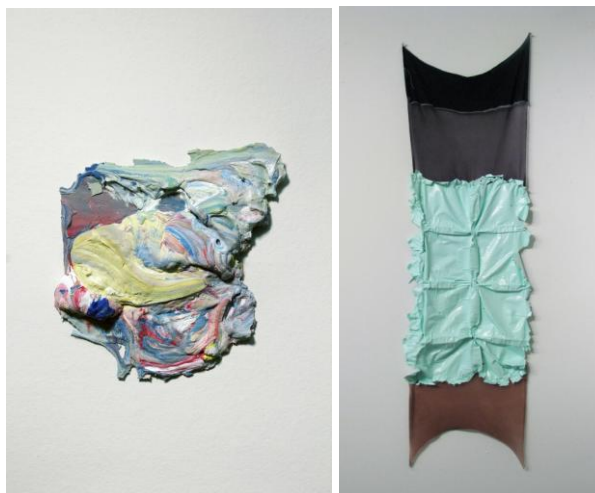
The exhibition’s title makes reference to the fascinator’s meaning as decorative headpiece—delicate and frivolous; its function not to protect the head, but rather to draw attention to it. “The work here is not frivolous by any stretch of the imagination,” write Pill and Wilmott, “but many of these artists grapple with ideas of functionality and the use-value of their chosen, rather alluring, materials. All share a keen awareness of the properties of their chosen medium.”

About the artists and their work:

Jacob Banholzer’s textured sculptures engage our sense of perception, and playfully combine his personal experiences and memories with cultural and political commentary. Creating surprising tableaux out of cast foam forms and everyday materials – paper towels, packing peanuts, carpet padding –he produces fanciful, often humorous relationships between the ornamental and the mundane. Banholzer graduates from the University of Kansas in 2011 with a BFA in Sculpture. His work is part of the permanent Collection of Johnson County Community College as well as the University of Kansas’s Murphy Art & Architecture Library. Banholzer is originally from Olathe, KS.

Matthew Blache uses materials that are familiar to him, such as steel, maple, and pine, interweaving their functional value with a personal one. With time and study, Blache’s works reveal unexpected narratives that are suggested in the work’s titles, *Gambit* and *Trough*. Blache received his BFA from Louisiana Tech University in 2010, and is currently pursuing his MFA at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His work was recently featured in *Counterpoints*, an exhibition at Lichen Gallery in Lincoln, NE.

Monica Dixon creates painterly compositions using materials that she confronts on a daily basis, such as egg cartons and panty hose. The relationship between the physical vessels, now devoid of their functionality, and their personal undertones forms a surprising harmony through Dixon’s application of paint and consideration of composition. Dixon graduated from Kansas City Art Institute 2011 with a BFA in Painting. In 2010 she studied Media Design at Fachhochschule Schwäbisch Hall School of Design in Schwäbisch Hall, Germany. She is originally



Clockwise from top left: Marcus Miers, *Icon 17*, 2011, 7.5 x 9.75 inches, acrylic on paper; Monica Dixon, *Shrivel*, 2011, 26 x 14 inches, paint, pantyhose; Jacob Banholzer, *Got Dominion?*, 2011, 16 x 24 x 13 inches, cast foam, paper towels, cast plastic, boning hooks, rubber nipples, flocking, wood, steel, paint, carpet padding, zip ties.

from West Plains, Missouri.

Marie Dougherty's work also explores the capacities of her medium; namely documentary and the staged photograph - two touchstones of fine art photography. In her photographs of friends, family, pets and stuffed animals she weaves between candid familiarity and surreal Photoshop effects. Sometimes she leaves her photographs untouched, feeling that they are sufficiently "disorienting"; while at other times she intervenes with a heavier hand, cutting, pasting, or erasing an object, person, animal, or land. Dougherty graduated from Kansas City Art Institute 2011 with a BFA in painting and creative writing. She is originally from Winston-Salem, NC.

Neil Griess creates hyper-realistic paintings based on miniature sets that he constructs and then photographs, creating a truly uncanny atmosphere of alternative realities that are grounded by familiar structures of urban America. His latest work, *Placemats (Charrette)* (2011), reflects his research interests in New Urbanism and how sustainable, functional communities are successfully created. Griess graduated from University of Nebraska in 2011 with a BFA in painting. Earlier this year, his work was included in the *2011 Bemis Center Regional Exhibition* in Omaha, Nebraska, where Greiss is from.

Marcus Miers examines the tension between illusion and reality through the medium of painting and the language of printmaking. In his *Icon* series, Miers builds up layers of impasto on Mylar, only to then isolate gestures through pulling off areas of paint and placing them on clean white backgrounds. Through this process, Miers explores the historic discrepancy between gestures that form a portal onto another reality and ones that serve as distinct objects. Miers will receive his BFA degree this fall from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

About the jurors:

Katherine Pill earned a dual master's degree in Modern Art History, Criticism, and Theory and Arts Administration and Policy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). While at SAIC she was the Administrative Director of the Student Union Galleries and Art Criticism Editor for *FNews Magazine*. She was also co-director of Concertina Gallery, an apartment gallery in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood. Katherine is currently the Assistant Curator at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri.

Francesca Wilmott is the co-founder of Los Caminos, an apartment gallery in St. Louis's Cherokee Street neighborhood. In May 2010, she earned a dual master's degree in Modern Art History, Criticism, and Theory and Arts Administration and Policy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In addition to Los Caminos, she co-directed Concertina Gallery in Chicago and has organized exhibitions for the Hyde Park Art Center, Art on Track, and the GOFFO Art Fair. She regularly contributes to *Temporary Art Review* and was a guest blogger for *Art21* in July 2011. Francesca currently works as Assistant Registrar at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum.

***Project Advisors for the Charlotte Street Biennial of Regional BA/BFA/MA/MFA Candidates** are Charlotte Street Foundation Urban Culture Project Curatorial Committee members **Grant Miller**, artist and educator, and **Jeremy Mikolajczak**, Director & Chief Curator, Gallery of Art & Design Department of Art & Design University of Central Missouri.

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.