

The Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning Announces Provocative Art Exhibit That Examines Boundaries in the Contemporary Art Field

QUEENS, N.Y. – Jan. 19 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning (JCAL) has assembled a group of 18 emerging artists in a new exhibition – The Field: Selections from JCAL’s Artist Registry. The opening reception is scheduled for Saturday, January 27, from 4-7 p.m. with a special performance by Tattfoo Tan.

The contemporary artists were selected from JCAL’s artist registry; themes, styles and type of media vary.

The exhibition serves to identify the artistic aspect of JCAL’s constituency and to contribute to the review of current studio practices. Featured artists include Paul Anthony, Elia Alba, Soledad Arias, Suzanne Broughel, Vickie Byron, William Crow, Anujan Ezhikode, Jeph Gurecka, Yasmin Hernandez, Niizeki Hiromi, Juliet Kaye, Jason Lujan, Carmen Ruiz-Davila, Zoe Sheehan Saldana, Hyungsub Shin, Tattfoo Tan, Brian Ulrich, and Monika Zarzeczna.

This curatorial research demonstrates that contemporary art practice is oriented to object-making or to organizing convivial events. Many of the reviewed artists explore personal experiences with their immediate surroundings, involving discussions on environmental issues or socio-political issues of our current society.

“We create our environment, yet we are subject to the creation,” Heng-Gil Han, the curator, said. “Being aware of our surroundings is a necessity of life.”

Areas that are explored include: racism and identity, cultural bias and planned obsolescence, landscape transformation, eco-political issues, spirituality and death, and dream states.

Issues of racism and identity are explored through an array of artistic installations. For example, Elia Alba presents identity and race as constructs by juxtaposing masks on the faces of her photographic subjects;

Suzanne Broughel discusses issues of racism in America and honors Malcolm X; and Anujan Ezhikode produces a serene pictorial space in reference to his Indian cultural identity.

Other artists focus on the environment and transpose found objects into practical and useful items – Niizeki Hiromi recycles the plastic windows in mailing envelopes to create paper bags; and Hyungsub Shin braids electronic wires to make tendrils sculptures evoking the images of rhizome and network.

Relational aesthetics has also been a hot issue in the recent New York City art scene. As a result, artists communicate feelings about critical issues such as consumerism, accumulation of wealth, inflation, and living in a capitalist society. For example, Brian Ulrich, artist, represents the consumer-culture experience such as loss, alienation, and emptiness in his large-scale photographs of retail stores, gigantic malls, and department stores.

Art is also confirmed as an ephemeral process and a social act of dialogue and communication. One ephemeral work is a group of tiny paper cut outs created by Monika Zarzeczna; her silvery, but barely noticeable figures will be installed on ordinary architectural structures, such as heat tubes and ventilation ducts. The audience, happening upon them, will likely be surprised and delighted by the prestigious, fragile and minuscule figures.

JCAL is housed in a landmark building owned by the City of New York and supported, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs with support from Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg; Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate D. Levin; the New York City Council; Council Speaker Christine Quinn; the Queens Delegation of the Council; Majority Whip, Councilman Leroy Comrie; and Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall.

JCAL's Visual Arts programs are supported by many generous contributors, including: Jerome Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; JPMorgan Chase Foundation; Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; and New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

The exhibition, scheduled to run through March 27, is located at JCAL: 161-04 Jamaica Avenue, Jamaica, NY 11432. For more information and directions, call 718-657-7400, extension 123, or visit www.jcal.org.

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