

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Common Jive

April 3 - May 15, 2010

Opening reception, Saturday, April 3, 6- 8 pm 2010

Curated by: Saya Woolfalk and Julie Fishkin

Artists: Scott Andresen, Karen Azoulay, Milton Carter, Kate Gilmore, Nate Kassel, Ai Kijima, Shana Moulton, Natsu, Brent Owens, Maria Pineres, Tanea Richardson, Whiting Tennis, Megan Whitmarsh, Vadis Turner and Saya Woolfalk

EFA Project Space

323 West 39th Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10018
between 8th and 9th Avenues

Gallery Hours: Wed through Sat, 12-6 PM

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Opening April 3rd at **EFA Project Space**, *Common Jive* presents a spectrum of contemporary artists who summon up vernacular and traditional craft approaches in their art-making practice. Organized in a collaborative effort between curator Julie Fishkin, and artist Saya Woolfalk, the fifteen artists in the exhibition engage the dichotomy between communal pasts and the individual experience, intertwining them visually through the manipulation of common materials and re-examination of time-honored aesthetic practices.

The work in the exhibition represents strategies of both the self-taught and formally trained. Rather than making a distinction between these tactics, **Common Jive** argues that these artists, presenting a resurgence of dedicated artistry combined with a concern for conceptual rigor, are part of a contemporary communal discourse.

Image: Ai Kijima, *101*, 2008, Fused, machine quilted, 31 1/2"x 27"

Some of the artists look to traditional approaches as means to critique and investigate current political or cultural concerns. **Brent Owens** conjures the aesthetic of Appalachian woodcraft with his chainsaw carved sneakers and whittled basswood laces to comment on the generic nature of mass production. The objects recall the familiarity of a pair of Nikes or Air Force Ones while remaining a nameless copy, albeit a hand-made one of a kind. **Nate Kassel** embroiders throw pillows, utilizing the language of domestic decoration, as an unexpected platform for his sarcastic and humorous social commentary, while **Maria Pineres** uses the traditional craft of her Colombian origins to create intricate needlepoint “paintings” that illustrate pop culture and its icons at their most decadent.

Other artists in the show act as collectors, foraging for relics and combining them with contemporary artifacts and visual icons. **Milton Carter’s** “Self-Portrait: A Hobo Pop-Up Shop” is an accumulation representing the artist’s fascination with the life of “things” and lifelong collection of esoteric ephemera found in local yard sales, thrift stores, and flea markets. With **Scott Andresen** and **Ai Kijima**, scavenged material is integrated with a multitude of other materials in their work. **Andresen’s** found artifacts or discarded detritus are woven into his detailed quilts, narrating the lives of a thousand nameless individual histories, while **Kijima** also uses quilted collage to illustrate a both a historical and contemporaneous commentary on the iconography of pop culture. In **Megan Whitmarsh’s** new work “Color Work Station,” the artist constructs an impression of a studio or what she calls a “meta studio.” Cheerfully awkward and self-conscious, the work “celebrates the process of making art” while making the often private and perplexing artist’s workspace palpable.

Pushing the theatrical potential of hand-constructed elements, some artists construct platforms for their own created narratives, building intricately detailed environments. **Kate Gilmore’s** sets are designed to provide her self-played protagonist with an endless array of difficult physical tasks, which she documents herself, dolled up in a variety of feminine frocks, obsessively attempting to conquer. **Karen Azoulay’s** lush fabricated backdrops play more to the desires of whimsy. Although satisfyingly fantastical, her materials and labor remain transparent, ever reminding us of the human hand that created these mythic worlds. **Shana Moulton** engages in an imaginative interplay with commonplace items, as her devised protagonist navigates possible magical properties of her home décor.

The complete list of artists is: Scott Andresen, Karen Azoulay, Milton Carter, Kate Gilmore, Nate Kassel, Ai Kijima, Shana Moulton, Natsu, Brent Owens, Maria Pineres, Tanea Richardson, Whiting Tennis, Megan Whitmarsh, Vadis Turner and Saya Woolfalk.

Performances and workshops will be scheduled throughout the duration of the show held by the collective CYA, artist Heather Hart, and other related artists. Please check www.efanyc.org for updates, or email michelle@efanyc.org for more information.

For more information on the exhibition, including press materials and images, please contact Michelle Levy, Program Director, michelle@efanyc.org, 212-563-5855 x 227

Curator’s Bios

Julie Fishkin was born in Moscow, Russia, and grew up in NY. She attended Barnard College and worked in galleries while studying in Paris. While exploring the virtues of the art world industry professionally, Julie was inspired to start a curatorial collective, called Metro Color Collision, with her collaborator, Matt Lucas. Since then, she has completed her MA in Art History at Columbia and

continues to write on art and life, while curating exhibitions. She is a regular contributor to art publications including Artcal, Humble Arts Foundation, Sadie, Block Magazine and Heeb. Julie finds solace in probing visual culture to arrive at its purest essence of meaning and tell a great story.

Saya Woolfalk is a New York based artist whose work spans multiple media from sculpture, installation, and painting to performance and video. She holds an MFA in Sculpture from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA from Brown University, and completed the Whitney Independent Study Program in 2006. She has exhibited at PS1/MoMA Contemporary Art Center in Long Island City, NY; the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, IN; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, IL; University at Buffalo's Center for the Arts; and Momenta Art in Williamsburg, NY. She received an Art Matters grant to Japan and a NYFA grant (2007), a Fulbright Fellowship to Brazil (2005), and a Joan Mitchell Foundation MFA grant (2004), and was a participant at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Yaddo, and Sculpture Space. In 2008, Woolfalk was a resident artist at the Studio Museum in Harlem and was a recipient of a Franklin Furnace fellowship.

EFA Project Space is a Program of **The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts**.

EFA Project Space, a multi-disciplinary contemporary art venue focused on the investigation of the creative process, aims to provide dynamic exchanges between artists, cultural workers, and the public. Art is directly connected to its producers, to the communities they are a part of, and to every day life. By contextualizing and revealing these connections, we strive to bridge gaps in our cultural community, forging new partnerships and the expansion of ideas. Through these synergies, artists build on their creative power to further impact society. www.efanyc.org

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