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Image Credit:

Lynne McCabe

Still from 14 Hours, 2009

Single channel HD video, 18 minutes

Courtesy of the Artist

DiverseWorks presents **\$TIMULUS** **Artadia Awardees 2008 Houston**

Showcasing some of the hottest talent in Houston's vibrant contemporary art community, DiverseWorks once again joins forces with Artadia to present *\$TIMULUS*, opening with a reception from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. **Friday, July 17, 2009**. The exhibition, on view **through August 15, 2009** in the **DiverseWorks Main Gallery**, features new work by the 2008 recipients of the *Artadia Awards*. Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue offers substantial artist awards in five cities including Houston. The most recent round of Artadia Awardees, who were selected following an open application call to all visual artists living and working in Harris County, include artists working in video, painting, sculpture, site-specific installation, photography, and collage, and represent the range and depth of Houston's creative force. Artists in *\$TIMULUS* are Mequitta Ahuja, Dawolu Jabari Anderson, Katy Heinlein, Lauren Kelley, El Franco Lee II, Lynne McCabe, Delilah Montoya, Katrina Moorhead, Floyd Newsum, and Stephanie Toppin.

\$TIMULUS Artists:

Mequitta Ahuja's large-scale self-portraits explore the symbolic significance of blackness and demonstrate female self-invention through a process she calls "Automythography" in which she combines history, myth, and personal narrative. Over colorful canvases, Ahuja's small brushstrokes create intricately textured surfaces as a formal device pointing to the deliberate and highly constructed presentation of her own identity.

Dawolu Jabari Anderson's playful paintings on paper combine stinging word play with the style and format of vintage movie posters and advertisements. For this exhibition, Anderson employs comic book storytelling techniques to seduce viewers with culturally loaded tales in which commoditized caricatures of Negro heroes are repackaged and polished within the African-American mythological landscape.

Katy Heinlein's simple structures generate interplay between the effect of gravity, tension, and movement by combining cloth with other readily available building materials. Heinlein's adept use of color, light, and form draws on the strength and fluidity of fabric to form straight lines in space subjected to tension and weight. The resulting sculptures are simultaneously formal and whimsical, curious and deceptively simple.

(more)

Lauren Kelley's videos use stop-motion animation that explore stereotypes of femininity and race. Working with a cast of dolls, she uses her voice to breathe life into plastic characters while poignantly and humorously addressing issues of gender, womanhood, and the human condition. For this exhibition, Kelley will present a site-specific work using trompe l'œil techniques to render three-dimensional spaces on the gallery's floor and walls.

Ei Franco Lee II depicts real-life events with startling graphic content, amazing depth, and acute attention to detail. Lee's paintings bring an illustrator's technique of realism and surrealism to the fine arts arena with the intention of peeling away the outer layers of still life and graphics to reveal the disguise of what once would have been considered ordinary.

Lynne McCabe Whether through potluck artist dinners or interviews with hairdressers, McCabe invites participants—including herself—to divulge truths about themselves. Using gender, body language, factual presentation strategies, and psychology, McCabe creates environments in which socially constructed notions of authority and trust can be manipulated. McCabe uses this occasion to premiere a large-scale video work in which she plays the central role.

Delilah Montoya works in a variety of photographic and printing processes and creates multimedia installations to explore the cultural history, memory, and identity of the Mexican-American community. The resulting images generate conversations that are densely textured and provocatively layered with aesthetic, spiritual, and political meaning.

Katrina Moorhead is known for creating unexpected, smart, and provocative installations that embrace nuance, fragility and temporality. Deeply affected by the realization that "everything we do is incongruent with the natural world," Moorhead isolates familiar relationships between nature and artifice by acts of restoration or deconstruction and explores how "vulnerable aspects of experience" complicate perception of authenticity.

Floyd Newsum combines colors, symbols, and personal signifiers in striking ways. Mostly working with acrylics, oil stick, and collage on paper, Newsum often uses shapes that originate from other cultures over a series of his paintings. In a number of pieces, Newsum comments on how we react to tragedy, such as natural disasters and dire social circumstances.

Stephanie Toppin uses collage and paint to create works in which shapes or limbs seamlessly connect in a mass movement, a testimony to the artist's fascination with the subtleties of human anatomy. Toppin understands her own practice as striving to untangle and abandon the borders and hindrances of thought to a more instinctual and natural honesty with herself.

ABOUT Artadia

Applications for the *Artadia Awards* were open online to visual artists at any stage of their career in Harris County from January 15 to May 15, 2008. The three first-round jurors—Franklin Sirmans (Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, The Menil Collection), Sue de Beer (artist, New York and Berlin), and Mark Bessire (then Director, Bates College Museum of Art) — reviewed a regional record number of 210 applications and selected 15 finalists in New York in mid-April. For three intensive days (May 15-17), three internationally prominent jurors— Franklin Sirmans, Jennifer Gross (Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Yale University Art Gallery), and Christopher Eamon (then Curator, Pamela and Richard Kramlich Collection and Executive Director, New Art Trust)—conducted studio visits with finalists to select the ten awardees.

The Artadia Houston program is supported by the Houston Endowment, Inc. and numerous generous individuals.

Artadia's mission is to encourage innovative practice and meaningful dialogue across the United States by providing visual artists in specific communities with unrestricted awards and a national network of support. Artadia was founded as The ArtCouncil in 1997 by investment banker and art collector Christopher E. Vroom as a response to the demise of the National Endowment for the Arts' artist fellowships. The first awards were given in San Francisco, where Vroom was living at the time. Chicago was added as a program city in 2001. In 2003, Artadia added Houston to its roster, Boston in 2007, and Atlanta this year. Once Artadia commits to a community, it returns every other year to run its awards programs and, on the off years, it co-sponsors a public program with a local institution. Started as an individual's philanthropy, Artadia is now expanding its base of support by recruiting art patrons from across the United States to join its giving circles and board of directors to support the core of creative culture: the individual artist. Artadia has been based in New York City since 2002.

This year Artadia launched its New York Artist Residency program, which brings Artadia Awardees from each of its program cities to New York for a three-month residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP), Brooklyn. This groundbreaking addition to Artadia's commitment to individual artists is the first of its kind in New York City for US-based visual artists, and received crucial seed funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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ABOUT DIVERSEWORKS

Known for its groundbreaking artistic and education programs, DiverseWorks is one of the premiere contemporary arts centers in the United States. DiverseWorks has been a hub for the presentation of daring and innovative work, a commissioner of major artistic projects in all disciplines, and an advocate for artists worldwide. Founded by artists for artists, DiverseWorks continues its commitment to bold artistic exploration, creative risk-taking and building audiences for contemporary art.

FUNDING CREDITS:

Programming for the DiverseWorks' 2008-2009 season is generously supported by: The Brown Foundation, Inc.; CEC Arts Link; Barbara Friedel McKnight and Catering By Culinaire*; Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts; Cindy Bishop & David Donnelly; Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; Greater East End District; Houston Arts Alliance; Houston Endowment Inc.; KUHF (88.7 FM)*; Meet the Composer; Mid-America Arts Alliance; Nathan Sommers Jacobs & Gorman; National Dance Project; National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency); National Performance Network; Nightingale Code Foundation; Nimoy Foundation; Nonprofit Finance Fund; Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation; Shell Oil; Louisa Stude Sarofim Foundation; Texas Commission on the Arts; Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; Lillian H. & Bob Warren; The Wortham Foundation, Inc; DiverseWorks Major Donors and DiverseDonors.

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DiverseWorks is located at 1117 East Freeway (off N. Main at Naylor), Houston, TX 77002
Tel. 713.223.8346 Fax 713.223.4608 www.diverseworks.org
Gallery hours are Noon – 6 PM, Wednesday - Saturday
Office hours are 10 AM - 6 PM Monday – Friday
Admission to the gallery is FREE