

For Immediate Release

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OTHER AMERICA

***Artists investigate views of America outside the commercial aesthetic
presenting works that symbolize the undercurrents of America***

March 5 – May 7, 2005

Opening Reception Saturday March 5th 7-10pm

OTHER AMERICA ARTISTS

Sol Aramendi

David Borawski

Michael Combs

Sung Ho Choi

Chaim Garcia

Reuben Henry

Duron Jackson

Marie Christine Katz

Sarah Klein

Tamara Kostianovsky

Warren Lehrer

David Opdyke

Dane Patterson

Richard Rinehart

Bradley Rubenstein

Bryan Savitz

Minshik Shin

Kiriko Shirobayashi

Véronique Simar

Jonathan Skurnik

Judith Sloan

Randy Erica Stulberg

Alison Elizabeth Taylor

The 62

Lex Thompson

Jennifer Trausch

Brian Ulrich

Michael Zansky

New York, NY, February 2005 – Exit Art, the nonprofit cultural center whose programs explore the diversity of cultures and voices in contemporary art, is pleased to present *Other America* (March 5 – May 7, 2005). In a world defined by American pop icons MTV, Hollywood, CNN, Disneyland, McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Superman, Exit Art investigates views of America outside the dominant commercial aesthetic, presenting a multidisciplinary art exhibition that envisions another view of American culture.

In its commitment to examining critical issues in contemporary society and culture through the work of emerging artists, Exit Art asked artists to submit works that defined their vision of America. Of the over 400 national and international artists who submitted works for consideration, 27 projects have been selected for *Other America*.

OTHER AMERICA PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Landscapes

Several projects in *Other America* focus on the ever-changing American landscape. In **David Borawski's** slide installation, he documents the preponderance of abandoned retail buildings – brought about by relocation, bankruptcy, redundancy or simple corporate impatience, these chain stores open and close and move and close again, leaving behind a trail of hollow structures and asphalt fields. Contrasting Borawski is **Kiriko Shirobayashi's** series *Lines: America/1747 miles*, her square format photographs show land, virtually untouched by human hands, that accentuate the beauty of the horizon line. These vast open landscapes exploit the lines of the earth's curvature, featuring photographs of different natural environments from the desert to forests to waterways.

Ruben Henry has created a comprehensive list of all of the places in the United States of America, including states, cities, towns, villages, Indian reservations, national parks, airports and any other map entry that could be considered a 'place'. Aside from its material form as a thousand or so sheets of A4 paper, the list is representative of the working time exhumed in its making. The items on the list were collected systematically not from an index, but crossed off, one by one, from the most detailed map Henry could find, moving from Maine down and around to New Mexico, finally to Hawaii and Alaska.

Unique American Communities

Projects that investigate unique American communities make up the majority of artworks in *Other America*. In **Alison Elizabeth Taylor's** intricate intarsia drawings made entirely of faux wood grain contact paper, she pays homage to young people living on the edge of Las Vegas. These alienated kids often meet up to have "desert shows", performances that express a culture not representative of the Southwest mainstream. In a rough and edgy short video documentary, **Randy Erica Stulberg** introduces us to Jeff, a loyal patriot who served in the military during the Gulf War. He currently lives in an outlaw community in the Southwest called Two Peaks, an anarchist group truly living off the grid (no electricity, police force, internet and cell phones). Jeff believes the U. S. government is the biggest enemy he knows and it is his duty as an American patriot to

overthrow this government, not through physical means but through words. The dark, grainy video accentuates Jeff's extreme living conditions and the sacrifice he makes in the name of personal freedom.

Jonathan Skurnik's The Elevator Operator video captures the story of Eugene Sheiman, a Ukrainian immigrant who runs a cage-like manual elevator in a New York City office building. While the almost 8 minute video takes place entirely in the confines of the elevator, Eugene's story is one of hope and promise.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Found and recycled materials take center role in several *Other America* installations. For **Marie-Christine Katz**, she exhibits the infamous cash collectors that many panhandlers use around the city, the paper coffee cup. For three years she collected these cups through offering panhandlers a dollar for them. Some refused to sell their cups, others feared she would throw a voodoo spell or lose their lucky cup. **Bryan Savitz's** fantastical cities resurrect out of colorful, flattened cardboard produce boxes and broken glass. He thinks of the boxes as bricks; stacking, unpacking and collapsing into intricate cityscapes that feature water towers, windmills, houses, animals, ferris wheels and other surprises.

Bradley Rubenstein and **Michael Zansky** use actual props and materials from film and television programs to create their installation. More people watch these programs in one Neilson-rated half hour than will ever see a Picasso in the Museum of Modern Art. Almost all Americans appreciate and understand cinema and network television, but do they understand fine art? Rubenstein and Zansky exploit an America that seeks culture in the glow of their television set. **Sol Aramendi's** video traces the life of Victoria, a Latera, and her family whose only source of income is through gathering and exchanging glass, plastic and aluminum cans for cash. **The 62** fabricated a large plywood quarter-pipe and sleds out of various found materials. During the course of the exhibition the artists will use the sleds to perform on the quarter pipe. The elaborately decorated sleds incorporate materials that the artists have found during dumpster diving excursions and include everything from toboggan rails to stuffed animals.

American Dreams?

Exploring ideas of class structure and the American Dream, **Richard Rinehart** and **Sung Ho Choi** employ works that exploit the incentive to keep up with the Joneses. In *ReadingClass*, Richard Rinehart utilizes a user-friendly game interface based on the children's' game Chutes & Ladders. The interface suggests the upward / downward class mobility and emphasizes the performative dimension of class. First, participants

self-identify their own class, then as they move through the game they are asked a series of questions like what they display on their mantle or tv and what they discuss when their boss comes over for dinner. At the end of the game, the answers are compiled by a central database that is compared to how others self-identify. They are then given a score that reveals, explores and critiques their social class. Sung Ho Choi was struggling with his thoughts about the meaning of an American life when he was struck by the long lines of people waiting to buy lottery tickets, hoping to strike it rich in their million to one chance. In his work, *American Dream*, Choi took 300 losing lottery tickets and pasted them together, over the surface of the tickets he writes "American Dream" in ballpoint pen.

ABOUT EXIT ART

Exit Art has charted the new in art and contemporary culture since it's founding by directors Jeanette Ingberman and Papo Colo in 1982. Over the course of 20 years, Exit Art has acquired a substantial reputation for curatorial innovation, depth of programming in diverse media, and especially for bringing to public attention the work of important unknown artists. Part of its mission is to present the work of under-recognized living artists in innovative ways that expose the diverse, multi-disciplinary nature of contemporary culture. Its exhibitions, performances and programs challenge traditional notions of what art is and explore the rich amalgam of voices and cultures that continually shape America. As such, it has grown to become one of the most admired, innovative spaces for supporting artists and providing the public with a visionary look on what's to come. Exit Art now stands as an archive of cultural thought and expression routinely mined by artists, students, curators, and scholars. It is no small wonder that Exit Art's programs have attracted a million visitors from across the country and around the world.

FUNDING

Other America is funded with a generous grant from Catharine and Jeffrey Soros. Additional support provided by the Jerome Foundation, Greenwall Foundation, Starry Night Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, New York State Council on the Arts and our members.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exit Art is located at 475 Tenth Avenue at 36th Street. *Other America* will be open each Tuesday through Thursday, 10 am – 6 pm; Friday, 10 am – 8 pm; Saturday, 12 noon – 8 pm Closed Sunday and Monday. There is a suggested donation of \$5. For more information, the public may call 212-966-7745 or visit www.exitart.org.

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