



The Creative Commons: Progressive Studio Practice from the Creative Growth Art Center, LAND Gallery, and the Center for Creative Works

January 12 – April 14, 2019

Opening reception: January 12, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

"The success of progressive art studios demonstrates the possibility that in a neurologically diverse world there may be profound, valuable, and beautiful connections made among wholly disparate minds." Tim Ortiz and Andreeana Donahue, from *Disparate Minds*

ArtYard is pleased to present *The Creative Commons: Progressive Studio Practice from the Creative Growth Art Center, LAND Gallery, and the Center for Creative Works*. This exhibition features works from three non-profit studios influenced by the work of Creative Growth founders Florence and Elias Katz, whose radical approach to art making and inclusion for adults with developmental disabilities launched acclaimed careers and occasioned a sea change in conceptions of contemporary art. This quiet revolution allowed artists such as Judith Scott, a hearing-impaired woman with Down Syndrome who spent thirty-five years in an institution, to achieve international recognition, exhibit at MoMA, and represent the United States in the Venice Biennale after finding community, meaningful employment, and exposure to the fiber arts at Creative Growth. She was not alone.

"I started to become intrigued by the question of why was there so much wonderful work coming out of these ... art centers and was there something they had in common, some kind of methodology ... which had to do with giving adult artists with developmental disabilities an opportunity to work in communal studios at hours which reflected the common work hours, ... that these centers be connected to the art world, that there be a gallery connected to the studio, that there be not teachers but facilitators who would assist the artists in making their work, and that there would be a sales element. It's interesting that the first of these centers was created at exactly the same moment of Roger Cardinal's famous Outsider Art definition of outsider artists being cut off from the world. These centers were radically connected to the world."

— Lawrence Rinder, Director of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

Importantly, these programs provide not only community, studio space, encouragement, and exposure to new materials, but also a source of income for marginalized and stigmatized individuals who often struggled to find meaningful employment.

The show features a continuous projection of four short films produced and directed by members of the Oakland-based studio Creative Growth: Susan Janow's astonishing existential opus *Questions*, Rosena Finister's exuberant *Finger Poppin' Time*, Gregory Stoper's *History in*

a *Minute* (in which Stoper portrays Abraham Lincoln from the cradle to the grave), and Paulino Martin's colorful, contemplative *City*. Creative Growth also contributes a collection of ball gowns, mermaid skirts, knit apparel, and jeans from its raucous annual fashion event, *Beyond Trend*, as well as an array of John Martin's oversized imaginary wooden tools.

Among the contributions from the Brooklyn-based LAND Gallery are Dean Millien's diminutive tin-foil gorillas; a cheerful, toe-obsessed painting by Raquel Albarran; and a large selection of works by Garol Gayden, whose ghostly pencil portraits of Coney Island's Spook-a-Rama, Ferris wheels, roller coasters, and neighborhood block parties evoke a love of place.

Works from the Center for Creative Works in Philadelphia include Mary T. Bevlock's part geometric, part figurative colored-pencil drawings with poetic titles such as *The 4th of July Aqua Fresh Tooth Paste Brush Your Pearly White Teeth Your Breathless Will Be So Clean*; inviting maps and landscapes by Timothy O Donovan; and Ishmael Sutton's evocative black-and-white master drawings, including his arguable improvement on the *Mona Lisa*.

ArtYard's *The Creative Commons* exhibition showcases the work of thirty-one living artists, all working and practicing at these metropolitan centers.

Artists included in the exhibition:

Creative Growth Art Center: Joseph Alef, Casey Brynes, Rosena Finister, Susan Janow, John Martin, Paulino Martin, Peter Salsman, Christine Setzo, Gregory Stoper

LAND Gallery: Raquel Albarran, Nicole Appel, Rudy Bansraj, Garol Gayden, Kenya Hanley, Dean Millien, James Rosa, Byron Smith

The Center for Creative Works: Owen Ahern-Browning, Judy Barnet, Mary T. Bevlock, Paige Donovan, Cassie Flanagan, Mary Beth Frampton, Jenny Garrity, Ken Mcnelis, Vinetta Miller, Joyce Moseley, Timothy O'Donovan, Karlee Salamone, Ishmael Sutton, Karen Toff

EVENTS: Mary T. Bevlock and Paige Donovan from the Center for Creative Works will teach a drawing workshop and give an artist talk at ArtYard on February 24th, and a woodworking workshop with bicycle-powered tools will follow on March 12th. A communal weaving project will be installed in the ArtYard gallery, giving visitors an opportunity to collaborate on a textile adaptation of an artwork designed by Center for Creative Works artist Judy Barnett.