

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST LOUIS

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CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS PRESENTS

GREAT RIVERS BIENNIAL 2008

February 1 – April 20, 2008



Juan William Chávez, *Drawing CWO*, 2007. Charcoal, gouache, colored-pencil, and ink, Courtesy of the artist.

November 1, 2007 (ST. LOUIS, MO) --- The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis and the Gateway Foundation are pleased to present the *Great Rivers Biennial 2008*, which for the first time in its six year history takes as its subject the practice of drawing. Bringing together the work of *Biennial* winners **Juan William Chávez**, **Corey Escoto** and **Michelle Oosterbaan**, this exhibition will feature new works on paper, film, and site-specific installation, in an exploration of how the intimate approach to line is manifest in a broad range of artistic practices. Together, the three artists present a shared fascination with the material, process, and form of drawing, while offering approaches so diverse as to reveal distinct understandings of the function and identity of line. From Chávez's storyboard "live-drawings" that make their way back to the screen, to Escoto's seemingly innocuous, geopolitical blueprints, to Michelle's intimate sketches-from-memory brought to bear at an encompassing scale, the exhibition investigates drawing as residual object and thing-in-itself, a starting point and inherent structure.

For the *Great Rivers* exhibition, each artist will present both drawn work and other media, revealing the complexity of their relationship to and reliance upon the graphic form. **Juan**

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William Chávez, who will present a series of drawings and two films, employs as his source material Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. Producing a sequence of storyboards he then re-animates to video—what he calls “hyper-alive situations”—Chávez engages such universal human experiences as violence, indulgence, and desire. **Corey Escoto**, drawing from both the style and idealism of United Nations memorabilia and the Do-It-Yourself movement, will create new works on paper and sculptural installation -- presenting his complex commentary on the concept of world-reform organizations. **Michelle Oosterbaan's** large-scale yet finely-detailed and complex compositions work to create “theaters of space” that integrate the viewer's shifting perspective within these environments. On the occasion of her exhibition at the Contemporary, she will create a site-specific installation covering both wall and floor, made from her newest work.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Juan William Chávez

Interested in the relationships between drawing and cinema, Juan William Chávez creates series of “live-drawings” from those films and videos that have deeply impacted his artistic practice—from soccer matches to classic drum solos. He has exhibited widely in Chicago and St. Louis, and has participated in shows at Gallery 400, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Art in General, New York, and the Portia K. Bakes Cultural Centre, Kastori, Greece. Chávez is also the Founder and Director of Boots Contemporary Art Space in St. Louis. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Kansas City Art Institute and a Master of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Corey Escoto

Escoto's self-proclaimed “self-satirical” work makes manifest the conflict between idealism and futility that occurs when endeavoring to better a troubled society. He has exhibited widely in Texas, his home state, and has been included in the Texas Biennial, Austin, the Biennial Southwest, Albuquerque Museum of Art and Art History, Albuquerque, and the Amarillo Biennial, Amarillo Museum of Art, Amarillo, Texas. Escoto is a recent graduate of the Master of Fine Arts program at the Washington University School of Art.

Michelle Oosterbaan

In Oosterbaan's drawings and installations, both myth and memory play important roles. Blending imagined narratives with personal experience, Oosterbaan explores both the formal and psychological relationships between line, color, and architectural space. Among her many exhibitions, she has shown at the Drawing Center, New York, Abington Arts Center, Philadelphia, The Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, Delaware, and the Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia. A graduate of Washington University, Oosterbaan received her MFA in Painting from Indiana University and is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Washington University's School of Art.

ABOUT THE GREAT RIVERS BIENNIAL

Designed to recognize emerging artistic talent in the greater St. Louis metro area, the *Great Rivers Biennial* program, funded generously by the Gateway Foundation, has raised each artist's award to \$20,000 from \$15,000 in past years. Juried by three distinguished curators from around the United States -- **Cheryl Brutvan**, Curator of Contemporary Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston;

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Lilian Tone, Assistant Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and, **Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson**, Director and Chief Curator, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado—this is the third round of awards since the inaugural *Great Rivers Biennial* in 2004. Past winners include **Jill Downen**, **Adam Frelin**, **Kim Humphries**, **Moses**, **Matthew Strauss**, and **Jason Wallace Triefenbach**. Jurors for past *Great Rivers Biennials* have included **Lisa Corrin**, Director, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts; **Gary Garrels**, Chief Curator and Deputy Director of Exhibitions and Public Programs at the UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; **Helen Molesworth**, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge; **Debra Singer**, Executive Director and Chief Curator, The Kitchen, New York; and **Hamza Walker**, Education Director, Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago.

OPENING WEEKEND EVENTS

Friday, February 1, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Member Reception and Preview with the Artists

Friday, February 1, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Public Reception

On **Saturday, February 2 at 1:00**, please join us for a panel discussion with Assistant Curator Laura Fried as she moderates a discussion with the three *Great Rivers* artists.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis is proud to announce our new season Winter/Spring programs. In conjunction with the *Great Rivers Biennial*, the Contemporary will collaborate with cultural and educational organizations in the St. Louis community, drawing from and exploring the fields of sociology, philosophy, and psychology as featured in the works of Juan William Chávez, Corey Escoto, and Michelle Oosterbaan.

Walk-in Wednesdays

Join us every Wednesday at 12:00 for *Walk-in Wednesdays*, where you can have the opportunity to meet the exhibiting artists, engage in discussions with local experts on globalism, dream interpretation, and moral psychology, or tour the exhibition with a member of our knowledgeable staff. Afterwards enjoy lunch at Tempt Café. No reservations are required.

Artists' Picks

Also in February the Contemporary will introduce a new group of podcasts featuring Artists' Picks. Highlights will include what Corey Escoto listens to when working in the studio, Juan Chávez's take on current films, and Michelle Oosterbaan's working reading list.

Family Day

In addition, on Saturday February 16th from 1:00-4:00, the Contemporary galleries will be transformed into a festival-like venue thanks to Maritz and its sponsorship of Maritz *Free Family Day*. Designed to run in conjunction with each exhibition at the Contemporary, this event will feature themes of myths, movies and good intentions that collide in this fun-filled day for the entire family. Highlights include interactive storytelling, a sing-along and non-stop art and craft activities inspired by the work of Chávez, Escoto and Oosterbaan.

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Visit our website regularly for new information about artist talks, gallery tours, performances and more during this exciting celebration of St. Louis artists and the rich emerging St. Louis contemporary art scene.

ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS

A leading center for contemporary art, the Contemporary is a non-collecting institution located in the heart of St. Louis's cultural district. Designed by Brad Cloepfil of Allied Works Architecture, the museum shares a courtyard with The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, designed by Tadao Ando.

Founded in 1980, The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis presents an ongoing schedule of exhibitions of new and innovative work and maintains an active program of community partnerships, educational offerings, and visitor activities. The Museum is located at 3750 Washington Boulevard, St. Louis, MO, 63108. Hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm; Thursday 10 am to 8 pm; and Sunday 11 am to 4 pm. For more information, the public may call 314-535-4660 or visit www.contemporarystl.org.

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