

CIVILIAN

ART PROJECTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Frontier Preachers

June 6 – July 26, 2009

Curated by Jayme McLellan, Civilian Art Projects, Washington, DC

Featured Artists: Tim Best, Kyle Bravo & Jenny LeBlanc from Hot Iron Press, Aubrey Edwards & Allison Fensterstock, Courtney Egan, Stephen Collier, Sally Heller, Srdjan Loncar, Cynthia Scott, David Sullivan, and Dan Tague

As cities that sit at the origin and conclusion of the great Mississippi River, New Orleans and Minneapolis are connected by commerce, travel, and folklore. Long after the heyday of the Mississippi River as the central artery in the heart of America, *Frontier Preachers* developed out of a desire to investigate this rich history through the work of contemporary artists.

The term ‘Frontier Preacher’ was used for religious and inspired gentle folk who traveled the Mississippi River’s shores to spread their gospel, deliver meaning, and conjure thought toward the betterment of others. Some would travel up river from the basin of New Orleans to the cold waters of Minnesota. The term seemed fitting for a group of artists traveling one thousand miles upstream from New Orleans to inhabit the Soap Factory with art.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, all these artists have witnessed the worst of the natural and built worlds and the work in the exhibition is both a response and a departure from the tragedy. For the exhibition, each artist has created a unique project inspired by The Soap Factory and tailored to the space. Works explore issues of propaganda, commerce, spirituality, detritus and what is left behind as well as music and energetic performances celebrating culture in New Orleans.

According to curator Jayme McLellan, “the inspiration for the exhibition was an exploration of the American Frontier and the consequences of unchecked conquest. Today, we near environmental and economic limits in terms of what our cities and shores may provide. We have reached a time of new understanding about our connections to one another including the role of government in our lives. This is reflected in the media and in contemporary art, and especially from artists from New Orleans. The crux of the exhibition, and the strength of each individual artist’s work, lies at the heart of this examination.”

By inviting twelve artists from the bottom of the Mississippi River to create work at its Northern spring, and by inviting a curator from nation’s capital, *Frontier Preachers* is then a show about a collective American story and kind of time capsule recording where we are today. Through imbuing the Soap Factory with the energy of this work, there’s a celebration and a rebirth of the mystery of the old frontier and a celebration of the new.

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Jayme McLellan lived in New Orleans during the 1990's and returned in June 2008 to curate an exhibition for the New Orleans Visual Artist Registry (NOVA Projects). During that and subsequent trips, she met the artists featured in *Frontier Preachers* and developed the concept behind the exhibition. McLellan is director and founder of Civilian Art Projects, a multi-faceted art space based in Washington, DC representing and supporting emerging artists. Since 1996, she has organized and curated over 100 exhibitions and events to promote art, artists, and ideas of social importance. This is the first time she has curated an exhibition in Minneapolis.

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Gallery Hours: Thurs/Fri 2 – 8 pm, Sat/Sun 12 – 5 pm

Street Address:

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Located in the former National Purity Soap Company building -- a historic, 48,000-square-foot warehouse on the riverfront near the birthplace of Minneapolis -- The Soap Factory is the third-largest space for contemporary art in Minneapolis/St Paul, and one of the largest devoted to emergent practice in the USA. We are committed to experimentation and risk-taking, and provide local, national, and international artists with a unique showcase for sculpture, installation, painting, performance, photography, film, and video. In turn, we offer audiences a real and immediate experience of the arts, encouraging a wider understanding of and appreciation for artists and their work. The Soap Factory was founded in 1988 (as "No Name Exhibitions") and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

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