

ART HYSTERICAL

curated by Matthew Weldon Showman

1 June – 30 July 2016

PRESS RELEASE

JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY is proud to present **Art Hysterical**, a group exhibition curated by Matthew Weldon Showman, featuring six New Orleans based artists of various media employing references to art history in the exploration of contemporary themes. Participating artists include: **E2, Generic Art Solutions, Adam Mysock, Paul Ninas, Nora See** and **Rachel Burch Williams**. The exhibition will be on view in the aft gallery from 1 June to 30 July with *First Saturday Gallery Openings* on **4 June** and **2 July** from **6-9pm**.

Showman elaborates on the concept and themes of the exhibition . . .

We see these famous images from Art History appropriated on all sorts of objects of high and low culture from mugs to scarves, calendars, umbrellas even posters and the list goes on and on. The scope of these proliferated masterpieces is not limited to the ever most popular renaissance works, but rather offers a full range of Art History through Modernism and Contemporaneity. Art appreciator or not these images are recognizable, even unavoidable.

In my continuing effort to share and make contemporary art more approachable for a larger audience, I am exploring this familiarity of famous artworks through contemporary works with direct references to the originals. Through this recognition, the perceived intimidation of entering a gallery dissipates as the viewer feels an immediate sense of knowledge and understanding. This allows for a certain amount of comfort and enjoyment in the engagement with the work. Yet, to simply replicate these masterpieces would be neither interesting nor relevant to the narrative of Contemporary Art.

*Each artist in the exhibition, in their own respective and characteristic style, re-contextualizes their own masterpieces to appeal to the current cultural climate. I observed a strong stylistic trend of this sort in the New Orleans art scene upon my arrival five years ago prevalent in artists of varying mediums and career levels. Whether it is re-writing the predominantly Caucasian European art history with the inclusion of people of Asian and African descent in the photographs of artist duo **E2** or turning the tables of female objectification onto the male form in **Nora See's** paintings; these contemporary works offer an extra aspect of relatability in their tackling of the various issues of the present. There is also a sense of humor in many of these works, particularly in that of **Adam Mysock's** ode to Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks" where the interior of the diner becomes a snow globe and posits concerns of climate change and environmental sustainability. In the same fashion as the old masters, these six talented artists' oeuvres are rendered masterfully in technique, embody and react to their context, and understand their audience and vice versa . . . they are contemporary masters and the future of art history.*

Matthew Weldon Showman received his BA in the History of Art and Architecture and Historic Preservation from the University of Pittsburgh in 2011 and is currently working towards his MA in Art History. He spent half of his undergraduate career researching in Europe where he lived in Paris and London, studying in the famous institutions housing the old Masters as well as working on exhibitions with various institutions in each city.

Showman has extensive experience in museums. Prior to his appointment as Director at Jonathan Ferrara Gallery he held positions in Pittsburgh at the Andy Warhol Museum, the Carnegie Museum of Art, Frick Fine Arts Library, University of Pittsburgh Art Gallery, Society for Contemporary Craft and Westmoreland Museum of American Art, as well as abroad at Dulwich Picture Gallery and Tate Modern in London, and Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.

Showman is an active member of the New Orleans' arts community. He is the Marketing Director of Arts District New Orleans, member of the Kohlmeyer Circle at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art and Pelican Bomb's Members Club, and continues to curate exhibitions at the gallery as well as independently. Most recently he became partner in Jonathan Ferrara Gallery.

Please join the conversation with JFG on Facebook (@Jonathan Ferrara Gallery), Twitter (@JFerraraGallery), and Instagram (@JonathanFerraraGallery) via the hashtags #ArtHysterical and #JonathanFerraraGallery.

JONATHAN
FERRARA
gallery

400A JULIA STREET | NEW ORLEANS LA 70130

+1.504.522.5471

WWW.JONATHANFERRARAGALLERY.COM

