

GINA PHILLIPS

Friends and Neighbors

1 April – 28 May 2016

PRESS RELEASE – 30 March 2016

JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY is proud to announce *Friends and Neighbors*, an exhibition of new fiber portraiture by artist **GINA PHILLIPS**. The exhibition will be on view in the main gallery from 1 April to 28 May with *First Saturday Gallery Openings* on **2 April from 6-9pm** and **7 May from 6-10pm** in conjunction with **JAMMIN' ON JULIA** presented by the **Arts District of New Orleans**, sponsored by the *Downtown Development District*. Known best for her mixed-media fabric portraits, Phillips's third solo exhibition at the gallery features the newest suite of these characteristic works including her subjects' pets and children. Often referred to as her "Cut-Out Portraits", Phillips depicts her subjects from the waist up, rendering the figures vulnerable and positing of tragicomedy. The people and/or animals that tell the story often embody a magical realism.

Phillips says of this latest suite of work. . .

All the portraits in this show are people I know. Most are my neighbors in the Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood of New Orleans. I begin by photographing the subject multiple times. Then I sketch from the photos, sometimes combining elements of several photos into one sketch. After the sketch is complete, I trace the drawing onto a transparency and enlarge the figure using an overhead projector and then I redraw it on a piece of plain muslin. At this point, I use acrylic washes to complete an underpainting. After the underpainting is dry, I load the piece onto a long-arm quilting machine and begin the process of appliquéing various combinations of fabric, thread, yarn and hair onto the portrait. I use the underpainting as my guide for form, light and shadow, and color choices. I use the long-arm quilting machine as a free-motion, thread-drawing machine. After rendering the figure with fabric and thread, I cut it out of its background and pin it to the wall. There's an interesting dichotomy between the vulnerability of these truncated forms and the strong presence they emanate that speaks to the human condition. More than anything, in each portrait, I try to capture something of the essence of the person.

GINA PHILLIPS is a mixed media, narrative artist who grew up in Kentucky and has lived in New Orleans since 1995. The imagery, stories and characters of both regions influence her work. She started her career as a painter, but over the years, has increasingly incorporated fabric and thread into her work. She begins a piece with a simple under-painting in acrylic paint on canvas or muslin...then finishes the piece by appliquéing fabric and thread on top. Phillips uses a communal gathering process to source her fabrics, as neighbors, friends, family often donate to her artistic process. Her sewn work hover between two and three dimensionality and often the backs of her pieces are as interesting as the front sides.

Gina Phillips has a BFA from the University of Kentucky and an MFA from Tulane University's Newcomb College. Her work has been exhibited in galleries and museums across the country including Pepperdine University, Ballroom Marfa, The Ogden Museum of Southern Art, and most recently the 21c Museum in Louisville, KY. In addition, her work has been presented at numerous art fairs including PULSE LA, PULSE Miami, Texas Contemporary and VOLTA Basel. Phillips' work has



been featured in Art in America, The Times-Picayune and ARTNews, among others. She was selected as one of twenty-seven international artists featured in the Prospect.2 Biennial of Contemporary Art curated by Dan Cameron and her collection of fabric portraits was exhibited as a solo project at VOLTA8 as part of Art Basel in Basel, Switzerland. In 2014, Phillips' work was featured in a mid-career retrospective at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans, LA and at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, AR in a group exhibition of 102 artists from across the country, entitled, "State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now". Additionally, her work was shown in two solo exhibitions at Jonathan Ferrara Gallery and the 21c Museum in Louisville, KY. Most recently, her work was on view at the 21c Museum in Bentonville, AR and the Mason-Scharfenstein Museum of Art at Piedmont College in Demorest, GA. Phillips is slated for several forthcoming exhibitions, including a solo exhibition at Liaison/John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art at Florida State University, as well as, in a portraiture-themed group exhibition curated by Jane Hart at the Hilliard University Art Museum, University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Her work is in numerous collections including Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; University of Kentucky, Lexington; NASA; New Orleans Museum of Art; Ogden Museum of Southern Art; 21c Museum, KY; the Drake Hotel, Toronto; The Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation; Tulane University and House of Blues (various locations across US.); Josh Rechnitz, Thomas Coleman, Ellen and Cooper Manning, and the collection of Marilyn Oshman.

For further information, press or sales inquiries please contact the gallery director, Matthew Weldon Showman, at matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com or at the gallery +1.504.522.5471.

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