

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Southern Exposure to Inaugurate New Building with Major New Exhibition Featuring 10 Newly Commissioned Projects



John Herschend; *Embrace of the Irrational*; production still; 2009

Grand Opening & Inaugural Exhibition Look To The Future

Bellwether

October 17 – December 12, 2009

Southern Exposure's Grand Opening:
Saturday, October 17, 2009
4:00 – 10:00 pm

Media Preview
Wednesday, October 14, 2009
10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Featuring new works by:

Ant Farm, Renée Gertler, Liz Glynn, Jonn Herschend, Whitney Lynn, Jay Nelson, Nonchalance, Lordy Rodriguez, Christine Wong Yap, and SoEx's Youth Advisory Board

San Francisco, CA July 23, 2009 – On October 17, 2009, in conjunction with its 35th Anniversary, Southern Exposure will publicly open its new Richard Johnson-designed home in the Mission District at 3030 20th Street. *Bellwether*, Southern Exposure's ambitious inaugural exhibition, comprised of 10 newly commissioned art projects by artists and artists groups from across the nation, will occupy the entirety of Southern Exposure's new 4,000 sq. ft. space, as well as at several public sites throughout San Francisco.

Open to the public from October 17 – December 12, 2009, *Bellwether* includes a gallery exhibition, public art projects, a public program event series, and a publication produced in conjunction with the exhibition. Curated by Southern Exposure's Curatorial Committee, an artist-run group consisting of 8 artists and 2 staff members, *Bellwether* and all related events are free to the public.

For the Southern Exposure Grand Opening, curators set out to create an inaugural exhibition that propels a forward-looking theme infused with speculation and uncertainty, asking the artists to project on the unknown. *Bellwether* concentrates on new work that not only reflects, but also confronts the contemporary moment.

The ten commissioned works featured in *Bellwether* include:

- An electric-powered camper home pod;
- An archive that attempts to capture the sum of our cultural moment for future preservation;
- A project that will seek to recruit new citizens through an immigration office installed at SoEx;
- A large-scale balsa wood installation that takes the form of a flood in stasis;
- A shelter that provides visitors with a safe place to 'bug-out'.

Ancillary public art interventions instigate such activities as:

- A hyper-real alternate reality game that leads participants through a tightly synchronized constellation of rivalries, quixotic maps, surrogate locations, and chance meetings;
- A small airplane that flies over San Francisco for the duration of the show carrying a generic apology banner that reads 'I'm Sorry';
- A processional through the neighborhood ending in an unfurling of a new collectively created banner.

Bellwether sets out to present work by artists that engage in multi-layered speculative projections on our ever shifting and uncertain future. Whether by indulging in hopeful fantasies or examining trepidation, the artists in *Bellwether* provide unique and perhaps unconventional tools and methodologies for envisioning and navigating the unknown. Through anticipation and fear, excitement and anxiety, prediction and instruction, the projects in this exhibition begin to give form to the haziness that lies ahead, and investigate both the uplifting and the darker aspects of the future.

The inaugural exhibition *Bellwether* builds upon Southern Exposure's 35-year legacy and incorporates the recent successes of the past three years, during which period SoEx moved several times and launched major new program initiatives, including *SoEx Off-Site* and the *Alternative Exposure Grant Program* funded by the Warhol Foundation. Known for helping artists at critical moments in their development, and for giving them freedom to pursue new ambitious ideas, *Bellwether*, as an inaugural exhibition, exemplifies SoEx's mission and emphasis on providing creative support for artists to exhibit and to develop new work in an open, accessible, and supportive environment.

Currently, SoEx is preparing to move into their new location, and is raising the final \$85,000 towards meeting their \$700,000 comprehensive fundraising campaign, *Funds for the Future* goal. The upcoming grand opening on October 17, 2009 and the new 4,000 sq. ft. home, brings with them extraordinary opportunities for Southern Exposure to further develop innovative

programming, to explore new initiatives, such as those associated with the inaugural exhibition *Bellwether*, and to continually redefine what it means to be the most daring and accessible visual arts organization in San Francisco.

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**Bellwether will include numerous public programs and activities led by exhibiting artists and their collaborators. Please visit www.soex.org for a complete schedule of events and public programs. A press release will be issued in August with full program details. All events are FREE and open to the public.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, JPEGs, BUILDING TOURS, OR INTERVIEWS CONTACT:

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EXHIBITION SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT

Generous support for Southern Exposure's inaugural exhibition and artists in education programs is provided by Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, The National Endowment for the Arts, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Foundation, and SoEx's Members.

Complete List of Inaugural Artists and descriptions of their SoEx Commissions:

Ant Farm, Renée Gertler, Liz Glynn, Jonn Herschend, Whitney Lynn, Jay Nelson, Nonchalance, Lordy Rodriguez, Christine Wong Yap, and Southern Exposure's Youth Advisory Board

Ant Farm *Time Capsule Triptych*

Ant Farm is a collective of radical architects, artists, visionaries, and cultural commentators currently including Chip Lord, Curtis Schreier, and Bruce Tomb. For Southern Exposure, Ant Farm presents *Time Capsule Triptych*, a newly commissioned project featuring a major new video and installation work documenting the reemergence of their 1975 *Media Van*, an installation of over 4000 digital audio and visual files collected through the newly updated *Media Van v.08* and an architectural rendering of the resting location of the *Media Van v.08*, *time capsule*. *Time Capsule Triptych* fits into a larger story that attempts to document the past (*Media Van* 1975), present (*Media Van v.08*, *time capsule*) and future (2030) of the *Media Van*.

Renée Gertler *Deluge Collapse*

Renée Gertler is interested in the wonders of the natural world and how we experience them whether through scientific calculation or existential awareness. In her project *Deluge Collapse*, Gertler presents a large-scale installation of a flood in stasis. Both forceful and life affirming this installation brings to light the current politics around water and leaves us to consider what role water will play in our future.

Liz Glynn *Banner Year*

Liz Glynn's *Banner Year* is a collectively created banner meant to serve as a manifesto, culled from fragments of past sentiment interwoven to create a new, provisional statement from which to move into the future. Hanging a banner is a territorial gesture and a means of claiming space. Unlike the nationalist identification of a flag, a banner is often an expression of idealism. *Banner Year* is intended to transform the collective experience of SoEx into a statement to propose a new future.

Jonn Herschend *Another Fine Mess (Part 1), Another Fine Mess (Part 2)*

Jonn Herschend is interested in the bare elements of narrative structure that occur when emotional confusion and absurdity play out in the everyday. For *Bellwether*, Herschend presents *Another Fine Mess (Part 1)* in which a hired plane flies over San Francisco at intervals throughout the exhibition with a banner that reads "I'm Sorry." It is just the sort of gesture that will inevitably have a wide spread effect. Herschend also presents *Another Fine Mess (Part 2)*, a video piece entitled *Embrace of the Irrational...Lessons from the Romantic Movement of the 18th Century*, by *Martin Thebes*.

Whitney Lynn *Bug-Out-Location*

Whitney Lynn's project, *Bug-Out-Location*, is a sculptural installation that draws inspiration equally from survivalist subcultures and do-it-yourself (DIY) movements. Taking a critical view of both, the project highlights the similarities between the two communities and emphasizes the role aesthetics play in defining perceived differences. Presented as a clandestine and defensible 'retreat' or 'safe place' within the gallery, *Bug-Out-Location* invites viewers to interact with the project.

Jay Nelson *The Golden Gate I*

Jay Nelson creates objects and structures that facilitate inventive approaches to living. His creations are often meant to be mobile and pose questions about our relationship to the environment that we inhabit and the landscape in which we travel. For Southern Exposure, Nelson creates a human powered pedal pod. Encased in a fiberglass shell, the pod is a small camper home on wheels complete with a water tank, stove, cabinets, fold-down table, and convertible bed. The *Pedal Pod* included in the show at Southern Exposure is a prototype and a proposal for what could possibly be fleet of similar vehicles. Each potential pod is a raw space that can be customized by the inhabitant into a temporary home and a space for introspection.

Nonchalance *Zetetic/Peripatetic: Investigations into the Ontology of the Elsewhere Public Works Agency and the First Steps Towards the Formulation of a General Theory of the Practice of Nonchalants*

Part fringe folklore, part comment on group potential, part *dérive*, Nonchalance creates hyper-real alternate reality games through tightly synchronized constellation of rivalries, quixotic maps, surrogate locations, and chance meetings. For Southern Exposure, Nonchalance presents a new public project focused on the failed collaboration between curator Audrey Griegh and rival group, Elsewhere Public Works (EPWA). As visitors walk through the familiar sites prescribed in this work, Nonchalance's narrative layers time and lifts them into a parallel reality of intrigue and the desire to right a topsy-turvy past through inquiry and the ability to just drift.

Lordy Rodriguez *First Colony*

Lordy Rodriguez's *First Colony* welcomes new residents and citizens through an immigration office installed in the gallery. Once the immigration process is complete, new citizens are able to vote on issues of importance to the Colony's future. In its first iteration, citizens voted to take over the neighboring Uokalani Village. The installation at Southern Exposure will include an exhibition of artifacts and pictures from the displaced Uokalani people, as well as a didactic display of their history and the events that took place during their capture. The First Colony will also be seeking to recruit new citizens at Southern Exposure and will have an immigration office, along with a voting booth and a map of the Colony's current and potential future territory.

Christine Wong Yap *mirrorsblack*

Investigating the dualities of optimism and pessimism through metaphors like light and dark, along with concept and physicality, Yap constructs a freestanding sculpture of two large, partially obscured mirrors on an illuminated base. Viewers will only be able to see either a half full or half empty image at any given moment, furthering a mood of skepticism or credence.

SoEx's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) *Nuestro Futuro*

Southern Exposure's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) alongside lead teaching artist Kamau Patton, and assistant teaching artists Tara Foley, Tibora Bea Girczyc-Blum, and Gloria Reyes create work which examines and re-envisions images of future identities through analysis of current and past uses of technology, media, and advertising. The final project is a culmination of 19 weeks of two hour, bi-weekly meetings at SoEx in the spring of 2009. In order to inform conversations about future identities, YAB delves into their own cultural identities and asks the question: how can art, within the parameters of collaborative arts practice, documentation, digital communications, video, sound, photography, self exploration, painting and drawing, help sustain the viability and presence of one's cultural background? Essential to this is an investigation of the tools and theories relating to immigration and anthropology. YAB presents a multimedia conversation regarding young identities today alongside futuristic projections within a cultural context.

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ABOUT SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Southern Exposure (SoEx) is a 35-year-old, non-profit, artist-run organization dedicated to presenting diverse, innovative, contemporary art, arts education, and related programs and events in an accessible environment. Southern Exposure reaches out to diverse audiences and serves as a forum and resource center to provide extraordinary support to the Bay Area's arts and educational communities. Activities range from exhibitions of local, regional, and international visual artists' work, education programs, public art projects, publishing, lectures, panel discussions, and performances. Southern Exposure is dedicated to giving artists—whether they are exhibiting, curating, teaching, or learning—an opportunity to realize ideas for projects that may not otherwise find support.

LOCATION and HOURS

Southern Exposure's new building is located at 3030 20th Street (at Alabama Street, one block east of Harrison Street). SoEx will be open to the public Tuesday - Saturday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Office hours will be Monday - Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is always FREE.

*Southern Exposure is currently located at 417 14th Street in San Francisco. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 10 am – 6 pm.

Website: www.soex.org