

(No) Vacancy at Carrie Secrist Gallery
February 4 – March 31, 2012
Reception for the artists 2/4/12 4-7PM

Curated by Stevie Greco, Carmen Price, and Carrie Secrist

A collaborative curatorial effort by the Carrie Secrist Gallery staff, *(No) Vacancy* grew from our contemplation of the hole – and the broad scope of what a hole can reference or suggest. This survey exhibition assembles a group of contemporary artists that employ a range of media to describe, illustrate, realize, invent, investigate, and/or deconstruct the simple or complex nature of a hole.

Formally, a hole might elicit a visual void (a fault, chasm, gap, interval, or portal), while conceptually, a hole might refer to an absence, something missing, an ominous threat, a sensual temptation, an entry or exit into another world, residue or remaining evidence of something that once was, and so on.

The three co-curators became overwhelmed by the notion of (w)holes in terms of trying to address larger questions about existence and infinity. As a result, our overall mission morphed into an instinct to select specific pieces that would fill a curatorial space or hole, something being made from nothing: Holes being made whole. With the wide reaching connection between the individual interpretations (for example - the play of a sexual connotation with an astrological phenomenon) as well as the simple truthfulness of a hole itself, the curatorial trio found resolution in the poetic nature of the void.

Personal layers of interest inform and define *(No) Vacancy* much more than, say, the hole as shape throughout the history of art or physics-based analyses of theoretical abyss, though these connections undoubtedly exist.

Instead, the individual works we chose examine architecture or framework, expose discontinuity in personal knowledge, or nod to a cheekier and more literal use of the word hole.

A site-specific installation by collaborators **Alex Gartelmann and Jonas Sebura** explores the loss of home as the idea of being a place. In attaching a decaying structure to a motorcycle, the artists address the intimacy and nature of their collaboration, which parallels the search for home. Through this sculpture the collaboration becomes a home and an act of preventative maintenance of the inevitable decay of one's sense of fixed identity.

Also examining emotional and psychological vacancies, a selection of portraits by Kansas City-based **Paul Anthony Smith** investigate gaps in his familial history. Utilizing strangers in his native Jamaica as models, Smith's portraits visualize potential relatives (people who might look like him) or imagine his own self-development and aging process, thereby filling holes in his personal narrative.

Continuing his ongoing study of blackness, Brooklyn-based **Vincent Como** exhibits *Composition to Threaten Your Existence* (2011), five small paintings punched directly into the gallery wall. By physically perforating the wall and interrupting its surface, Como's work enters an unknown realm, a cosmological void that causes anxiety until filled.

Similarly minimal, *Untitled (shot)* by **Liliana Porter** offers a humorous view of deconstruction. A miniature figurine takes aim at his target, marking the gallery wall with a bullet hole and its residue.

Joel Ross presents two untitled works on paper, symbols of hearts also formed by bullet holes. These images represent a memory of past events, reminders that love can be both violent and consolatory.

The *Martyrs* collages by **Javier Piñon** invert negative space to expose figures of cowboys in Western landscapes. The iconographic cowboys freefall from torn space, permeating the picture plane with vacant symbols.

Gallery artist **Dietrich Wegner** shows *Black Oracle* (2011), a large-scale sculpture referencing a human cavity. Voluminous and tactile, *Black Oracle* glorifies and disguises this intimate, communal chasm.

Alette Simmons-Jimenez' video installation depicts a hamster burrowing frantically toward us. Though seemingly whimsical, this behavior leaves viewers wondering *why* the small animal digs so erratically: Is there an imminent threat driven by panic, or is this favorite pet simply playing?

Gallery artist **Angelo Musco** brings *Xylem* (2011), recently debuted at PULSE Miami, an 8 x 20 feet photographic installation composed entirely of human figures. Each body or line of bodies in the work entwines to form a vast forest. Hollows in the background of the forest suggest a tunnel to an imaginary anti-universe, Musco's fantastical abyss.

New York-based **Jamisen Ogg** exhibits a new piece, a framed drawing supported against the wall by a fluted 2 x 4. The saturated colors of the work on paper paired with the minimalist structure reveal a tension between division and reconciliation.

About the Artists:

Lauren Anderson (BFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2006) lives, works, and shows regularly in Chicago, IL. Her work was the subject of a solo exhibition at Golden Age in 2010.

Vincent Como (BFA, Cleveland Institute of Art, 1998) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. The subject of solo exhibitions at PS 122, New York, House Gallery, Salt Lake City, UT, Proof Gallery, Boston, and Western Exhibitions, Chicago, Como's work has been exhibited widely in the United States and abroad.

Antonia Contro (MFA, University of Illinois-Chicago, 1987) is the executive director of Marwen in Chicago. Past solo exhibitions include the Chicago Cultural Center, The Newberry Library, and the Union League Club in Chicago. Her work is included in the collections of the Block Museum, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, Northwestern University, and the Delaware Art Museum.

Collaborators **Alex Gartelmann and Jonas Sebura** have created projects for Waterstreet Glass Works, Benton Harbor, MI; UICA, Grand Rapids, MI; NADA Art Fair / OxBow, Miami, FL; The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA; and Frontierspace, Missoula, MT. Sebura received his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2011 and Gartelmann completes an MFA from SAIC this year.

Alette Simmons-Jimenez (BFA, Newcomb Memorial College of Tulane University, New Orleans, 1975) lives and works in Miami, FL. The past recipient of a Knight Foundation grant award, Simmons-Jimenez has exhibited widely throughout Florida and the Dominican Republic.

Born in Italy and based in New York, **Angelo Musco** received an MA in Fine Art from the University of Naples, Italy. Noted projects include *Tehom* at Carrie Secrist Gallery, 2010 and *Hadal* at the 53rd Venice Biennial, 2009. He will debut a new film *Parthenogenesis* during the 2012 Armory Show in New York.

Jamisen Ogg has exhibited at Regina Rex, Queens, NY, Hudson Franklin, NY, and Studio, Brooklyn as well as Roots and Culture, duchess, and the Suburban in Chicago. Ogg lives and works in New York.

Javier Piñón (MAT, RISD, 1994) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York and has exhibited widely in the United States. Past solo exhibitions include ZieherSmith, New York; David Castillo Gallery, Miami, FL; Flanklin Art Works, Minneapolis, MN and Tache-Levy Gallery, Brussels, Belgium.

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina and residing in New York since 1964, **Liliana Porter** is a lauded artist with a rich international exhibition history. Her work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art and Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA; Musee d'Arte Contemporaine, Montreal, Canada; Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires, Museo de Monterrey, Mexico, and the TATE Modern Collection, London, UK, among many others.

Joel Ross holds a MFA from Cranbrook Academy for Art and a BFA from Tufts University. Currently he is Assistant Professor in the School of Art and Design at University of Illinois Champaign/Urbana, a position he has held since 2004. The artist is represented in Chicago by Monique Meloche Gallery.

Paul Anthony Smith (BFA, Kansas City Art Institute, 2010) lives and works in Kansas City, MO. He is currently an artist in residence at the AIR Program, Anderson Ranch Art Center, Aspen, CO and a studio resident of the Charlotte Street Foundation Urban Culture Project in Kansas City, MO. He has shown in Kansas City, Chicago, Austin, and Los Angeles.

A professor of art at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania, **Dietrich Wegner** received his MFA from Ohio State University in 2003. He was included in the AAP 97th Annual Exhibition at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA as well as shows at Digital Art Space, Troy, NY; The Carnegie, Covington, KY; Sculpture Center, Cleveland, OH and the Athens Institute of Contemporary Art, Athens, GA.