



THE BUSINESS OF ART

A THOUSAND FACES:

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EMERGING ARTISTS FIND THEIR VOICE

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A long time ago, prior to the Reservation Period, the Lakota people were a nomadic, family-oriented people who freely roamed the Plains in search of buffalo and lived a happy life. But, there were also times when they were forced to become aggressive, to go against another people and do things they normally wouldn't do.

During these times of aggression, the men—the warriors of the tribe—would come into a woman's lodge and take a ceremony to prepare them for what they had to do.

At a certain point in the ceremony, the men would see an elder—a man who had been there for a long time and who had been there for a long time. He would have a little bag... and when he reached out, a man who had always been there. With him, he would have a little bag... and when he reached into the bag, he would pull out masks, one for each warrior.

These masks were not physical masks, but instead, they were spiritual offerings. When the elder presented a warrior with a mask, he also bestowed upon him the abilities to avoid fear—nophobia, agility, fortitude, courage, strength—and the men would then go to battle with these gifts.

Upon their return, the warriors would again go into the woman's lodge and meet with the elder. Making the promise known, the elder would take each man's mask and put it back in his bag. In doing this, the elder would rid the warriors of everything they had experienced in battle—all they had seen, all the bad things they were forced to do. He would take all their thoughts and actions and put them back in the bag.

When each warrior left the woman's lodge, his experience in battle were no longer a part of him. He was once again a compassionate, unadorned man who could love his family and hold his children, without the ghosts of battle looking behind him.

This traditional Lakota story inspired renowned South Dakota artist Donald Montlake, who has recently expressed it visually in a new series of artwork. "When my friend Dakotah Hollow Horn Bear first told me this story, I was captivated with the idea of riding yourself of the load by letting your mask take the experience," he says. "Once the mask is taken off, you're free of the ghosts."

In the series, Montlake attaches plastic masks to canvases, textures them with muddling paste, and adds several waxes of pain—the result is a haunting composition balanced between chaos and order. The masks are scarred with the marks of the tumultuous process, yet they see from emotionless eyes, their expression, untouched.

"I'm never quite sure what will happen when I'm working on my masks or how they'll turn out," he says of the process, "but then each mask begins to talk to me and gives me direction—[I want beads, I want feathers, I want shells]—and I think, 'Oh, that's cool...they're so cooperative, of life's challenges—even simple shifts we undergo each day. Consider the difference between a warrior in the story preparing for an attack two hundred years ago, versus someone today, attending an important business meeting—or going to the gym. Consider our use of voice, our language of touch, when helping a child who has fallen from a bicycle, as compared with facing a disparate person stealing a bicycle. We all have different "pieces," different "adversities," our daily lives, for navigating among our various obligations, relationships, and feelings.

And consider the shifts a young artist faces when set loose, alone in the workshop, painting or writing or dancing with abandon, thus with inspiration—and then challenged with facing the audience or the show jury or even one potential patron. The journey through life is one of gaining experience, and with time our masks change.

Throughout these pages, we explore how the emerging and the established are charting their paths, considering their options, evaluating their gifts, and choosing which of their masks to wear today...and tomorrow.

This is a subject writer and lecturer Joseph Campbell would have loved; his life's passion lay in collecting stories from around the world and weaving their roots, comprising the



YOUNG TURKS

Dakotah Hollow Horn Bear was just a young man at the end of his journey on this earth, but he touched countless others with his storytelling and his passion for tradition. The mask story explored one particular tradition that helped to relieve the burdens of war—burdens that remain fresh and often unhealed in today's world.

Regardless of our country of origin, "ghosts" can remain in those who fight for what they believe in, what they know, or for their very survival. And our world's artists tell the stories of what they see, what they experience, and what they dream.

For generations, thanks to their youthful perspective, emerging artists have redefined our collective view of the human experience, and they have redefined the ways in which this experience is portrayed. Just since the mid-1900s, the younger set has revolutionized artistic styles, explored the theory of art, performed art live, and galvanized all permission to shakedown boundaries. Our masks firmly in place, we have shed our inhibitions, our expectations, and our preconceptions, thanks to the young creative minds among us.

This energetic, boundary-shattering global view has been exhibited in an ongoing series at the New Museum in New York City, which features only contemporary art. "The



Generational Triennial," which premiered in 2009 and opened again in February, 2012, is New York's only recurring international exhibition of emerging artists. It is slated to occur every three years.

Each New Museum participating artist was born between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, and many of them have never before exhibited in the United States. The Spring 2012 installation is titled "The Un governables," and represents the sensibilities of a generation who came of age after the revolutionary movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

"In many ways this generation was formed by the instability of a period marked by military dictatorships, the IMF crises of the 1980s and 1990s, the spread of global capitalism and the rise of fundamentalism," curator Eungie Joo says, after visiting more than 20 countries and hundreds of artists in



ABOVE: Photos from an emerging artist project featured in the New Museum. "Ungovernable" depicts impatience, and an exploration of the present and future—in a variety of media, including traditional works like painting and sketches, as well as performance art and installations.

THEIR work is telling the story of what is happening politically and socially in our world today—place by place, environment by environment, through each artist's point of view. The representation might be a monumental political companion, like *WE THE PEOPLE*. This replica of a section of the Statue of Liberty, created in the same way the original was made, was conceived by Death W3, 37, a Vietnamese artist who lives in Germany. Another piece might explore more intimate relationships, such as *Rescue Trepaid* ("Tropical Haigover"), which was created by 30-year-old Brazilian Jonathan de Andrade. This installation links more

than one hundred photographs to pages of a narrative diary that was rescued from the wreckage, and is intended to represent how the piece can remain alive.

"The Ungovernable" title is intended to honor organized resistance that comes as part of civil disobedience, while also recognizing, like a satiric parent, that the Young Turks of this generation—like many thinkers before them—follow their own hearts and minds.

If the emerging artists throughout the world could hear Deborah Hollow Hean Bear's story, likely they would relate to the poignancy inherent in putting on a selection of masks, "game face" that would help them to present, document, express, and even risk their lives. Montlaur says that these artistic warriors of today—along with soldiers and philosophers and social commentators—sometimes cannot remove their "war masks" for long periods, even years or decades. They struggle with the presence of what they have

seen, feared, and experienced, and in the fast pace of many cultures, there is no ceremony, no spirit, to remove the mask. "Sometimes you can hear those people, eagle-screaming or bear-growling," he says. "They still have the pain in them."

REFLECTIONS

Montlaur's masks talk to many people, to gallery attendees, to visitors at his office, and to those who have purchased them for their own walls. The pieces also speak to Katie Adkins, an emerging fine art and documentary photographer who moved in 2011 to South Dakota from Georgia. She says the camera acts as her mask.

"I want to be behind the camera. I don't want people to see me," Adkins says. "I think that as artists, we try to represent our selves—we try to be open—but there are things we might not share in our art. An artist's mask helps us choose what to show in our work, what to create, where it's shown, and whether it's shown at all."

"Every day we have masks, we all wear different ones—artists or not," Montlaur says. "With our friends and family or with business people. We've all felt the change, like when you take off a protective mask when you're alone, or with your spouse."

Adkins is inspired by the work of Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher, and especially by his theory that "the world is made up of signs—words, images, symbols—and that these signs only point us to other signs, which point us to even more signs, and so on and so on." "I think of a mask in these terms, and that a mask only leads to another mask," she explains. "This concept has inspired one of her earliest series of photographs, called 'Reflections.' Looking through the Looking Glass." This digital project replicates the effect of double-exposing film with layers upon layers of images, creating "ambiguous and fantastical images" that obscure the viewer's ability to discern what is real and what is reflected. "This blending of layers serves as a metaphor for my own artificial versions of self," Adkins says. It is difficult, but sometimes possible, to see a glimpse of her image in the photographs.



The give-and-take of this exchange, between established artist and emerging artist, underscores some of the experiences—and challenges—shared by artists of all ages. They are all inspired by what they see and hear and feel; they all balance their own lives with their work, its needs, its demands—in voice, in action, in spirit.

But still, Adkins, new to our arts, is eager to meet others of her own ilk, those who grew up making art and teaching it to friends. Those who speak her own dialect of youth.

Lucky for her, someone compiled a list.

KALEIDOSCOPE

In 2011, South Dakotans for the Arts honored this state's own Young Turks during the Governor's Awards in the Arts, a biennial event in South Dakota. The work of dozens of artists under the age of 40 was reviewed, and a cross-section of 30 individuals was selected by painter and event curator George Pribe-Przybyz.

"It was a pleasure to examine and become acquainted with so many young, talented individuals," Pribe-Przybyz wrote in his curatorial statement. "These are young people with tremendous enthusiasm, innovative ideas, optimistic passion—and they are well connected. I was made aware of the serious level of their engagement with each other, art, and the world in which we live. Still, through all of this, I sensed a measure of doubt—a healthy degree of skepticism. They are open



to new ideas and ready to be challenged, for they recognize the speed with which contemporary reality changes."

Pribe-Przybyz concluded that, to his delight, "the future of the visual art in South Dakota is in fine and capable hands."

With Pribe-Przybyz's own capable hands, he quietly curates his comfort zone—most recent in his studio, where he works with his dog snuggling nearby—and composed an artistic expression about the experience. Part poem, part reflection, part rejection of traditional punctuation, the piece depicts Kaleidoscope from the perspective of longevity. It was this older's experience with South Dakota's Young Turks that inspired this magazine issue, dedicated to the emerging artists of our time.