

## ***Chockablock***

***A funky fresh group exhibition featuring emerging regional artists***

On view from January 26 to April 14, 2013 at the University Art Museum, CSU Long Beach

### **Exhibition Opening Reception**

*January 26, 2013 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm at the University Art Museum, CSU Long Beach*

**Free and open to the public - no RSVP required**

In the group exhibition *Chockablock*, the influence of the digital activities of surfing, sampling, and aggregating can be discerned in the creative process and the visual characteristics of artwork, social practice, or performance by the participating seventeen regionally based artists. The participating artists include: Anthony Carfello, Alice Clements, Evan Higgins, Roya Falahi, Amir H. Fallah, Asad Faulwell, Janice Gomez, Julia Haft-Candell, Ashley Hagen, Jonathon Hornedo, Ichiro Irie and Lucas Kazansky, Anna Mayer, Prumsodun Ok, Lisa Tchakmakian, Devon Tsuno, Jemima Wyman. *Chockablock* has been organized by Kristina Newhouse, UAM Curator of Exhibitions.



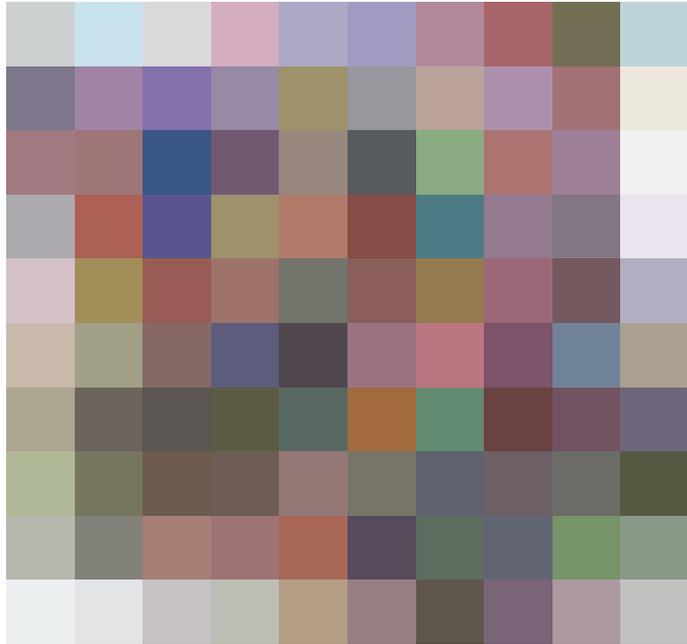
Amir H. Fallah, *The Redwood Healer*, 2012.  
Acrylic, ink, pencil, oil, collage on paper, 30 x 22 inches.  
Courtesy of Gallery Wendi Norris. (c) Amir H. Fallah

In her latest *Artforum* essay, “The Digital Divide” (2012) Claire Bishop declares the digital to be the “shaping condition—even the structural paradox—that determines artistic decisions.” She likens the “subterranean presence” and prevailing influence of the digital to the rise of “television as the backdrop to art of the 1960s.” Artists as aggregators have become “de facto archivists,” adept at downloading, file sharing, sampling, and “curating.”

It is striking how artists coming into their own are quite unfazed by the condition of “everything, all at once,” even as cultural thinkers use terms of instability such “ungrounded” or “free floating” to characterize the present. Resonating as never before, the idea of the “network” is now part of the vocabulary of artmaking. It indicates the level to which smart technology is pervasive. Recently, David Joselit made comment about how artists sort, capture, and reformat existing content like “human search engines.” To him, the emphasis has shifted from “producing to formatting content.” Artworks

(which Joselit terms “visual bytes”) have become “transitive,” in that they are shaped by “circulation from place to place and their subsequent translation into new contexts.”

Acts of aggregating, sampling, and formatting are different from older artistic strategies of appropriation. Appropriated images typically appear as if within quotation marks as critique, commentary, or satire. In contrast, the sample may function as *tabula rasa*, pure data wiped clean of customary contextualization. A young artist can reference the “look” of early 20th Century Modernism, without applying the prefix of post, anti, neo, or retro. Indeed, within the same piece, an artist can draw from many eras and precepts—all things being equal. It is in this sense that such works are chockablock: differing visual and conceptual elements adjoin one another, cheek-by-jowl, without being circumscribed or ranked in hierarchy.



Jemima Wyman, *Free Pussy Riot Crazy Quilt*, 2012, Digital photographs sewn onto secondhand tie-dyed t-shirts, 74 x 74 inches. Courtesy of the Artist and Steve Turner Contemporary

Alongside their activities of sampling and aggregating, younger artists seem reluctant to present artworks that appear “finished” in the manner of the masterpiece. In “The Digital Divide,” Bishop discusses “repurposing,” an idea that can be extended to the provisional or makeshift mien of such works. In light of the digital activities of “reformatting and transcoding,” of building “new files” from “preexisting components,” the very temporariness of an artwork becomes a factor in its production. Dated notions of mastery certainly seem a lesser priority under such provisional circumstances.

In the works of the seventeen artists of Chockablock, the digital activities of surfing, sampling, and aggregating can be discerned. These artists have embraced the paradigm of provisionality that characterizes present-day contemporary art practices. Whether visual artwork, social practice, or performance, the reliance of these artists upon digital networking and the use of the Web for research, production, and dissemination is revealed.

## About the University Art Museum, CSU Long Beach

The mission of the University Art Museum is to present exhibitions and programs that blur the boundaries between visual arts and design, technology, music, and contemporary culture. The UAM provides a forum for the investigation of contemporary visual culture and seeks to transform the traditional art museum experience, from the ordinary to the extraordinary and personal. Begun as a significant campus gallery in 1973 and first accredited by the American Association of Museums in 1984, the UAM ranks among the top ten-percent of the nation’s 16,000 plus museums, and is praised as one of the top museums in the state by the California Arts Council. The UAM maintains a permanent collection of works on paper by important contemporary masters and site-specific outdoor sculpture that has brought recognition to the university and the City of Long Beach.