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Megan Euker // Juan Angel Chavez

April 15, 2011

Megan Euker: Reenactments

Project Space: Juan Angel Chavez

Exhibition runs April 15 – May 14, 2011

Opening Reception with the Artists: Friday, April 15th 6-9pm

Special Opening Event During Art Chicago/NEXT: Saturday, April 30th, 6-10pm

(with music and performance by capoeeristas)

Linda Warren Gallery is proud to present the opening of Megan Euker's first solo exhibition at the gallery – *Reenactments*. Featured will be a selection of new paintings and large-scale sculptures that display her critical focus on gesture, human interaction, body language, and the figure. Conceptually the work can be divided into three different series: *Good Intentions*, cultural bathing rituals, and narratives and movements in capoeira. The work connects by virtue of Euker's acute observation of her surroundings and the aggressive and bold manner with which she expresses and captures the immense subtleties and fluidity of light and movement. Euker's several periods living in Italy, the last, on a Fulbright Fellowship in 2008-2009, as well as time spent in Brazil in 2010 where she further developed her skill and interest in capoeira inspires all of the works.

Euker's original intent on the Fulbright Fellowship was to focus on exploring the many mineral baths and healing waters she had encountered on a prior visit to Italy. A 10 ft. painting, depicting one such often revisited location, entitled "La Mola" will be on display in this show. She then discovered and began training in capoeira. Laden with ritualistic and spiritual narratives and a primitive style, which harks back to its historical origins as a subversive form of self-defense for the African slaves brought to Brazil in the 16th century, capoeira itself, in addition to being a fascinating art form, became Euker's new inspiration. Not only did the energy, spirituality, physicality, and underlying meanings and narratives of capoeira move her to begin learning this form, but

the myriad shapes and lines which present themselves visually in this highly choreographed, music driven Afro-Brazilian martial art form became wonderful subject matter for her brazen creative style in both painting and sculpture.

The *Good Intentions* series represents one of the more idiosyncratic aspects to Euker's practice. These paintings are based on ironic gestures of generosity she observed while living in Italy. Her paintings and sculptures are actually recreations of the reenactments her family members stage based on their interpretations and understandings of her stories, coming up with costumes and all. She photographs and films such scenarios acted out by her family and uses the photos and films as sources for her paintings and sculptures. For instance, in the piece *Good Intentions #2 (Mama Needs a New Pair O'Shoes)*, Euker saw a man throw a pair of strappy high-heeled shoes out of the window of his fourth story residence to a gypsy. The gypsy looked happy to receive the shoes; however in the midst of winter, for someone who walks everywhere, the gift seemed impractical. Euker wondered what the relationship was between the shoe-thrower and the gypsy, and whether the gift was discussed before it was thrown out the window. The act of throwing the shoes out the window voided the altruism of the gesture. In the painting, it is Euker's own mother and father who good-naturedly, and in a true gesture of generosity, dressed up and acted out this story for their daughter's joyful pleasure.

New work by Juan Angel Chavez will be on display in the Project Space.

Furthering his interest in survival, he communicates the coexistence of the

natural world and the man-made with a new formation – hanging root-like sculptures that encapsulate remnants he collects from his forays into the urban jungle. A precarious balance is expressed, one that is at once suffocating, all consuming, yet highly adaptive.

Megan Euker received her BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2005 and her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2007. She has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including the Artists' Fellowship, Inc. (New York) and Change, Inc. (est. by Robert Rauschenberg). She is an Adjunct Professor of Painting and Drawing at the College of DuPage. Juan Angel Chavez has been exhibited extensively both here and abroad including Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art 12 x 12, The Mexican Fine Art Center Museum (where he has a solo exhibition opening later this year), The Hyde Park Art Center, MassArt, The Center of Contemporary Art in New Zealand amongst others. He has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards including the Richard H. Driehaus Individual Artist Award, the Louis Comfort Tiffany award in NYC and the Artadia grant. He is currently a faculty member of the School of the Art Institute teaching sculpture. Born in La Junta, Chihuahua Mexico he moved to the United States at the age of thirteen after working as a professional jockey. Both artists live and work in Chicago.