

**Eve Rivera**

Chicago-based artist and educator Eve Rivera has a background in literary, performance and visual arts. Her appreciation for beauty and the struggle of life inspire her art. Through her photography, she documents the ever-changing urban landscape at the site where the architecture meets human intervention: abandoned buildings, street-side memorials, clotheslines, etc. . Currently Rivera is teaching while freelancing as a documentary/portraiture photographer, and a mixed media artist.

**Shan**

Shan grew up with a passion for the arts and has been writing graffiti for nearly a decade. Street art opened her mind up to shading, colors, and the possibility to use anything for canvas. Following the mindset that “graffiti is graffiti, and should be kept anonymous”, she has always aimed for people not identify her work as “male” or “female”. Her aggressive form of lettering weaves old school style and vibrant colors to create an authentic aesthetic on walls and unlikely materials like shoes and jackets, emphasizing her distinctive personal style.

**Stef Skills**

Stef Skills is a muralist, painter, educator, mother, and activist. She lives in Chicago and has been illuminating the streets with her characters and letters for over 25 years. Briefly trained at Parsons School of Design (NY), she developed her unique style of illustrated figures working with various crews on the streets and was a founding member of Earth Squad Productions (ESP), a crew featuring all women writers. As a style writer, she prefers to paint with aerosol, inks, and acrylics on metal, canvas, wood, and repurposed materials such as metallic foam insulation. She also teaches ceramics and applies her style writing into lowfire clay and stoneware.

**Zena**

Delilah Salgado, aka Zena, is a multidisciplinary artist and co-founder of Mujeres Mutantes. She studied painting, drawing, and video at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has painted graffiti murals at the international event Meeting of Styles in Chicago and at Be Girl Be in Minneapolis, Minnesota. When Delilah is not making art or planning her next project with Mujeres Mutantes she is teaching art or spending time with her family and friends in McKinley Park. Her use of bold vivid colors, organic designs, and female characters that embody a spiritual nature, define her signature style.s

**ZorZorZor**

Born and raised in Chicago, ZorZorZor first discovered her love and passion for street art while traveling abroad five years ago. With a love for finding beauty where one may least expect it, she began drawing and sticking everywhere she went and hasn’t stopped. Working with materials she finds along the way, ZorZorZor composes shapes and lines, creating mask-like faces and figures. Graphic black fluid lines define her large female pasted figures. Her work is intuitive, expressing hidden emotions she holds within herself. She frequently uses words and phrases to further draw the viewer into her works.

**Artist Talk**

**November 8, 2-3 pm**

Organizer Liz Lazdins will discuss the work with some of the artists

**Exhibition Reception**

**November 8, 3-5 pm**

Hyde Park**ARTCENTER**

5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 [www.hydeparkart.org](http://www.hydeparkart.org)

Hyde Park Art Center is a unique resource that advances contemporary visual art in Chicago by connecting artists and communities in unexpected ways. The Art Center is funded in part by the: Alphawood Foundation; Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; Field Foundation of Illinois; Harpo Foundation; Harper Court Arts Council; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Irving Harris Foundation; The Joyce Foundation; Leo S. Guthman Fund; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; Polk Bros. Foundation; Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust; and the generosity of people like you.

*Creatures from the Concrete*

Gallery 5

September 13, 2015 - January 10, 2016

Work by:

**Bel2  
Beloved  
Gloe**

**Monstrochika  
Eve Rivera  
Shan**

**Stef Skills  
Zena  
ZorZorZor**



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Public art takes many free forms that can be illegal or sanctioned, depending on society's viewpoint. Whether it's a mosaic wall on a high school campus, a memorial sculpture in a park, a vegetable garden, or graffiti on a watertower, to name a few, these are all equally important forms of expression necessary to promote culture and community. The exhibition *Creatures from the Concrete* tests the Art Center's ability and dedication to presenting new public art that has a tradition of being irrepressible, messy, politically provocative and visually innovative.

Recent exhibitions in Chicago such as *Outside In* (2013) and *Paint, Paste, Sticker: Chicago Street Art* (2014) brought much needed attention to street art in the contemporary art gallery. However, the noticeable absence of women artists in these shows led me to discuss a project with Liz Lazdins aka Beloved, who proposed a collaborative mural with eight women artists. Over the course of three weeks in Gallery 5 (both time and space providing a luxury rarely afforded to the artists who work undercover during the night), the artists added their signature styles to a composition mapped out by Lazdins. The finished site-specific work addresses key issues for each artist including, but not limited to, poverty, sexism, racism, immigration, civil rights, urban agriculture, education and access. Located in a space directly next to the newly-created teen lounge in the Guida Family Creative Wing, *Creatures from the Concrete* sets high standards for budding street artists, while encouraging the legitimization of the vibrant art form for all generations.

Allison Peters Quinn  
Director of Exhibition & Residency Programs

### Creatures From The Concrete

Concrete is solid- dividing the land from the sky, allowing nothing to grow. And so it is in our city. Many people are divided from the basic resources that allow a being to thrive- healthcare, education, nutrition, housing and any sense of control over their destiny and future. Often there is a world of opportunity just across the street or just across town, but it is unobtainable, like trying to run across a busy freeway with no overpass. We see that. We are aware of the drudgery and suffering of life, but we refuse to accept that there is nothing more. We are the creatures from the concrete. We create our own life and reality. We transform dead space with our colors, styles and words.

Concrete actually crumbles quite easily. The rain, dirt, wind, cold, heat, and weeds all do their part to erode and rebuild. Many creatures from the concrete are like these elements. Under a tough protective exterior we are actually supple, generous, beautiful and insuppressible. Against all odds we continue to survive and we continue to thrive. No matter how often a new slab of concrete is laid down we will crack it, creep under it, cover it and color it. We accept the challenge. Where we may be lacking in some areas, we rely on heart and instincts to guide us and we are quick learners. Along with our allies we build the most powerful memes and our calls are heard around the world.

Maybe from a distance you only see our flashy style, our egos and our disregard for the system and the institutions that so often have failed us. But today you can come closer. Nine of us have come in from the streets and taken over the gallery walls. Check our style- our craft. See the things that inspire us- The textures that make us what we are. Included are materials and texts of our co-conspirators. They are also concrete creatures who are pushing and persevering toward a more meaningful existence. Hopefully by looking closer you will know us better. Remember us as you travel the city. Our signs are there reminding you that you are not alone. Not alone. Someone else is here too, another creature much like you.

Thanks and Love...  
This creation is made with Allah aka Love aka The Most High in mind although any deficiencies are my own.  
Mad respect and love to eight amazing women whose contributions to this project were essential- Stef Skillz, Gloe, Shan, Bel2, Zena, Monstrochika, Zorzor and Eve Rivera. Gratitude to young artists Emani Woods and Adjua Pryor who assisted in the very important task of getting things done, Lavie Raven for making the crucial introductions and big hugs to



Detail of *Creatures From The Concrete* installation

our families and babysitters who always have our backs. Many, many thanks to Allison Peter Quinn for the invitation and everyone at the Hyde Park Art Center for being allies, respecting our craft and giving us the freedom and support to bring this vision to life.

Finally I'd like to mention those whose materials inspired us and ended up on the wall: Super LP Raven, Mujeres Mutantes, Stony Island, Ang 13, Dmnology, Assata Shakur, Maya Odim, Revolution Books, Kuumba Lynx, IMAN, Frida Khalo,Yollocalli, World Can't Wait, F.L.Y., Bazookafilm77, Patrick Lanham, Chi-Rock Nation, "We Are Everywhere", "First World Ha, Ha, Ha- The Zapatista Challenge", "Physicians of the Heart", "Graffiti Women" and the Quran. Many apologies to sources I neglected to mention- not all the materials origins are known.

Liz Lazdins  
Aka Beloved, lead organizer for Creature from the Concrete

### Contributing artists:

**Bel2**  
Bel2 has been painting for more than ten years. She is a Chicago native and is a teaching artist of graffiti workshops at Yollocalli. She is also the co-organizer of an all-female annual mural project called *Splash in Little Village*.

**Beloved**  
Raised on the South Side of Chicago, Liz Lazdins (aka Beloved) spent her youth and teen years immersed in Chicago's hip-hop community as a (graffiti) writer and rapper. She is a founding member of the Vision Village, one of the earliest hip-hop community centers in Chicago, and also was a member of the city-wide organization Chi-ROCK (Chapter 3 Allstars). Her paintings and stencils on canvas draw from moments of protest in recent history and are widely exhibited. Recently she contributed to the Graffiti Garden mural project along the Bloomington 606 bike trail and her work was exhibited in Graffiti Imagery In Contemporary Art at Northern Illinois University's Jack Olsen Gallery.

**Gloe**  
Gloria is driven by a combination of her competitive nature and rebellious spirit. She credits both old and new mentors providing her informal art training, influences from the street, and her tenacity for reading and studying history as being vital to her success. Her skill and dedication have opened doors for her to work as a lead teaching artist in organizations like The National Museum of Mexican Art's youth initiative-Yollocalli, Southwest Youth Collaborative, Arab American Action Network, Marwen, Matli, Progressive Arts Alliance in Cleveland and other community organizations throughout the country where she instructs as well as mentors youth through Graffiti focused programs. In 2006, with the support of Synergy, an all women hip hop collective she co-led and curated the first all-women graffiti mural in Chicago's South Side. Because Gloe's letter work was gender neutral her technical style and high caliber work paved a way for the graffiti women in Chicago. Gloria is a mother, a wife, archivist, wall scout and public artist who works with aerosol, acrylic, photography and wood carved prints. She is also a proud member of the Mujeres Mutantes Collective.

**Monstrochika**  
Naomi Martinez a.k.a. Monstrochika, was raised in the Logan Square neighborhood. She was first exposed to the art of painting and hand-craft as a teenager through Chicago's Marwen Foundation and Gallery 37 Apprentice Artist program and continued her studies at Columbia College for Advertising, Art & Design. Her work has exhibited locally and nationally thanks to Intermedia Arts' B-Girl Be Summit, Minneapolis and Yunity Art Collective, New York. She has been a Teaching Artist and works with local grass root arts organizations to bring murals and other public art projects to her community. She is co-founder of the all women artist collective Mujeres Mutantes (Mutant Women) and creator/curator of their annual iMUTANTES! Art Zine. Her work is inspired by Japanese animation and the Superflat movement, ndependent comics, nature and growing up in the Windy City. Mediums include traditional illustration, painting, zines, cloth doll-making and spray-painted mural work.



Detail of *Creatures From The Concrete* installation