

Related Events:

All events are free and open to the public.

Exhibition Reception

Sunday, July 19, 3 – 5pm

Pecha Kucha

Tuesday, July 21, 7 pm

This event will be hosted by the Hyde Park Art Center in Gallery 1. Sponsored by KDa Architects.

Art Thing

Tuesday, August 4, 6 - 7 pm

Join the curator to talk informally about the exhibition and answer questions from the audience.

Free Concerts in the Gallery

Saturday, September 12, 1 - 5 pm

Bands include: Twelve Modern, Mykel Boyd, Zelienople, Clarity, and others...

Hyde Park ARTCENTER

5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 www.hydeparkart.org

The Hyde Park Art Center is a not-for-profit organization that presents innovative exhibitions, primarily work by Chicago-area artists, and educational programs in the visual arts for children and adults of diverse backgrounds. The Center is funded in part by the Alphawood Foundation; The Chicago Community Trust; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council; The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Leo S. Guthman Fund; The Irving Harris Foundation; The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Joyce Foundation; JPMorgan Chase Foundation; The Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; The MacArthur Foundation; The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The Orbit Fund; Polk Bros. Foundation; The Clinton Family Fund; The Sara Lee Foundation; South East Chicago Commission; The Wallace Foundation; and the generosity of its members and friends.

Hyde Park**ARTCENTER**

Gallery 1, 2, the Cleve Carney Gallery,
and the Foyer Project Space

July 19 - September 20, 2009

Signs of the Apocalypse/Rapture
Curated by Front Forty Press

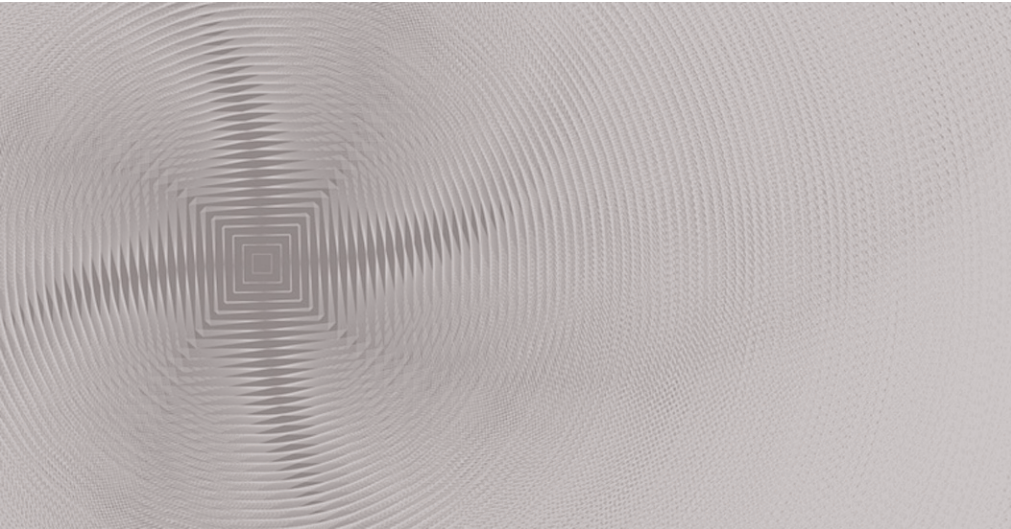


Image courtesy of David Castillo, 2008

Ricky Allman, Oksana Badrak, Kelly Barrie, Hisham Akira Bharoocha, Nina Bovasso, Sebastiaan Bremer, Christopher Bucklow, Simmons & Burke, Dan De Los Monteros, Eduardo DeSoignie, Jon Elliott, Lora Fosberg, Julie Heffernan, Cody Hudson, Jennifer J.L. Jones, Ellen Kooi, Soo Kim, Mark McGinnis, Julie Mehretu, Richard Misrach, David Opdyke, Emilio Perez, Jean-Pierre Roy, John Pranica, Alison Ruttan, Carrie Schneider, Andrew Schoultz, Matthew Schreiber, Erika Somogyi, John Sparagana, Doug and Mike Starn, Michael Tarbi, Nicola Verlato, and Caleb Weintraub

The turn of the twenty-first century coincided with a barrage of current events that severely impacted the global psyche. Apocalyptic "signs" ranging from terrorism, climate change, geopolitical conflicts, religious fundamentalism, and other cultural tensions confronted people at alarming rates and continue to do so today. This thematic trend also appears in the con-



Julie Heffernan, *Self Portrait as Fireworks*, 2004, oil on canvas, 52 x 66 inches

temporary art made in the past decade and is explored by Chicago-based independent publishing group Front Forty Press in a 2008 publication titled *Signs of Apocalypse/Rapture*. The current exhibition of the same name at the Hyde Park Art Center highlights select artists from the book who address intense transformative experiences in response to the contemporary climate.

Change is the primary factor that determines whether a situation becomes disastrous or delightful and the exhibition provokes an individual consideration of these extremes. The concepts of apocalypse and rapture

both point to an experience of particular intensity considered here as "agents of change". The notion of an ultimate end can also give the impression that we are about to become something new and transcend the everyday (if even for a moment). For instance, birth is a painful process from which comes the newly arrived baby. Death is another shift, one that we hope leads to a transformation to a better place. Often in the course of life we are compelled to make serious decisions that will impact our future. Which agents of change do you want to strive for, to experience and/or avoid?

In this exhibition, Front Forty Press aims to present multiple viewpoints and variations on the two categories of apocalypse and rapture. Both concepts have a wide range of secular ties as well as social or popular significance. Additionally, the deep history of these two subject matters manifested in the visual arts, music, and literature (think Hieronymus Bosch, Dante, or Beethoven for example) cannot be ignored either. On the negative side, one can find contemporary imagery of the "end of the world" coming from outer space, from humanity itself, folklore, religion, or even in an abstract sense of impending doom. The positive side of the duality focuses on the experience of elated joy perhaps via medita-



Sebastiaan Bremer, *Jump into the Fire*, 2008, ink on lamda paper, 15 3/4 x 23 1/2 inches

tion, spirituality, sex, the arts, and nature, to name a few. There are so many stimuli that can bring about rapturous or apocalyptic feelings; it really depends on how you choose to interpret the definition.

Signs of the Apocalypse/Rapture occupies the entire main floor of the Art Center: Gallery 1, 2, the Cleve Carney Gallery and the foyer project space. The exhibition layout in Gallery 1 (central gallery) makes use of the graphic forward slash (/) between *Apocalypse/Rapture* in the title. The space is bisected by an angled black wall that brings the forward slash to life in physical form in the center of the space. As the rest of the rectangular room has white walls, the contrast further implies a duality. Sight lines from the front and back entrance of the Art Center also encourage a cyclic experience of the exhibition.

Each artist in the exhibition offers an interpretation of apocalypse and rapture, resulting in a body of artwork replete with diverse and engaging relationships. Ranging in size and media, the works were created by both local and international artists at various stages in their careers. For example, Simmons & Burke use pop culture iconography to create towering tableaux punctuated by randomized audio samples that engage multiple senses while Nina Bovasso's large painting on paper looms in the space with its expanding black shapes contrasting magnificent pink bubbles. Christopher Bucklow's photograph of a child made entirely of light contrasts the submerged televisions and other "tidal debris" in Jon Elliott's dark aquatic landscape. Carrie Schneider's self-portrait shows a blissful connection with the earth while Ricky Allman spins us in a painted rainbow of centrifugal force with an ominous blasting center. Michael Tarbi's painting, simply called *The End*, shows a stark skull with a white foreground and black background in a play on classic iconography. These works are just some examples of how the artists in the show blur the lines between destruction and transcendence.



Kelly Barrie, *Astral Field#3*, 2007, light jet print, 43 x 55 inches

In the end, you are the judge here. Is your Rapture aligned with ice cream, orgasm, or heading toward the light? Is your Apocalypse a man-made Armageddon, the fiery wrath of an angry god or other supernatural power? Perhaps none of the above. Hopefully the art contained in this exhibition will inspire reflection upon one's beliefs and desires as they relate to transformative agents of change.

Doug Fogelson
Director / Curator
Front Forty Press