

## **Mystic Pizza**

**Lisa Rybovich Crallé, Scott Hewicker, Courtney Johnson and Tamra Seal**

January 16 - February 21, 2015

Opening reception: Friday, January 16, 7 - 11pm

What makes an artist or artwork distinct to the Bay Area? As much of the art world trends further towards sleekness, ultra-professionalism, and formalism, we must consider what vestiges remain of the ragged, messy and informal aesthetics that have been associated with so much of local art history. Mystic Pizza looks to Bay Area Funk art of 1957-67, a celebrated but clearly antiquated legacy, for context.

The artists in Mystic Pizza do not count Wiley, Conner, Brown, or Arneson as major influences, and they have differing opinions on which Funk artists and works they even like. They are, however, four weirdos making some of the oddest and most innovative work today in the Bay Area, fulfilling the same loose-fitting, label-defying ethos of Funk, decades ago. Their works are just as exciting and relevant within their own practice(s) as they are within their art community and the art world at large.

Each artist has been asked to exhibit all-new works, sidestepping their recent oeuvre in favor of freshness and immediacy. Scott Hewicker, an accomplished painter in his third decade of art-making in San Francisco, presents an improvisational painting of layered still life tableaux. Courtney Johnson's fantastic abstractions in black ink are as stunning as they are optically overwhelming. Lisa Rybovich Crallé's leather sculptures beg for both decadence and humility. And Tamra Seal diverts from recent explorations of color theory to present more representational, sensory, and textured works.

**Lisa Rybovich Crallé** received her MFA from the University of California, Davis in 2011 and a Bachelors of Liberal Arts from Sarah Lawrence College in 2004, also studying at the San Francisco Art Institute and the New

York Studio School. Her work has been exhibited in the US and abroad, including exhibitions at di Rosa, The Lab, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Pro Arts, Field Projects (New York), Roots & Culture (Chicago), Weekend (LA) Proof Gallery (Boston), and the Dublin City Gallery (Dublin, IRE). Crallé has held numerous residencies, including Arteles, Ox-Bow, ART342, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. She is a project recipient of the 2014 Alternative Exposure award as well as the 2011 Robert Arneson Award.

**Scott Hewicker** is an artist, writer and musician based in San Francisco. He has an MFA from Stanford University and has exhibited his work at 2nd Floor Projects, Gallery 16, Jack Hanley Gallery, Deitch Projects, Galleri Christina Wilson (Copenhagen), the ICA Philadelphia and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Other projects include Hauntology, an exhibition at the Berkeley Museum co-curated with Larry Rinder and the book Good Times, Bad Trips, edited and illustrated with Cliff Hengst. He has also played in bands such as The Alps and Aero-Mic'd. Hewicker has taught at Stanford and the California College of the Arts.

**Courtney Johnson** is an artist living and working in San Francisco. She received her MFA from California College of the Arts in 2011. Her work has been exhibited throughout the Bay Area and LA. She has an upcoming exhibition at 2nd Floor Projects in San Francisco with Gregory Kaplowitz and Nancy White.

**Tamra Seal** received her MFA from The San Francisco Art Institute in 2013. In 2014 alone, she exhibited at Ever Gold, Pro Arts Gallery, Interface Gallery, Studio 110 Projects and Kathleen Cullen (Brooklyn). Her work has recently been selected for juried exhibitions by curators such as Dena Beard, Glen Helfand, and Catherine Clark.

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