

Brooklyn Art Revealed in the First BRIC Biennial

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by Hamptons Art Hub Staff

Downtown Brooklyn artists are spotlighted in a new biennial opening this weekend. “BRIC Biennial: Volume I, Downtown Edition” presents 27 artists selected by a team of curators. It takes place at BRIC House in Brooklyn from September 20 through December 15, 2014. An initiative of BRIC, the “BRIC Biennial” is the first of a series of anticipated curated biennials designed to reveal artists and art making taking place in Brooklyn, according to organizers. Volume I includes art exhibitions, programming and a special project installed at the Downtown Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University, a short walk away.

“The inaugural BRIC Biennial exhibition reflects the diversity of voices and perspectives that connect Downtown Brooklyn artists to their communities,” wrote BRIC President Leslie G. Schultz in an exhibition release. “BRIC House, as an anchor for contemporary art in the Brooklyn Cultural District, is the perfect place for an artist survey which will both shine a spotlight on extraordinary talent in our immediate environment, and enable Brooklyn-based artists to share their work with their neighbors as well as the thousands of visitors that come to BRIC House each week.”

[BRIC Biennial](#) presents artists working in a variety of different media and is curated to demonstrate the significance of Brooklyn as an art making community, according to organizers. Each anticipated edition of the BRIC Biennial will focus on different geographic neighborhoods, providing the curators an opportunity to reveal the diversity of talent within the geographic focus presented. “BRIC Biennial: Volume 1, Downtown Edition” presents 27 artists based in Downtown Brooklyn and adjacent neighborhoods including Fort Greene and Boerum Hill

The exhibiting artists span generations, cultural backgrounds and work with diverse artistic formats and themes.

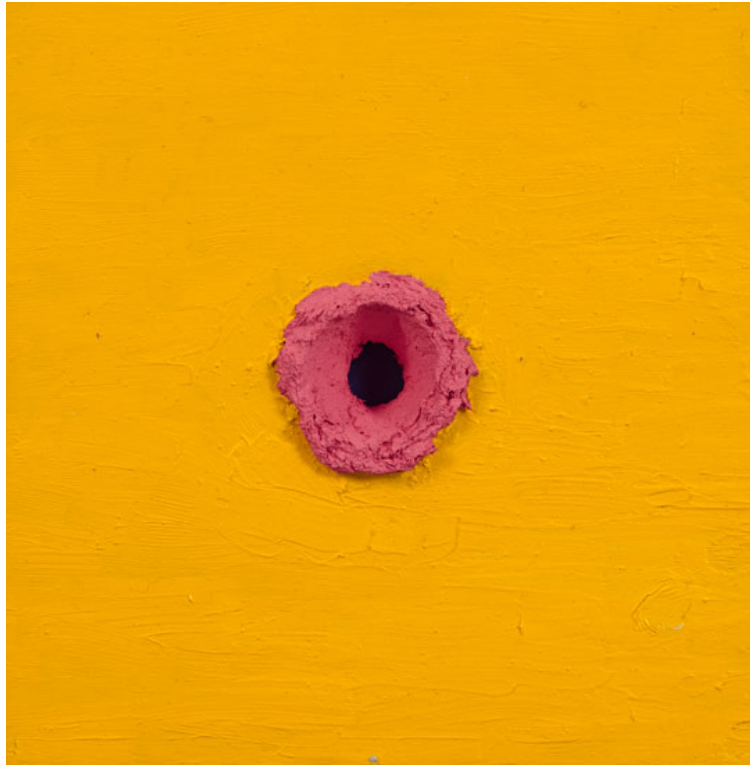
Exhibiting artists include Fariba Salma Alam, Richard Baker, Katie Bell, Isak Berbic, Ben Thorp Brown, Youmna Chlala, Vince Contarino, Joe Diebes, Seth Michael Forman, Scherezade Garcia, Valérie Hallier, Nene Humphrey, Nina Katchadourian, Despo Magoni, Karyn Olivier, ruby onyinyechi amanze, Jenny Polak and Dread Scott, Eleanor Ray, Wendy Richmond, Niv Rozenberg, Jean Shin, Jenna Spevack, Daniel Terna, Penelope Umbrico, Daniel Wiener, and Martha Wilson



“Missing Pieces” by Vince Contarino, 2014. Photo by Etienne Frossard.

The show is curated by Elizabeth Ferrer, BRIC Vice President, Contemporary Art, Jenny Gerow, BRIC Assistant Curator and guest curators Fawz Kabra and Leslie Kerby. The Biennial will be installed on the first floor of BRIC House, including the main gallery, the Project Room, hallways and other spaces. In addition, a large sculpture by Katie Bell is installed at the Humanities Gallery of Long Island University’s Downtown Brooklyn campus at University Plaza.

“We hope that the exhibition provides our audience with an intriguing look at some of the ideas and approaches that distinguish art making at this point of time, in one of world’s most significant creative capitals,” stated Ferrer in an exhibition release.



“Backstroke Sunburn (for LEB)” by Richard Baker, 2013.
Oil on board, 7.5 x 7.5 inches.

For the first edition, broad themes were revealed in the artists selected. They include issues concerning land and landscape (in Brooklyn and beyond); the body as nexus of cultural identity and depiction in imagined narratives; notions of history and memory; and abstraction.

For instance, ruby onyinyechi amanze, a Brooklyn-based artist of Nigerian birth and British upbringing, creates art influenced and inspired by the culture hybridity, according to BRIC. In addition to exhibiting work in the main gallery, she has created a site-specific mural installed in the café area. amanze has exhibition nationally and internationally. She is a 2014 artist-in-residence at BRIC.

Scherezade Garcia, a Brooklyn artist born in the Dominican Republic, will create an installation made from copies of the Village Voice that aims to symbolize cultural separation and freedom. Her mixed media works frequently deals with the immigrant experience and the Caribbean diaspora. Garcia has exhibited in solo shows and group exhibitions nationally and internationally. They include exhibitions held at the Museum of Modern Art in Santo Domingo, the El Museo del Barrio in New York City, Yale University and multiple biennials.

Jenna Spevack, whose art practice is couched in sustainable design, created a binaural audio installation presented in a reclaimed wood outhouse. The darkened / soundproof structure aims to simulate the restorative experience of solitude within a natural soundscape, according to BRIC. Her work has been exhibited internationally. In New York, her work has been shown at Mixed Greens, Hendershot Gallery, White Columns, Art in General, Artists Space, Dowling College’s Anthony Giordano Gallery on Long Island.



"Jenny Polak and Dread Scott, The Great Unconformity (Video Still)," 2014.

BRIC House is a 40,000 square-foot arts and media facility located in Downtown Brooklyn and the home of BRIC. Opening in October 2013, BRIC House includes a flexible performance space, a contemporary art gallery, artist workspace, and multiple television and media production studios. Designed by Brooklyn-based architect Thomas Leeser, BRIC House aims to be a home and cultural center for artists and audiences and a place where emerging and established artists can make art that deepens their practice, according to the website.

The curators for the first BRIC Biennial are equal parts BRIC staff and guest curation. Ferrer, affiliated with BRIC since 2007, is a longtime curator. She has presented exhibitions at Wallach Gallery at Columbia University; the Americas Society, New York; the Austin Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Institution, and exhibitions for the American Federation of Arts and Independent Curators International.

Jenny Gerow, BRIC Assistant Curator, has worked and contributed to exhibitions for the International Center of Photography and the Detroit Institute of Art.

Fawz Kabra is currently assistant curator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Abu Dhabi Project. Previously, she worked with the Emirates Foundation, Abu Dhabi and managed public programs at the Cultural Department, TDIC, Abu Dhabi. Fawz worked with the Park Avenue Armory for WS: Paul McCarthy in 2013 and was the curator of Art Dubai Projects.

Leslie Kerby is a curator and artist who's lived and worked in Brooklyn for the past 35 years. She is

a resident curator at 308 at 156 Project Artspace and holds board positions with BRIC and Norte Maar and is a past chair of Kentler International Drawing Space, Brooklyn.

BASIC FACTS: “**BRIC Biennial: Volume I, Downtown Edition**” is on view from September 20 to December 15, 2014. An Opening Reception was held on September 19 from 7 to 9 p.m. BRIC Arts is located at 647 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217. www.bricartsmedia.org. Gallery hours are Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. A BRIC Biennial catalog is available for \$8 or \$5 for BRIC House members.

PROGRAMMING is planned for September 23, October 14, November 4 and December 13. Curator’s Tours are also in the works. For updates and details, visit www.bricartsmedia.org.