



Seattle's Out of Sight Satellite in a Wider Orbit for 2016

August 23, 2016
by Amber Cortes

The gift of time is a wonderful thing. For Vital 5 Productions, the team of curators behind [Out of Sight](#)—the largest and most ambitious satellite exhibit happening during the [Seattle Art Fair](#) this year—it was a godsend.

“Last year we were given keys to the space only six weeks in advance,” exhibition producer and curator Sierra Stinson said in a recent interview, “so we knew we had to hustle.”

Dealing with last year's short notice, Out of Sight founder and curator Greg Lundgren and Stinson immediately reached out to a roster of local Seattle artists who rose to the challenge.

Given a longer window this year, the two had an opportunity to further expand the curatorial team. The Vital 5 curatorial and production team for Out of Sight this year included, in addition to Lundgren and Stinson: curator Minh Nguyen; Beth Sellars, curator and installation; Julia Fryett, curator, film, video and new media; Molly Sides, curator, dance and performance; Scott Lawrimore, exhibition caretaker; and Justen Waterhouse, exhibition manager.

The additional time also allowed the Out of Sight organizers to broaden their range, assembling an impressive roster of more than 100 artists for the satellite fair.

“What's been so wonderful this year,” Stinson explained, “is to have the time to branch out further than Seattle, and represent more of a survey of the Pacific Northwest. To really find artists that not everybody would know, and become a resource for information about local artists in conjunction with the fair.”

The third floor raw space at the historic King Street Station venue has come far, too. In February, the city designated the station building as a permanent cultural space, in no small measure because of the efforts to launch the Out of Sight fair and a strong program of other themed exhibitions during the year.

Because they are independent, the Vital 5 team has the freedom to choose from a wealth of local artists not represented by galleries, and also not to feel constrained by the limitations of four white walls in a booth.

“I've been called anti-institutional and that's not true!” Stinson said. “To me, Vital 5 is its own institution. Out of Sight is becoming its own institution. Here you are not faced with: buy, buy, buy. But people *are* buying work here. In a way we're just trying to fill in the holes of what we see missing. And it's less about a conventional gallery structure.”

Walking into the King Street space on opening night, that difference was palpable. The vibe was more like a loft party than a gallery. DJ's from TUF, a local all-female and female-identified art and music crew, spun electronic music from high up in the rafters to the crowd below.

And the art was the kind of edgy fare that art lovers have come to expect at this kind of gathering: a live go-go dancer accompanied artist [Clyde Peterson](#) and [Kerstin Graudin's](#) "Queer Pledge Poster"; dance troupe AU Collective injected personal history and hip-hop moves live into the hallways and corners of the space; and a VR spa by [Portland Immersive Media](#) invited participants to lay down and experience "experimental wellness."



Go-go dancer accompanying artist Clyde Peterson and Kerstin Graudin's "Queer Pledge Poster." Photo by Amber Cortes.



Portland Immersive Media Group. Photo by Amber Cortes.

Fair goers were also treated to representation of many works by LGBT artists and artists of color: [Ari Glass's](#) paintings depicting narrative mythologies of life in South Seattle; [Christopher Paul Jordan's](#) site-specific mural of young African-American children at a table; artist [Modou Dieng's](#) mixed media commentaries on history, race and urbanism; Tlingit artist [Alison Bremner's](#) carved paddles and potlatch drums blending traditional native art and powerful social commentary; and [Demian DinéYazhi's](#) text murals opposing institutional structures of oppression affecting indigenous peoples.



"Kings Day in Rainer Valley" and "King Donuts" by Ari Glass. Photo by Amber Cortes.



"Untitled 2" by Christopher Paul Jordan. Site-Specific mural. Photo by Amber Cortes.



“Brown Hall” by Modou Dieng, 2012. Photo by Amber Cortes.

One of the Out of Sight centerpieces was [Paul Rucker’s](#) “American Power,” featuring a triangle of mannequins wearing KKK uniforms made from traditional African fabrics and camouflage patterns. Venture into the triangle and a glass case displays disturbing, racist ephemera from the turn of the century, with visceral and political implications that couldn’t be ignored. This is the kind of work that asks to be faced and processed on the spot, giving an emotional immediacy to the space.



“American Power” by Paul Rucker. Photo by Amber Cortes.

While Stinson said the intention of Out of Sight differs from the goals of the Seattle Art Fair, it’s complementary to have both. “They feed each other,” she says. “And you want that.”

“They need each other,” echoed Seattle gallery owner Sharon Arnold of [Bridge Productions](#), which was represented at the Seattle Art Fair. “I think Out of Sight could stand alone, but it wouldn’t have as much gravity without the Seattle Art Fair, because people are excited to have a satellite event to check out and see what’s beneath the surface. And Seattle Art Fair wouldn’t have as much momentum if Seattle wasn’t rising up to meet it.”

It seems that both Out of Sight and the Seattle Art Fair have reached a maturation of sorts: they’re bigger, broader, more expansive, more polished.

“I think last year people were kind of hedging their bets or withholding their emotions or their excitement; people were really being skeptical last year,” Arnold said in a separate interview. “But now, they’ve seen what’s possible. And I think there’s so much buzz: my friends in L.A. and New York are thinking about coming out. So people are talking about it. It’s a really nice spotlight to have on us right now.”

BASIC FACTS: Out of Sight 2016, on view August 4 to August 28, 2016 at King Street Station, Seattle, WA. www.outofsight.space.

Copyright 2016 Hamptons Art Hub LLC. All rights reserved.