



BEYOND STREET ART

February 1, 2018 through March 7, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Greenwich, CT: In the first exhibition of its kind for Greenwich, *Beyond Street Art* brings the explosive energy of the street to Flinn Gallery. Curated by Ruth Sutcliffe, the exhibition features the work of five prominent urban artists: **Swoon, Lady Pink, Billy the Artist, Paul Deo and Blake Jamieson**. Bursting with a supercharged array of voices, the exhibition showcases the movement's range and impact, its freshness, dynamism and continuing relevance. There will be a series of talks allowing the public to engage with several of the artists over the course of exhibition.

Street Art traces its origins back to the Seventies' urban graffiti of New York City's outer boroughs and from there spread like wildfire to urban centers all over the world. Originally the product of disenfranchised urban youths who illegally spray-painted their "tags" or "handles" in highly visible public spaces and on subway trains, it soon developed into a fringe urban phenomenon with its own set of rules and devoted followers. In the Eighties a coterie of lower Manhattan artists adopted graffiti's guerilla-style approach for its immediacy, as a means to engage directly with the public and circumvent traditional art institutions and venues. These artists began moving beyond purely word-based graffiti, incorporating cartoons, photographs and popular imagery often referencing alternative lifestyles and cultures. The art world soon took note and "Street Art" was celebrated as an exciting new form of self-expression enabling even marginalized voices to be heard. Today, works by Basquiat, Haring and Banksy are very highly valued and sought after. But beyond these famous examples are other highly recognized street artists who continue reaching out to the public, creating and affirming community identity, solidarity and pride.

Beyond Street Art highlights the work of artists who focus on, but also beyond the unsanctioned urban spaces we normally associate with Street Art. These artists have expanded their palettes beyond spray paint, incorporating brushes, stickers, stencils, wheat pasted prints, digital imagery and commercial graphics into their varied arsenals. In addition, through their proactive involvement with their communities, often drawing them into the creative process, they reinforce the identity and solidarity of the groups they work with. This exhibition showcases several new directions being taken by this young, fresh and very vibrant movement with provocative new work that speaks to us all.

Lady Pink was born in Ecuador, but raised in NYC. In 1979 she started writing graffiti and soon was well known as the only female capable of competing with the boys in the graffiti subculture. Pink painted subway trains from the years 1979-1985. In 1982 she had a starring role in the motion picture "Wild Style". That role and her other significant contributions to graffiti have made her a cult figure in the hip-hop subculture. Today she continues to make activist graffiti based works and large-scale murals. She focuses on the empowerment of women and mentoring teens. Based in NY, she visits schools and teaches students about the power of art and how it can serve as a medium for self-expression and community pride.

Swoon was born in Connecticut and studied art at Pratt in Brooklyn. She still lives and works in Brooklyn. Swoon's work is socially minded, often with an activist, progressive bent. She specializes in life-size wheat-pasted prints and paper cutouts of human figures which she arranges in large scale murals or three-dimensional installations and open-air performance art. She has been exhibited in major museums, including MoMA and was featured in a 2014 solo show at the Brooklyn Art Museum. Cincinnati's Center for Contemporary Art is currently hosting a major retrospective survey of her work (until 2/25/18).

Deo seeks to harness the communal power of imagination in the spiritual, making video-based multimedia projects, murals, sculptures and canvas works. In his words, his art "evokes the collective, drawing upon ancestral oral tradition as well as threads of modern mythology in order to establish a space for communal dialogue". He is known for his innovative mixed-media murals, including the renowned Planet Harlem in NYC. He is currently breaking ground as an artist in residency at Harvard University collaborating with art and tech departments to produce a mixed-reality, digital mural to be unveiled in 2018. Paul & his family reside in Harlem, NY.

Finally, **Billy the Artist** and **Blake Jamieson** market and often situate their work in the new "Street", working in social media and other digital cyber-spheres that comprise today's most dynamic and democratic public spaces. These works are often customizable and unabashedly commercial, reflecting the new dominance of e-commerce and trade, and the reality of the marketplace as a primary force of human interaction.

Beyond Street Art opens with a reception from 6-8pm on February 1st and runs until March 7th.

A series of artists talks will take place on Saturdays at 2pm, with dates as follows:

2/3: Blake Jamieson: "Using Social Media to Promote Art"

2/10: Lady Pink: "The Queen of Street Art"

2/24: Paul Deo: "Paul Deo and His NYC Murals"

2/24: Tax Free Day

3/3: Billy the Artist: "His Art and Objects Of Art"

Art Lounge welcomes the public to the gallery on February 2nd from 6 to 7:45pm immediately preceding the Friday Night Film screening in the Cole Auditorium at 8pm of *Funny Face featuring Audrey Hepburn*.

Flinn Gallery is located on the second floor of the Greenwich Library. The gallery is sponsored by the Friends of the Greenwich Library and is open daily Mon.- Sat. 10-5, Thurs. until 8, and Sun. 1-5. All works are for sale.

To learn more about the exhibit visit: <http://flinngallery.com/beyond-street-art/>
FOR INQUIRIES, IMAGES OR TO SET UP A TOUR OR INTERVIEW: PR@flinngallery.com