

Art links Brooklyn, Kingston

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Slideshow image: A detail from a work by Shakhed Hadaya.

A new group of artists, called the Brooklyn-Kingston Exchange Project, will be shown for the first time at Gallery One Eleven in the Shirt Factory. Although most live in that hippest of all New York boroughs, they represent a global community, with some members coming from Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Europe. The show, which consists of videos, paintings, installations, sculptures and performances, opens this Saturday, Sept. 10 (the reception is from 5 to 8 p.m.) and will run through September 25.

It's more evidence that Kingston, which will host the second annual O+ (read as O-Positive) festival showcasing exciting art and music, much of it Brooklyn-born, is on the cusp of becoming a dynamic center of culture vying with the most forward-looking of urban centers.

The curator of the Cornell show is Brooklynite Meir Gal, an artist, lecturer and screenwriter who teaches art theory and studio art at the School of Visual Arts. With one exception, all of the 17 artists are his former students and have continued their explorations by participating in a "visual literacy and visual studies workshop" founded by Gal.

The Kingston connection is Exchange member Lynn Herring, who graduated from SVA in 2008 and has rented a studio at the Shirt Factory, 77 Cornell St., since moving to Woodstock with her husband in 2010.



Lynn Herring, at her Shirt Factory studio.

Herring, who will be showing her videos, two of which will be projected in "isolation theaters" she builds — the floating black boxes function as individual viewing stations — also is overseeing promotion of the show and built the elegant website, www.galleryoneeleven.com. The exhibition was made possible by the donation of free gallery space by building owner Mike Piazza — a type of benefit that's next to impossible in the Big Apple, though Gal said he would like to bring the show to Brooklyn eventually.

Herring organized two previous shows at the Shirt Factory, but this is the first exhibition curated by Gal and features the work of the Exchange. Judging by images of each artist's work on the website, the exhibition will live up to its billing by Gal as an exploration and analysis of the "intangible and unfathomable aspects of capitalism." He elaborated: "Capitalism is a form of anarchy, in which the hope of liberation is captive to mostly invisible market forces, which overshadow and determine every single human activity and interaction. When the 20-somethings look at the political, financial, and social upheaval that is taking place in the U.S. and around the world, they are trying to figure out what is their position in society.

"Given the barrage of images manufactured by media, the public is already hijacked. Artists have to figure out a way to work with audiences already mesmerized and indoctrinated. They need to create images that arrest its attention and expose the social amnesia and anesthesia that typifies this period. For contemporary artists, the challenge is to use images that elucidate how real lived experience has moved into the realm of representation."

Disembodied chat and time's transience

The artists have responded in inspired, multiple ways. Instead of cuts of meat, Warren Lewis packages dead animals, fur intact, in the standard plastic-wrapped yellow supermarket packages, with a tag stamped with the date, price per pound, and price. Lilly Gist, perhaps inspired by a scathing critique of the art world entitled *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark*, has constructed branding irons bearing the names of influential galleries. Shakhed Hadaya is two years into an eight-year project to create a machine showing the mechanics of language and will be exhibiting graphic "drawings for the engineer" in which pairs of pages are covered in spidery, multicolored script and sketches of machine parts.

Besides Herring, the other Kingston-based artist participating in the show is Doug Van Nort, an experimental musician and digital music researcher who will collaborate with composer and musician Patrick Monte on a musical improvisation entitled "Disembodied Chat." Herring connected with Van Nort through Pauline Oliveros, whose Deep Listening Space is a fellow tenant at the Shirt Factory. That kind of Kingston-Brooklyn collaboration is welcome, said Gal.

Community found

Gal, who moved to the U.S. from Europe in the mid 1980s, describes his art, which combines photography, film, language, and drawing and painting, as "a fusion of the conceptual and political that analyzes social history" — a philosophy that obviously served as a guiding principle in his selection of artists. "They experienced the financial meltdown when they are 18 or 9 and even though most don't understand the mechanics of it, they understand intuitively how it defined a period in their lives," he said.

Compared to large cities, smaller communities, such as Kingston, can be more productive venues for artists, Gal and Herring said. Besides her large, affordable studio and the free gallery space, Herring said getting articles in the local press was one advantage of being in Kingston. "It's impossible to get people to pay attention in the city," she said.

She's also grateful for the help she's received from individuals, including a music producer based in Saugerties who helped edit her videos for a very reasonable fee. "There is a community here, but you have to find it," she said. (She acknowledged, however, that making a living here is difficult. To pay the bills, she runs a boutique ad agency from the loft during the day.)

Gal, who's exhibited his work in Wales, Switzerland, Israel and other countries, said some of his most positive experiences occurred in smaller communities. "It's amazing to show your work in these places, which are not saturated with endless cultural spectacles and the people aren't jaded or skeptical. It's very open and unique."