Team America: Artists As Cultural Ambassadors

by brian boucher 10/18/11

A new program of the U.S. State Department is betting that visual artists in residence in foreign countries will sway public opinion and foster friendly views of the United States. Today, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of State, announced the 15 American artists they have selected from an open call to participate in their new smARTpower initiative.

Starting in May, the chosen artists will travel to countries around the globe for 6- to 12-week periods to create public artworks in a $1-million, two-year pilot program to be administered by the Bronx Museum of the Arts (BxMA).

In a post-9/11 age, the state department's cultural diplomacy budget has ballooned from $1.6 million in 2001 to $11.75 million in 2010. And as holder of the purse strings, the State Department reserves final approval over the artists selected for the program as well as their projects.

The artists, along with their destinations and partner organizations:

Duke Riley of Brooklyn, New York - Shanghai, China
Partner Organization: Arthub Asia

Chris "Daze" Ellis of New York, New York - Quito, Ecuador
Partner Organization: Cero Inspiración

Arturo Lindsay of Atlanta, Georgia - Cairo, Egypt
Partner Organization: Medrar/Nagla Samir

Rochelle Feinstein of New York, New York - Accra, Ghana
Partner Organization: Foundation for Contemporary Art

Caroline Woolard of Brooklyn, New York - New Delhi, India
Partner Organization: KHOJ

Miguel Luciano of Brooklyn, New York - Nairobi and Dadaab Province, Kenya
Partner Organization: Kuuna Trust

Samuel Gould of Minneapolis, Minnesota - Pristina, Kosovo
Partner Organization: Stacion Center for Contemporary Art

Think Tank (comprised of Christopher Robbins, John Ewing, and Maria del Carmen Montoya) of Little Neck, New York; Roxbury, Massachusetts; and Convalis, Oregon - Beirut, Lebanon
Partner Organization: Arab Image Foundation

Pepón Osorio of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - Kathmandu, Nepal
Partner Organization: Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre

Brett Cook of Berkeley, California - Lagos, Nigeria
Partner Organization: Wy Art Foundation

Art Jones of Bronx, New York - Karachi, Pakistan
Partner Organization: Vasl

Mary Mattingly of New York, New York - Manila, The Philippines
Partner Organization: Green Papaya Art Projects

Xaviere Simmons of Brooklyn, New York - Colombo, Sri Lanka
Partner Organization: Theertha International Artists Collective.

Kabir Carter of Brooklyn, New York - Istanbul, Turkey
Partner Organization: PSi/Interdisciplinary Project Space

Seth Augustine and Rachel Shachar of Los Angeles, California - Caracas, Venezuela
Partner Organization: Centro Cultural Chacao
In his sculpture and installation, Eli Hansen, who lives and works in Taco...

**ALSO**

Stuart Hawkins, Rooftop Garden, 2010

Nick van Woert, Haruspex, 2010

**Eli Hansen**, *I've Made a Lot of Love Out of This One*, 2010

Mixed Media

Image courtesy the artist and Macarone Gallery.