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DESPERATION TO ARRIVE IN LOS ANGELES

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The Audacity of Desperation, an art exhibit that has traveled through rural Illinois and New York City, opens in Los Angeles Sunday October 26, 2008 at Sea and Space Explorations. **The show runs October 26 through November 16, 2008.**

Organized by Jessica Lawless and Sarah Ross, more than 40 socially engaged local and international artists address the depressed state of politics, anti-war activism, and the economy accrued by eight years of the current Bush administration. Taking to heart the idea that random acts of kindness are central to social change, each artist has made a work of art in multiple editions visitors to the exhibition can take away. *The Audacity of Desperation* creates a free exchange of ideas that challenges the culture at large as well as the international art market of which Los Angeles has become a central location.

The exhibition includes a series of events addressing the Nov. 4th elections:

Sunday October 26: *Exchange Rate: 2008* presents performances in the gallery space. *Exchange Rate: 2008* is an international performance exchange organized by artist Elana Mann in response to the US presidential elections and includes artists from Brazil, Denmark, Israel, Mexico, South Korea, Ukraine, and the US among others. **6-8pm**

Saturday Nov. 1: *Evil Dead 8: the end is near, a Day of the Dead inspired memorial for the final days of the Bush administration.* Celebrating the end of one evil while not knowing what is lurking ahead, *Evil Dead 8* includes skill sharing, music, dancing, a bookmobile project created by Irina Contreras and Kelly Besser called *The Miracle*, and guerilla interventions by AK-Ami and her mother Maleeka Kobrah. **8pm**

Tuesday November 4: Election returns will be projected in the gallery with several of the participating artists present and Lee Azzarello and Sarah Kanouse "Voices of America" internet radio project will be broadcast. **5pm on**

Saturday November 8: *FOCUS Group Findings -- What Now?*

Jeff Foye and Gordon Winiemko, present their findings from focus groups staged this summer as part of Trade and Row's Campaign Trail project. The duo solicited ideas about ways artists can reclaim their power in the political process. Stay for a dance party following the presentation. **8pm**

Sunday November 9: A screening of video works that address the numerous political disasters, violations and obfuscations of the past eight years. Curated by Nancy Popp. **6-8pm**

Sunday November 16: "So now what?" or "HOLY FUCK! NOW WHAT?" Whether it is Obama/Biden or McCain/Palin, immediately after the elections we're still in debt, looking for work, without universal health care, and occupying Iraq. Adam Overton and Nancy Popp facilitate conversation and activities that will lead to concrete actions to make change in our own communities. **2-5pm**

Why are we so desperate?

The Audacity of Desperation is a collaborative response to the reality that our political system is fraught with inequities and dangerous contradictions. In November, 2008, "the worst president in history" will finally be voted out of the White House. How do we make sense of a presidential race where a black man who rose to prominence as a community organizer faces criticism for elitism, where a rich white woman is a working class hero, and where the 18 million cracks in the glass ceiling did not resuscitate feminism, but instead left us with a gun-toting, anti abortion, evangelical pin-up girl turned hockey mom VP candidate?

Even as Barack Obama successfully engages a younger generation, our desperation grows. For many of us born in the wake of the assassinations of JFK, RFK, MLK and Malcolm X, our first political memory falls somewhere between Nixon's resignation and Bill Clinton's lies about having sex with Monica Lewinsky. Belief in revolutionary change through electoral politics is a hard sell. And yet, Obama's seductive oratory style also captures the hopes of our generation, instilling nostalgia for social movements we can't remember. So what do we do when the veneer has dulled?

In Los Angeles, the events accompanying *The Audacity of Desperation* facilitate the question of "what now" while also exploring possibilities for action. Throughout it's run, *The Audacity of Desperation* explores ways desperation itself can be re-imagined as a tool for political organizing. We ask: How do we connect communities, select alliances, and establish new coalitions as old models of protest based on identity are no longer useful? Can we wallow in our desperation and still find creative ways to make systemic changes on our terms?

Artists in the exhibit:

AK-Ami, William Brown, David Sanchez Burr, CaFF, Chris Christion, Ryan Claypool/Austin Smythe, Heidi Cunningham, Anna Campbell, solidad decosta, Alexis Disselkoen, Von Edwards, Nicky Enright, Feel Tank Chicago, Dara Greenwald/Josh MacPhee/Steve Lambert with the Anti-Advertising Agency, Russell Howze, Jill Jeannides, Anné M. Klint, Caroline Kelley, Sarah Kanouse/Tianna Kennedy/Lee Azzerello, Norene Leddy/Ed Bringas, Let's Re-Make, Steven Lam, the League of Imaginary Scientists, DJ Lightbolt, Diran Lyons, Elana Mann, Glendalys Medina, Tomas A. Moreno, Anne Elizabeth Moore, Doug Minkler, Mahyar Nili, Taisha Paggett and Ashley Hunt, Robert T. Pannell, Sheila Pinkel, Nancy Popp, Lizabeth Eva Rossof, Anthony Rayson, Nino Rodriguez, Lián Amaris Sifuentes, Rick Salafia, simon strikeback, Dorothy Schultz, Heath Schultz/Brad Thomson, Lisa Tucker, Tammy Jo Wilson, Gordon Winiemko, Xtine, Carrie Yury

About Sea and Space:

Sea and Space Explorations was founded by its current director, Lara Bank (MFA CalArts) in June 2007. Operating as an artwork in and of itself, Sea and Space is redefined each time it hosts artwork, statements, and the thoughts of other artists, guest curators, lecturers and collaborators. Gallery Hours: Sunday, 1-5 PM Or call 323-445-4015 to make an appointment. <http://www.seaandspace.org> email: info@seaandspace.org

DIRECTIONS from Los Angeles: From the 5, take the 2 north. Take the Verdugo Road exit. Left onto Eagle Rock Boulevard. Right onto York Boulevard (major cross street is Armadale Boulevard).

About Exchange Rate 2008:

Exchange Rate 2008 (<http://exchangerate2008.com/blog/>) is sponsored by Trade&Row (www.tradeandrow.org) with in-kind support from Side Street Projects (www.sidestreet.org).

About Voices of America:

"Voices of America" is sponsored by free103point9 <<http://free103point9.org/>> . The project is part of The UnConvention <<http://theunconvention.com/>> , a non-partisan, Minneapolis-based collective of artists and citizens acting as a counterpoint to the highly scripted and predetermined nature of the contemporary presidential nomination process and convention. For more info: <http://thevoa.net/>

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