

# LAWNDALE ART CENTER

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## Lawndale Art Center

Presents

**Exhibitions on view November 20, 2009 – January 9, 2010**

**Opening Reception November 20, 2009, 6:30 - 8:30 PM**

**Artist talks at 6 PM**

***Blow Up Heart*** – Monica Vidal  
John M. O'Quinn Gallery

***Grotto*** – Kia Neill  
Mezzanine Gallery

***Moonlight Towers*** – Andy Mattern  
Grace R. Cavnar Gallery

***Vicious Venue*** – Shawn Smith  
Project Space

***Negotiation*** – Jasmyne Graybill  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Hallway and Stairwell

*Houston, Texas* – Lawndale Art Center presents five exhibitions **opening November 20, 2009, 6:30 – 8:30 PM**, with artist talks beginning at **6 PM**. In the John M. O'Quinn Gallery, **Monica Vidal** creates a hive made from anatomical colored textiles in the exhibition ***Blow Up Heart***. In the Mezzanine Gallery, **Kia Neill's** installation ***Grotto*** transforms the gallery into a supernatural cavernous landscape. In the Grace R. Cavnar Gallery, **Andy Mattern** presents photographs documenting Austin's iconic ***Moonlight Towers***. In the Project Space, **Shawn Smith's** sculptural installation consists of a group of life-size pixelated vultures devouring an analog office full of obsolete technologies in ***Vicious Venue***. Also on view in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor stairwell and hallway is **Jasmyne Graybill's** site specific installation of fictional organisms titled ***Negotiation***. The exhibitions continue **through January 10, 2010**.

DANIEL ADAME  
CHUY BENITEZ  
AMY BLUMROSEN  
ELAINE BRADFORD  
SASHA DELA  
SHARON ENGELSTEIN  
KAREN FARBER  
ADAM GIBSON  
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VICTORIA LUDWIN  
LESTER MARKS  
KATE McCONNICO  
BARBARA FRIEDEL McKNIGHT  
BLAIR SATTERFIELD  
MARK SCHATZ  
ANDREW SCHIRRMEISTER III  
KANEEM SMITH  
CHRISTINA SOLIS  
KEIJIRO SUZUKI  
M'KINA TAPSCOTT  
MIRI WILKINS

EMERITUS  
GRACIE CAVNAR  
TIM CROWLEY  
JONATHAN DAY  
ANN HARITHAS  
CECILY HORTON  
KAROL KREYMER  
MARSHAL LIGHTMAN  
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Gallery Attendant

**-MORE-**

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John M. O'Quinn Gallery

## Monica Vidal

### **Blow Up Heart**

Monica Vidal has been using variations on the tent and the body as the primary themes in her work for the past 5 years. The tents have anthropomorphized with a palette of anatomical colors and textures that evoke muscle and tissue. She has a reoccurring character named the "hive". It's a tent that has mutated and become organic, but with a pattern that suggests textiles. The hive is both a place and an entity. Vidal also uses herself as a character in the work. In the drawings she wears a ritual costume inspired by an image of Xipe Totec, an Aztec God who traditionally represents spring and renewal. For *Blow Up Heart*, Vidal brings her drawings into the three dimensional realm. Shown will be a "hive" built to scale. She will also assume her proper role in a costume based on her drawn counterpart, for the opening night only.



**Monica Vidal**

*In front of a Hive*, 2008  
Graphite, gouache, ink  
and oil crayon on paper  
16 x 12 inches

**Monica Vidal** currently lives and works in Houston, TX. She received an MFA from Tyler School of Art of Temple University in Philadelphia, PA (1999) and a BFA from The Cleveland Institute of Art in Ohio (1996). Her work has been in exhibitions at Arthouse at the Jones Center (Austin, TX), Dunn and Brown Contemporary (Dallas, TX) and The Joanna (Houston, TX). This is her second solo exhibition at Lawndale Art Center.

Mezzanine Gallery

## Kia Neill

### **Grotto**

Through sculpture and installation, Kia Neill creates simulations of nature that blur discomfort and the fantastic. With her installation *Grotto*, Neill mimics extraordinary, almost alien, natural landscapes, such as caves and coral reefs, as well as enlarges the diorama of their miniature collectable counterparts, which serve in household aquariums, souvenir cases, gardens, etc. In this work, Neill attempts to produce an environment that reifies metaphysical association and fantasy such bizarre landscapes can induce. Neill places an emphasis on gaudy or absurd embellishment so to render an enhanced synthetic ideal. "I am particularly interested in cavernous spaces as a setting such as this, may offer a type of sanctuary and yet can also evoke feelings of entrapment or disorientation. While constructing a work such a 'Grotto' I pay attention to the possible impact the structure may have upon the viewer's physical comfort and boundary while incorporating a strong lure of spectacular phenomenon. My aim is not a realistic replication, but to suggest geological and biological form amply to provoke the viewer's imagination, in a way causing the viewer to become a participant in the work." - Neill



**Kia Neill**

*Interior of Cave*, 2008  
Paper mache, lumber, chicken wire,  
compact discs, holiday lights  
Approx. 8' high x 20' x 30'

**Kia Neill** was born and raised in the northern suburbs of Chicago, IL. In 2006, she moved from Los Angeles, California to Houston, Texas where she currently is full-time faculty at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston's Glassell School of Art and an instructor at the Houston Center for Photography. Neill is a 2009 recipient of a Houston Art Alliance Individual Artist Grant, and is currently producing work for her solo exhibition at Lawndale in November 2009 and a solo exhibition to be held at Women and Their Work in January 2010. Neill's work is included in the recent *Cantanker Magazine Issue 8: Anxiety*. Neill received her BFA from The Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio, and her MFA from The University of California, San Diego.

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*Previous residencies include the Johannstädter Kultutreff in Dresden, Germany and the Diverseworks Real Art World in Houston. Neill has exhibited nationally at venues including the LA Design Center, Acuna Hansen, Chapman University, CSU Long Beach, in Los Angeles, CA; Limbo Fine Arts in San Diego, CA; ARC Gallery in Chicago, IL; 1300 Gallery in Cleveland, OH; Arthouse (Texas Fine Art Association) in Austin, TX; and Diverseworks, Lawndale Art Center, Box13 Artspace, and 125 Gallery in Houston, TX.*

Grace R. Cavnar Gallery

**Andy Mattern**

## ***Moonlight Towers***

In 1895, the City of Austin acquired a street-lighting system from Detroit, Michigan consisting of thirty-one 165-foot tower lights. The network originally ran on hydro-electric power and provided illumination to the city center and surrounding neighborhoods. By the late 1930s, however, the lighting system was all but obsolete, and yet the city kept it in use due to public admiration and advertising value. However, for a variety of reasons including public safety and urban growth, more than half of the original towers have been removed over the years. Today, the so-called "Moonlight Towers" occupy a seemingly random assortment of locations from residential neighborhoods to high-traffic intersections downtown.

This series of photographs is a catalog of the remaining towers, systematically seen, as they are nearly identical. Including the supporting guy wires, each tower traverses nearly an entire square city block, but today these unusual structures easily go unnoticed. Amid the tangle of surrounding infrastructure they are looming and yet unseen. The towers are perhaps most visible at twilight immediately after the lights turn on. Photographing during this brief window of time, the result is a monumental view of each tower, alone and idealized. And yet the sameness of each tower redirects attention to the surrounding context, shifting these apparently typological photographs to an investigation of place punctuated by the industrial objects they depict. In 1995, the then seventeen Moonlight Towers were added to the National Register of Historic Places and were celebrated with a \$1.3 million restoration effort. However, at the time of this writing, only fifteen towers still stand; two of the seventeen officially recognized towers have been removed due to new construction downtown. It is unclear if they will be reinstalled.

**Andy Mattern** studied art at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque where he earned a BFA in 2002. In 2004, he relocated to Austin, Texas where he began photographing vacant urban architecture at night. The culmination of this work, *Façades*, led to an exploration of solitary trees spot lit at night in city parks. Later, he completed a survey of the antiquated civic lighting system in Austin, the *Moonlight Towers*. In 2009, he relocated to Minneapolis to pursue an MFA at the University of Minnesota.



**Andy Mattern**

*East MLK Blvd. & Chicon St.,*

2008

24" x 24"

Pigment Ink Print

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Project Space

**Shawn Smith**

***Vicious Venue***

Shawn Smith's work explores the depiction of nature through digital technology and comments on the effects of technology on our perception of the world. Smith's recent work explores his interest in birds of prey as a source of conceptual inspiration and analogy. Smith is fascinated by vultures and the visceral way most people react to them. For his exhibition in the Project Space, Smith asks the question, "What would a digital vulture eat if it was somehow trapped inside this reality?" *Vicious Venue* is a sculptural installation consisting of a group of life-size pixelated vultures devouring an analog office full of obsolete technologies (like a typewriter, rolodex, and a rotary phone). The viewer becomes an intruder into the space, as if they are stumbling into the middle of the ongoing carnage as the vultures pick the office's carcass clean. Smith's current work highlights the collision of the digital world and the real world by creating pixelated sculptures interacting with found objects. For his installation in the Project Space, Smith pushes the scale and scope of his current work by creating an installation that creates a narrative and brings these objects to life. The title of the exhibition, *Vicious Venue*, refers to the double meaning of "venue" as both a place, and a group of vultures.



Shawn Smith  
*Vulture*, 2007  
Plywood, ink, and acrylic paint  
44"x 33"x 27"

**Shawn Smith** was born in 1972 in Dallas, TX where he attended Arts Magnet High School and Brookhaven College before graduating from Washington University in St. Louis, MO with a BFA in Printmaking in 1995. Smith received his MFA in Sculpture from the California College of the Arts in San Francisco in 2005. He has received artist-in-residencies from the Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, CA and the Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris, France. In 1996, Smith was a recipient of the Clare Hart DeGolyer grant from the Dallas Museum of Art. Smith's work has been exhibited throughout the United States including the Austin Museum of Art, Arthouse at the Jones Center (Austin), Galveston Art Center, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (San Francisco), Stephen Wirtz Gallery (San Francisco), Southern Exposure (San Francisco), Oakland Arts Museum, Berkeley Art Center, Richmond Art Center, di Rosa Art and Nature Preserve (Napa), Dean Leshar Center for the Arts (California), Holter Museum of Art (Montana), Northwest Art Center (North Dakota), Kingston Gallery (Boston), the Armory Art Center (Florida), and the McKinney Avenue Contemporary (Dallas), among others. In 2006, he was commissioned to create a monumental public sculpture in San Francisco, CA. Smith currently resides in Austin, Texas.

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Hallway and Stairwell

**Jasmyne Graybill**

***Negotiation***

As an interdisciplinary artist, Jasmyne Graybill uses site-specific installations and sculptures to explore and magnify the ongoing negotiations for space that arise everyday between nature and domestic life. Borrowing from the familiar forms of fungus, lichen, mold, and barnacles, she invents and sculpts fictional organisms that graft onto manufactured domestic objects and infest the nooks and crannies of architectural spaces. In her exhibition *Negotiation*, Graybill uses latex, flock, and pigments to meticulously sculpt a fictional parasite that



Jasmyne Graybill  
*Untitled Specimen*, 2009  
4" x 4" x 1/2"  
Polymer clay, petri dish

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is invading Lawndale's public stairwell. Exploiting the stairwell as an alternative "host", Graybill's installation embellishes nature's uncanny ability to flourish in synthetic environments.

***Jasmyne Graybill** received her MFA from the University of Texas in San Antonio and her BFA from the University of North Texas. She currently teaches WASH, an experimental studio program that explores contemporary issues surrounding the visual arts at Sam Houston State University. Her work has been exhibited throughout Texas, including recent solo exhibitions at the UTSA Satellite Space and Cactus Bra in San Antonio.*

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<b>About Lawndale:</b>	Lawndale Art Center is a nonprofit alternative exhibition space dedicated to the presentation of contemporary art in all media, with an emphasis on the work of Houston area artists.
<b>Address:</b>	4912 Main St., Houston, TX 77002
<b>For More Info:</b>	<a href="http://www.lawndaleartcenter.org">www.lawndaleartcenter.org</a> or <a href="mailto:askus@lawndalwartcenter.org">askus@lawndalwartcenter.org</a>
<b>Gallery Hours:</b>	Monday-Friday, 10-5; Saturday, 12-5; Closed Sunday
<b>Admission:</b>	Free
<b>Viewing Dates:</b>	This exhibition will open on Friday, November 20, 2009 and will remain on view through Saturday, January 9, 2010. Lawndale will be closed for the holidays from December 24, 2009 to January 1, 2010.
<b>Press Contact:</b>	Dennis Nance, 713-528-5858, <a href="mailto:dnance@lawndaleartcenter.org">dnance@lawndaleartcenter.org</a>

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