

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LAWNDALE ART CENTER

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Lawndale Art Center

Presents

Exhibitions on view February 28 – April 12, 2014

Opening Reception February 28, 2014, 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Artist talks at 6 PM

In conjunction with the FotoFest 2014 Biennial

Love Letters in a Tree • Otis Ike & Ivete Lucas

John M. O'Quinn Gallery

Safe Distance • Galina Kurlat

Cecily E. Horton Gallery

CURB APPEAL • Krista Birnbaum

Grace R. Cavnar Gallery

Friends in Low Places • Spike Johnson

Project Space

Houston, Texas - Lawndale Art Center presents four exhibitions **opening February 28, 2014, 6:30 - 8:30 PM**, with **artist talks beginning at 6 PM**. In the John M. O'Quinn Gallery, **Otis Ike & Ivete Lucas** examine the intimate yet physically detached relationship between two anonymous correspondents who exchange letters hidden inside a dying tree for the exhibition ***Love Letters in a Tree***. In the Cecily E. Horton Gallery, **Galina Kurlat** explores the intimate relationship between photographer and sitter in ***Safe Distance***. **Krista Birnbaum** fits hedges, trailing vines, and decorative grasses into the structure of the Grace R. Cavnar Gallery for the exhibition ***CURB APPEAL***. In the Project Space, **Spike Johnson** documents the lives of a group of U.S. veterans who exist beneath Houston's Downtown in ***Friends in Low Places***. The exhibitions will remain **on view through April 12, 2014**.

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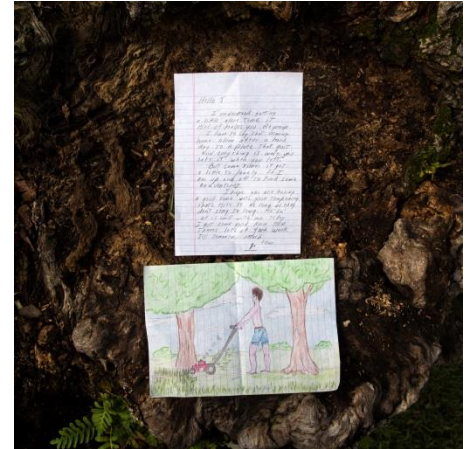
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John M. O'Quinn Gallery

Otis Ike & Ivete Lucas

Love Letters in a Tree

Otis Ike and Ivete Lucas employ documentary photography and filmmaking to explore encounters with niche segments of society. While much of Ike and Lucas's work speaks to the closeness the artists developed with their varied subjects, their most recent project, *Love Letters in a Tree*, examines from a distance the intimate yet physically detached relationship between two anonymous correspondents. For this series, Ike and Lucas photographically recorded the daily exchange of letters hidden inside a dying tree in Houston, Texas. Using only their first initials, "V" and "J" wrote and illustrated their reflections on love, nature, family, and mysticism. By documenting this exchange, Ike and Lucas address the interwoven nature of public and private spaces, and provide commentary with their interception and restaging of this communication between individuals.



Otis Ike

July 19, 2013 – Hello J, 2013

Archival digital print

36" x 36"

Otis Ike is photographer, documentary filmmaker, sustainable designer and builder. From 2003-07, Ike worked as a fabricator for artists Clare Rojas and Barry McGee (a.k.a. Twist), aiding in the creation of new work for their exhibitions. His architectural work includes disaster relief housing on the Gulf Coast, cottages for the homeless in Austin and structures for his photo and video installations. In 2010, he was awarded the top grant from the 2010 Texas Filmmakers Production Fund for VIETNAM APPRECIATION DAY. He holds a Masters degree in Sustainable Design from the School of Architecture at the University of Texas.

otisike.com

Ivete Lucas (b. 1983 Sao Paulo, Brazil) A filmmaker and visual artist based in Houston, Texas, Lucas launched her filmmaking career in Monterrey, Mexico. Her short film *Asthma* (2009) was released nationally in select movie theaters, screened at festivals in South America and Europe, and was short-listed for the Mexican Academy Awards. Lucas' documentary and narrative works have screened at festivals including SXSW, the Boston Latino Film Festival and HBO's New York Latino Film Festival. She is the recipient of grants from the Mexican Film Institute, the Texas Filmmakers Production Fund and the Mexican Fund for Culture and the Arts (FONCA).

Cecily E. Horton Gallery

Galina Kurlat

Safe Distance

Safe Distance explores the intimate relationship between photographer and sitter. This relationship becomes as much about the process of making the images as the final photograph. The slow, tenuous process of creating large format photographs invites the sitter to orchestrate his or her own compositions. Each gesture, conscious or not, informs the viewer, while the direction of the subjects' gaze becomes their choice to

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reveal or hide. Using Polaroid positive/negative black and white film, a fragile medium that has a tendency to react to changes in temperature and humidity, Kurlat deliberately manipulates the negatives while allowing others to degrade, resulting in a controlled serendipity to dictate the final portrait.

Galina Kurlat was born in Moscow in 1981 and immigrated to the United States shortly after the fall of communism in 1989. She received her Bachelor of Media Arts Degree from Brooklyn's Pratt Institute in 2005. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is in number of public and private collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She currently lives and works in Houston, TX.
galinakurlat.com



Galina Kurlat
Deborah, 2012
Archival pigment print
18" x 24"

Grace R. Cavnar Gallery

Krista Birnbaum
CURB APPEAL

In the same way that much of Houston is carefully planted, then neatly trimmed around houses, sidewalks, and trees, Krista Birnbaum's *CURB APPEAL* fits hedges, trailing vines, and decorative grasses into the structure of the gallery. Using artificial plants and computer generated photographs to stand in for living foliage, the installation references the careful maintenance of a year-round growing season into minimalist, geometric form. Photographic and sculptural elements mirror each other, repeating the pleasant constraints placed upon urban nature.

Krista Birnbaum is an interdisciplinary artist currently residing in Houston, TX. Her images and sculptures reflect issues of control over nature. She received an MFA from Syracuse University in 2007. Recent exhibitions include: *Box 13* and *Gensler Architecture* in Houston, TX, the *ASU Art Museum* in Tempe, AZ, *ROY G BIV Gallery* in Columbus, OH, and *516 Arts* in Albuquerque, NM.
kristabirnbaum.com



Krista Birnbaum
Arctium tomentosum with friends,
2014
30" x 30"
C-print

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Project Space

Spike Johnson

Friends in Low Places

Friends in Low Places is a photographic project documenting the lives of a group of U.S. veterans who exist beneath Houston's Downtown in a series of caves, tunnels and alcoves that line the bayou and nestle under the highways. The work is accompanied by audio interviews with the subjects. The percentage of veterans in the homeless community is double the representation of veterans in normal society. Around 300,000 veterans sleep rough every night, around 1 million will have been homeless at some point in 2012.



Spike Johnson

Friends in Low Places, 2012-13

Inkjet print

The cracks and alcoves around downtown Houston and Buffalo Bayou have become home to these men. Wrestling with psychological problems, arrest warrants, and an inability to integrate into civilian society, they group together for companionship, and seek solace in a hidden existence. Together they build shelters from scraps of tarpaulin, or scuttle through holes in concrete bridges into the caves beyond. They share the burden of addiction, self-medicating the pain of old injuries, or drowning memories in a blur of alcohol or crack cocaine.

Originally from Southern England, Spike Johnson completed an MA in photojournalism at the University of North Texas, under the guidance of Thorne Anderson. He's worked on stories connected to US civilian militias, the booming natural gas industry and religious conflict. Johnson has received awards from the Society of Environmental Journalists, the Society of Professional Journalism, the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors, and the annual College Photographer of the Year competition. His work has published with outlets including Foreign Policy, Vice Magazine, the BBC and Human Rights Watch.

spike.photoshelter.com

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About Lawndale:	Lawndale Art Center develops local contemporary artists and the audience for their art. Lawndale is dedicated to the presentation of contemporary art with an emphasis on work by Houston artists. Lawndale presents exhibitions, lectures and events, and offers an annual residency program to further the creative exchange of ideas among Houston's diverse artistic, cultural and student communities.
Address:	4912 Main St., Houston, TX 77002
For More Info:	www.lawndaleartcenter.org or askus@lawndalwartcenter.org
Gallery Hours:	Monday-Friday, 10-5; Saturday, 12-5; Closed Sunday
Admission:	Free
Exhibition Dates:	These exhibitions will open on Friday, February 28, 2014 and will remain on view through Saturday, April 12, 2014.
Press Contact:	Dennis Nance, 713-528-5858, dnance@lawndaleartcenter.org

Programs at Lawndale are supported in part by The National Endowment for the Arts, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The City of Houston through the Houston Museum District Association, The Texas Commission on the Arts, Houston Endowment, The Brown Foundation, Inc., The John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation, The John P. McGovern Foundation, The Joan Hohlt and Roger Wich Foundation, Art Colony Association, John M. O'Quinn, Cecily E. Horton, Ann W. Harithas, Diana M. Hudson and Lee Kaplan, Julia and Luke Burke, Monica Rios and Colin Fulton, Bruce Eames, Anita and David Garten, Felvis Foundation/David R. Graham, Samantha Schnee and Michael Hafner, Henke Law Firm LLP, Jenny and Mark Johnson, Gretchen and Andrew McFarland, Paula Murphy, Nicole and Joey Romano, Scott Sparvero, Mary Martha and Joel Staff, TeleFlex, United Airlines, Kinzelman Art Consulting, Page Southerland Page, Poggenpohl Design Studio, Saint Cloud and other contributors, memberships, benefit events and many volunteers.

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