

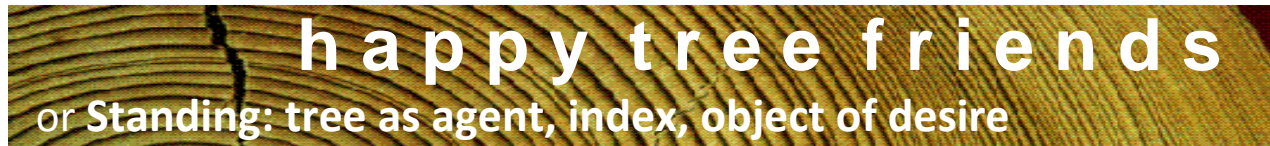
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Charlotte Street Foundation's Urban Culture Project presents:



*Happy Tree Friends (Part I)*

LA ESQUINA | 1000 WEST 25<sup>th</sup> KANSAS CITY, MO 64108

MARCH 6-APRIL 18, 2009

Opening reception: March 6, 6-9pm

First Friday April reception: April 3, 6-9pm; talk with curator & artists at 6pm

Hours: Thursdays + Saturdays, 12-5pm and by appointment

Curated by Kate Hackman, Associate Director, Charlotte Street Foundation, *Happy Tree Friends (or Standing: Tree as Agent, Index, Object of Desire)* is a two-part exhibition project featuring works that depict, reference, incorporate, document, and otherwise derive or draw inspiration from trees. The exhibition is being organized in partnership with the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, which will concurrently present the exhibition *Trees and other Ramifications: Branches in Nature & Culture*. \*

*Happy Tree Friends (Part I)* at la Esquina, March 6-April 18, includes works by: Barry Anderson (Kansas City), Jeff Badger (Portland, Maine), Carnal Torpor (Kansas City/Omaha, NE), Kelly J. Clark (Lawrence, KS), Mark Cowardin (Kansas City), Jeanna Darby (Chicago), Dominique Davison + Robert Riccardi (Kansas City), Kristina Estell (Deluth, MN), Cari Freno (Richmond, VA), Diane Henk (Kansas City), Michael Krueger (Lawrence, KS), Sarah Luther (Milwaukee, WI), Kacy Maddux (Kansas City), Johnny Naugahyde (Kansas City), Benjamin Potter (Portland, Maine), Shawn Sanem (Kansas City), Margaret Shelby (Kansas City), Carlos Rosales-Silva (Austin, TX), Deanna Skedel (Kansas City), Jesse Small (Kansas City/China), Corine Smith (Detroit, MI), Maranda Stebbins (Kansas City), Davin Watne (Kansas City), and Jennifer Whiteford (Kansas City).

Works included span photography, sculpture, painting, drawing, printmaking, quilting, collage, audio, video, performance, installation, cooking, and urban design. The exhibition approaches the tree theme as



Images: Michael Krueger's "Green River," Cari Freno's "Tree Jump" (video still).

a means to consider, and draw connections among, a wide swath of creative investigations. Taken as a whole, the exhibition addresses the tree(s) as index/marker of activity, time, place, memory, and change; as sign, signifier, symbol, metaphor, conceptual model, and personification/surrogate; as medium for the expression of cultural, spiritual and ecological/environmental beliefs, behaviors, and desires; and as material body – object, media, source, tool, support.

**Public Programs/events in conjunction with *Happy Tree Friends (Part I)* - all free & open to the public:**

- **Opening reception: Friday, March 6, 6-9pm**
- **Third Friday second reception: Friday, April 3, 6-9pm**
- **Gallery talk with Curator & Artists: Friday, April 3, 6pm**

**The exhibition will feature a series of three meals prepared and presented by artist collective Carnal Torpor:**

- **TRY ONE: RAW – March 6, in conjunction with opening reception, 6-9pm** - this meal will be comprised exclusively of local foods warmed to a temperature of less than 104 degrees. Associated diagrams will focus on the process of photosynthesis and the understanding of what nuts and berries are and how they function as a technology of propagation.
- **TRY TWO: ALIVE - March 20, 9pm** - this meal will be made of fermented local foods. Associated diagrams will concern the collectivity of nutrition and culture and techniques of generating/cultivating probiotic cultures.
- **TRY THREE: COOKED – April 3, in conjunction with First Friday reception, 6-9pm** - this meal will be cooked food using local ingredients. Diagrams will concern the chemical changes which occur during the cooking process and the ritual value of eating as culture.



**In addition, the exhibition includes a collaboration with Heartland Tree Alliance, presenting the following:**

- ***Happy Tree Friends* Urban Tree Identification Walk + Urban Tree Planting – Saturday, April 18, 2-4pm** – Meet at la Esquina for a walking excursion to identify and learn more about trees in the downtown area, led by Angela Schreffler, Director of the Heartland Tree Alliance. Following the walk, attendees are invited to assist with an urban tree planting, in close proximity to la Esquina. Heartland Tree Alliance's mission is to engage people of the greater Kansas City region to take action and advocate for a healthy community forest. Visit [www.heartlandtreealliance.org](http://www.heartlandtreealliance.org) for more information about HTA's work.
- **Arbor Day Tree Planting Event: Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 9-noon, Budd Park, St. John Ave and Quincy Ave, Kansas City, MO** – Volunteers are invited to help plant 40 trees in the park. No previous experience is necessary and training will be provided. Pre-registration is required by calling 816-561-1061, ext. 110 or emailing [treemail@bridgingthegap.org](mailto:treemail@bridgingthegap.org).



Images: Jeanna Darby, "Untitled," Kristina Estell, "Reconstruction" (detail), Corine Smith, "Diorama." Above: Benjamin Potter.

This Urban Culture Project exhibition project will extend to include ***Happy Tree Friends (Part II)***, opening Friday, April 17, 6-9pm at Paragraph Gallery, 23 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street. This second exhibition will focus on installation-based work. Artists include Kurt Flecksing, HMM Services, Ke-Sook Lee, Sarah Vandersall, BJ Vogt (St. Louis, MO), Chris Wildrick (Syracuse, NY) and others. Participating artists and works in both shows have been selected through a mix of individual invitations and proposals submitted in response to a call to artists.

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***\*Trees and other Ramifications: Branches in Nature and Culture*** is an exhibition project curated by Steve Goddard, Senior Curator and Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Spencer Museum, in collaboration with the University of Kansas Natural History Museum / Biodiversity Research Center.

*Trees and other Ramifications* offers an open-ended look at some of the many ways that trees are meaningful to humanity and important in the natural world. The exhibition, predominantly of prints, drawings, books, and photographs drawn from University of Kansas and area collections, is not limited to works of art that were inspired by trees, but also includes images from the arts and sciences in which trees have served as a metaphor for real and imagined branching systems (ramifications). In alliance with other spring exhibitions and programs concerning climate change, the Natural History Museum/Biodiversity Research Center has contributed research on the species of trees seen in some of the exhibited works that allows us to predict the future geographic distribution of those species under different climate change models.

***Trees and other Ramifications opens at the Spencer Museum on Thursday, March 5, 6:30pm.*** Additional exhibitions, programs, and events are being scheduled in conjunction with the exhibition. Visit [www.spencerart.ku.edu](http://www.spencerart.ku.edu) for complete information.

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This project is made possible with support from the Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts, Commerce Bank Trustee.

***An initiative of the Charlotte Street Foundation, Urban Culture Project creates new opportunities for artists of all disciplines and contributes to urban revitalization by transforming spaces in downtown Kansas City into new venues for multi-disciplinary contemporary arts programming. For more information, visit CSF's NEW website at [www.charlottestreet.org](http://www.charlottestreet.org).***