



“Life Lasagna” - an installation by Gina Phillips
Presented by Prospect.2
On Exhibit at the Contemporary Arts Center,
first floor oval gallery
October 20, 2011- January 29, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 18, 2011 (New Orleans, LA) Jonathan Ferrara Gallery is proud to announce that gallery artist Gina Phillips will present a new installation of fabric works as part of Prospect.2 Biennial. Phillips joins twenty-seven other featured artists from around the world in Prospect.2, the largest international biennial exhibition of contemporary art held in the U.S. Her installation, *Life Lasagna*, will be on exhibit in the Contemporary Arts Center’s first floor oval gallery from October 20, 2011- January 29, 2012 and features over 40 new fabric works created on her twelve foot long arm quilting machine.

About the Artist

Gina Phillips is a mixed-media, narrative artist who grew up in Kentucky and has lived in New Orleans since 1995. Her work is influenced by the imagery, stories and characters of both regions. She started her career as a painter, but over the years, has increasingly incorporated fabric and thread into her work. She begins a piece with a simple underpainting in acrylic paint on canvas or muslin...then finishes the piece by appliquéing fabric and thread on top. Phillips uses a communal gathering process to source her fabrics, as neighbors, friends, family often donate to her artistic process. Her sewn work hover between two and three dimensionality and often the backs of her pieces are as interesting as the front sides. The most common narrative characteristic that runs through her work is tragicomedy. The people and/or animals that tell the story often embody a magical realism.

Gina Phillips has a BFA from University of Kentucky and an MFA from Tulane University’s Newcomb College. Her work has been exhibited in galleries and museums across the country including at Pepperdine University, Tulane University and most recently at Ballroom Marfa. In addition, her work was recently featured at Pulse LA and will also be a part of the gallery’s presentation at Pulse Miami. Her work is in numerous collections including University of Kentucky, Lexington, NASA, New Orleans Museum of Art, Ogden Museum of Southern Art, Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Tulane University and House of Blues (various locations across US.) Phillips’ work has been featured in Art In America, The Times-Picayune and her recent solo exhibition this past March was reviewed in ARTNews. Phillips is scheduled for a major solo exhibition at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in 2013.

Gina Phillips lives and works in New Orleans, LA and is represented by Jonathan Ferrara Gallery

About Prospect.2

Founded by the curator Dan Cameron, Prospect New Orleans is one of the leading biennials of international contemporary art in the United States. Conceived in the tradition of the great international biennials, such as the Venice Biennale and the Bienal de São Paulo, Prospect New Orleans showcases new artistic practices from around the world in settings that are both historic and culturally exceptional, and contributes to the cultural economy of New Orleans and the Louisiana Gulf region by spurring cultural tourism and bringing international attention to the area’s vibrant visual arts community.

In its inaugural year, Prospect.1 New Orleans featured 81 artists who exhibited at 24 venues throughout the city, occupying a combined 200,000 square feet of space spread widely over miles of the city’s eclectic and historic neighborhoods. From November 2008 through January 2009, Prospect.1 attracted 42,000 individual visitors (88,000 admissions), generating over \$23 million in economic activity.

Prospect.2 is now scheduled to open to the public on October 22, 2011, and will be on view until January 29, 2012. The current list of artists includes 27 artists from nine countries, including the United States, France, Italy, Sweden, Poland, Japan,

Chile, and Vietnam including Sophie Calle, Francesco Vezzoli, William Pope L., Nick Cave, William Eggleston, Ivan Navarro and Jennifer Steinkamp.

In keeping with Prospect's commitment to the promotion of the visual art community in New Orleans, this year's biennial will feature work by several artists who live and work in the city, as well as a variety of site-specific projects inspired by the city's distinctive history and culture and conceived specifically for the city of New Orleans. Prospect New Orleans is founded on the principle that art engenders social progress.

About *Life Lasagna*

In *Life Lasagna*, Phillips explores the cycle of life from birth to death to nostalgia for all things past. The imagery predominantly derives from the artist's childhood memories growing up in rural Appalachia combined with her explorations into the paupers graves at Holt Cemetery in New Orleans, where entire families are often buried together in below-ground graves marked with homemade, hand-painted wooden tombstones, and the earth is turned regularly to make room for the new dead. (One of the strategies the families use to maintain their loved one's graves is to cover the site with blankets and carpets.)

The artist says of her P.2 installation:

I recently learned that the word, nostalgia, originated as a medical term. A person could be diagnosed with nostalgia. It was considered an illness, most commonly associated with soldiers fulfilling long tours of duty. It's true; sometimes you can miss something so much you seem to feel it in your bones or in the pit of your stomach. I've been thinking about the root of nostalgia, and if I had to define it, I'd say that it's driven by the sentimentality of mortality. In Life Lasagna, I wanted to convey something of the sensation of a life flash, like the moments before death or near death...the ultimate nostalgic experience. Hence, the cycle of life is evident in this work.

Phillips' rural roots inform her work both visually and in her use of materials; she gathers donated fabrics from neighbors, family members, thrift stores and other sources which she then "collages" together by using a large twelve foot long arm radial quilting machine.

Life Lasagna is infused with nostalgic reflections upon history, childhood, and the artist's personal narrative. Even as the installation weaves together the corporeal symbols of life's phases, from a baby's first tooth to the remains we leave behind; it is infused with overtones of humor. *Life Lasagna*: teeth, skin, feet, hands, heads. Parts of a whole: layers of life between the sky and the grave.

*"I don't have a photograph,
but you can have my foot prints.
They're upstairs in my socks."*

- Groucho Marx, *A Day At The Races*

For more information and images, please contact :

Jonathan Ferrara Gallery
400a Julia Street, New Orleans LA 70120.
p: 504.522.5471
e: info@jonathanferraragallery.com

Artist walk-throughs are currently being scheduled and will be accommodated as time permits. Please contact the gallery about scheduling a walk-through with the artist.