

MEDIA RELEASE

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Deborah Colton Gallery
Fall 2013 Season Opener

September 7 through October 29, 2013
Opening Reception: Saturday, September 7th, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm

ROBERT BARRY JESSICA CRUTE CHRISTIAN TOMASZEWSKI
PHILIPPE TOUGARD-MAUCOTEL CHRISTIAN XATREC

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to present *Collective Identity*, a group exhibition that explores the elusive sense of self and the fragility of the human psyche through contemporary art. This exhibition, with its humanitarian thread, aims to promote awareness that ultimately encourages the building of a stronger collective identity in order to combat societal labeling. *Collective Identity* opens Saturday, September 7, 2013, with an opening reception from 6:00 to 9:00 pm.

Collective Identity headlines six principal artists, Robert Barry, Jessica Crute, Jenny Holzer, Christian Tomaszewski, Philippe Tougard-Maucotel, and Christian Xatrec and is presented in conjunction with a public space billboard exhibition, also by Jessica Crute. The exhibition proposes that since our identities are most often associated with traits within our environment, one's sense of self can easily become lost or compromised due to unforeseen junctures in one's life. By revealing our own unique vulnerabilities, the show encapsulates the idea that in order to enact social change for underrepresented populations within society, we must first reverberate those social identities into creating a better understanding of the socioeconomic issues and obstacles that surround us.

Collective Identity calls for oneness, openness and for greater empathy to exist among humanity. United by this notion, the show emphasizes that we are all fragile human beings; whether it be through the loss of a job or the stress of a transitional social or education activity, we may all be one step removed from being in a situation where we lose our sense of self and subsequently our sense of place.

As part of the exhibition, a public art billboard installation by Jessica Crute will be displayed in the City of Houston, which will read: "Even the Pigeons Don't See Me – (voiceofthehomeless)."

Robert Barry is an internationally revered American artist, born in the Bronx, New York, whose artworks often challenge perceptions of "nothingness." He is quoted as saying "Nothing seems to be me the most potent thing in the world." Words are fundamental to his artwork as he uses individual words, not phrases or fragments of texts, to suggest or persuade impressions of his work. His discerning use of selected words often work through insinuation to elicit audience reaction to his artwork based on their the psychological context in which they are experienced. Robert Barry's works have been exhibited extensively world-wide and in such institutions as the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and the Guggenheim Museum in the United States.

Jessica Crute is an artist whose work explores the significance, value and validity of the human experience through the engagement of individuals and social worlds. Since the debut of her work at the Lawndale Art Center in 2012, Crute's work has continued to advocate for social change through a myriad of creative and collaborative mediums. Recently, Crute appeared at the Contemporary Arts Museum, as part of their *Revenue Sharing* series, where she facilitated a discussion on the use of social and political themes in contemporary art and how art can both interpret and inform a collective identity.

Conceptual, New York based artist **Jenny Holzer**, best known for her large-scale public installations and LED works, creates text-based works of art that place great significance on the public spaces in which they are viewed. Reacting to the prevalence of ignorance and violence that is presented to and displayed by contemporary cultures, Holzer presents her works with humor, kindness, and moral courage. Her works have been exhibited internationally and nationally, including in such venues as the Venice Biennale, The Reichstag, and the Guggenheim Museums in New York and Bilbao. She received the Barnard Medal of Distinction, was the recipient of the Leone d'Oro at the 1999 Venice Biennale and was honored with the Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum in 1996. She has been awarded honorary degrees from the Ohio University, Williams College, the Rhode Island School of Design, The New School, and Smith College.

Christian Tomaszewski, born in Poland, currently lives and works in New York. He has worked predominantly in multi-media installation exploring various mediums and modes of communication and influence. In his work, he has been interested in adapting different roles and definitions of an artist, balancing between making things out of sincere or self-induced obsession and critical calculation. For this exhibition we see presented in his work ideas that challenge the humane in the viewer.

He is a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan, Poland and past participant in several prestigious residency programs including the American Academy in Rome, the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York City and recently Artpace in San Antonio. Tomaszewski is recipient of numerous grants and awards including past support from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation 2008 fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and 2009 Travel Grant from the Jerome Foundation.

Philippe Tougaard-Maucotel, a native of France, is an international artist who creates sculptural works out of text. The work of Maucotel's included in this exhibition turns object, text, and inference on its head and is a play on the idea of objectification- a word whose definitions are often associated with direct and indirect relationships between people or groups of people. An established artist for many years, Maucotel has exhibited his work throughout Europe and in the United States with a positive reception.

French-born **Christian Xatrec** creates signage as artwork. Semiotics, therefore plays a particularly significant role in his visual creations. Ken Friedman says of Xatrec's works:

"The art of Christian Xatrec consists of subtle philosophical objects that question our relations with the world around us. They also challenge our knowledge of the world in elegant, witty comments on life... At a deeper level, they bring artist and viewer together in Socratic dialogue on postmodern times... Metaphor and rhetorical sophistication contradict material humility to give this work cultural resonance."

Xatrec's work included in *Collective Identity* addresses the viewer directly, simultaneously alluding to the importance of the intact sense of self-identity and acknowledging the fragility of a person's often challenged, ever evolving self of self. Xatrec's works have been presented and published internationally and he presently serves as the Vice-President of the Emily Harvey Foundation in New York City.

An **Art + Advocacy Benefit Auction**, will also be held on September 28, 2013 at the Gallery, and proceeds will go directly to benefit Houston charities Bread of Life, Inc. and Voice of the Homeless—which aims to raise much needed dollars for the homeless.

Deborah Colton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, performance, conceptual future media and public space installations. The Gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to make positive change.