

**Cress Gallery of Art
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
“Okay Mountain”
Exhibition dates: February 8 – March 20, 2012**

**Okay Mountain Artists’ lecture Wednesday February 8, 5:30 – 6:30pm
followed by a public reception**

**Okay Mountain visits campus and community for activities
February 6 – 9, 2012 as a part of
The Diane Marek Visiting Artist Series.**

**Admission to all Marek events and the Cress exhibition is free
and open to all.**

Okay Mountain is an artists’ collective which has within the past few years burned an exhibition trail of acclaim and accolade from Miami to New Orleans, New York City to Los Angeles, and points between. Blending humor with irony, Okay Mountain creates work that weaves an engaging yet dead serious commentary about our contemporary existence.

Founded in 2006 in Austin, TX., Okay Mountain draws upon the talents of nine members whose working locations span the continental US from Austin, TX. (Sterling Allen, Nathan Green, Ryan Hennessee, Carlos Rosales-Silva, and Michael Sieben); Chicago, IL. (Josh Rios); Los Angeles, CA. (Justin Goldwater); Santa Barbara, CA. (Tim Brown); and Cambridge, MA. (Peat Duggins).

In a broad sense, artists’ collectives have long existed for many various goals: collective buying of artist materials, sharing communal studio space, and creating exhibitions that find more opportunities for exposure for individual members. Yet it is rare today that an artists’ collective collaborates in the manner of Okay Mountain. With its accepted de-emphasis on the individual to draw upon the strengths and labor of each member of the group as a single entity, Okay Mountain creates work that few artists can accomplish alone.

As a collaborative, each member of Okay Mountain shares an equal weight and responsibility with every endeavor. Each work is produced through the collective contributions of the individual towards a singular whole, not each individual contributing a piece of work towards an end exhibition. This process employs the current skills of every member and also challenges each individual to build new skills. This working process results in large-scale works of complex conceptualization, and immense craft in fabrication and execution.

Okay Mountain at the Cress will depart from the collaborative’s previous exhibitions. Rather than feature a single installation, this exhibition will feature a recent retrospective of three works in a range of media previously premiered at other locations, and a fourth work to be unveiled in the Cress.

Appearing in the Cress will be “The Wheel”, 2011, created for the exhibition “Ultrasonic IV: Appropriation” at Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA; “Multi-Station Machine” 2011, created for the McNay Museum of Art’s important national survey of 13 emerging and mid-career artists “New Image Sculpture”, San Antonio, TX.; and “Water, Water Everywhere, So Let’s All Have a Drink”, 2010, a video first shown at the Austin Museum of Art, Austin, TX., and subsequently featured during “Prospect 1.5”, 2010, at Arthur Rogers Gallery, New Orleans, LA.

Okay Mountain burst onto the international arts scene with “Corner Store”, 2009, commissioned

by Arthouse at the Jones Center, for the Pulse Miami Art Fair during Art Basel Miami. Completely stocked with hundreds of “typical” convenience store items all created by Okay Mountain members and each for sale, “Corner Store” was a true feat of meaningful endurance through hours of work and thought. It is now in the collection of the 21C Museum Hotel, Louisville, KY. “Corner Store” received “The People’s Choice” and “Best Booth” awards during Pulse Miami, 2009, while serving as a thoughtful commentary on society’s consumerist mentality, and by extension, examining the nature of the art market itself.

If there is an overriding theme in the work of Okay Mountain, it might be contemporary culture’s penchant for confusing superficial materiality with knowledge and reason, and our own individual culpability as participants in perpetuating this situation. Yet delight and humor invite us to engage in the work, consider deeper issues, and even question the nature of humor itself: the what-it-is that makes us laugh.

Okay Mountain’s solo exhibitions include “Four Wheel Rollover”, upcoming 2012, De Cordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA.; “First Take: Okay Mountain” 2011, Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston, TX; “New Works: Okay Mountain”, 2010, Austin Museum of Art, TX.; “Benefit Plate”, 2010, Freight and Volume Gallery, NYC; and “Big Strange Mystery”, 2010, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX. Recent projects include “Food Fight”, 2010, a mural commissioned by Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.

Okay Mountain’s exhibition is supported by *The Friends of the Cress Gallery*.

For more information about Okay Mountain visit www.okaymountain.com

For more information about Okay Mountain’s Cress Gallery exhibition and *Marek Series* events visit www.CressGallery.org

become a Fan of the Cress Gallery of Art on FACEBOOK;

or contact ruth-grover@utc.edu ; voice or text 423-304-9789.

Gallery hours:

9:30am – 7:30pm Monday – Friday

1:00pm – 4:00pm Saturday and Sunday

Parking: Parking is free after 5:00pm weekdays and all day on weekends in any UTC lot not marked “24-hour reserved”. Before 5:00pm on weekdays, visitors may find one-hour or metered street parking or obtain a lot pass from the Parking Office in the UTC Facilities Bldg. located at 400 Palmetto Street.

Location: The Cress Gallery of Art is located in the lobby of the UTC Fine Arts Center, 752 Vine Street at the corner of Vine and Palmetto Streets, 37403