



**Apex**  
*Untitled (Syracuse Mural, detail)*, 2011



**Chor Boogie**  
*Substance (detail)*, 2011

## THE WAREHOUSE GALLERY

Syracuse University  
 350 West Fayette Street  
 Syracuse, NY 13202

The Warehouse Gallery is an international contemporary art venue of the SUart Galleries at Syracuse University. The gallery's mission is to present exhibitions and programs by artists whose work engages the community in a dialogue regarding the role the arts can play in illuminating critical issues of our life and times.

### EDITOR

Jessica Reed

### DESIGNER

Omkar

### GALLERY STAFF

Anja Chávez—Curator of Contemporary Art  
 Omkar—Exhibition Designer and Preparator

### GALLERY ASSISTANTS

Emily Marie Barry—Gallery Assistant  
 Ash Braunecker—Gallery Assistant  
 Ellie Brown—Gallery Assistant  
 Emma Diane McAnaw—Gallery Assistant  
 Daniela Rodriguez Restrepo—Gallery Assistant  
 Kiri Rowan—Gallery Assistant  
 Sarah Steele—Intern  
 Sarah Trad—SU Engagement Fellow  
 Minjie Yoo—Intern

Website—[thewarehousegallery.syr.edu](http://thewarehousegallery.syr.edu)  
 Information—[whginfo@syr.edu](mailto:whginfo@syr.edu)  
 Voice (315) 443-6450 Fax (315) 443-6494

NON PROFIT ORG  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY  
 SYRACUSE, N.Y.

## EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Notes: height precedes width. All artworks have been made available courtesy of Apex, Chor Boogie, Jet Martinez, and Sarah Trad. All installation shots are courtesy of David Broda.

### MAIN GALLERY:

**Apex** *Untitled (Syracuse Mural)*, 2011  
 Spray-paint on wood, 120 X 346.5 inches

**Jet Martinez** *Untitled*, 2011  
 Acrylic paint on wood, 144 X 261 inches

**Chor Boogie** *First Name Unknown*, 2011  
 Spray-paint on wood, 120 X 60 inches

**VAULT:**  
 FILM, VIDEO CLIPS, AND STILL IMAGES

*A Boogie Bird's Dream I*, 2011  
 Spray-paint on wood, 120 X 60 inches

Sarah Trad, *Untitled*, 2011 (Apex, Chor Boogie, and Jet Martinez during the installation), three-channel video with audio, 8:40 min.; Apex and Jan Wayne Swayze, *Apex and Black-Scale X MNTColors*, 2011, 4:20 min.; Apex and Jan Wayne Swayze, *Y & R Mural*, 2010, 1:00 min.; Apex and Jan Wayne Swayze, *Apex x Kiya-Indigo*, 2011, 4:12 min.; Sarah Fisher, *Spray Paint-The Fine Art of Chor Boogie*, (to be released in 2012), Documentary Trailer, 3:11 min., courtesy of the artist and Blue Lotus Films; Evan Romano & Jan Wayne Swayzie, *Chor Boogie Paints Downtown Los Angeles*, 2010, 3:24 min.; Chor Boogie, still images, 2000–2011; Jet Martinez, still images, 1995–2011.

*Substance*, 2011  
 Spray-paint on wood, 120 X 60 inches

*A Boogie Bird's Dream II*, 2011  
 Spray-paint on wood, 120 X 60 inches

*Monolith*, 2011  
 Spray-paint on wood, 120 X 60 inches

California-based street artists Apex, Chor Boogie, and Jet Martinez created new temporary murals inside the Warehouse Gallery. The work is based on improvisation, collaboration, and the notion that how and what they paint is recognizably Californian in its focus on strong colors, patterns, forms, and nature. Their language consists of colorful abstract forms pertaining to optical illusions and movement, faces, evoking real and imaginary urban settings, and imaginary tropical landscapes. All three of the artists have significantly contributed to public art in San Francisco, San Diego, and other major cities within and outside of the United States through their use of spray paint (Apex; Chor Boogie) and traditional paint (Jet Martinez) to achieve elaborate compositions with high attention to detail.

Additional support for the exhibition is provided by Tucker B. Culbertson and the Delavan Center, Inc. Organized in conjunction with the Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. Round-table discussion is also supported by the Painting Program, as part of the Department of Art Visiting Lecture Series.



**COLORFORNIA: NEW FORMS IN WEST COAST STREET ART**  
**APEX, CHOR BOOGIE, AND JET MARTINEZ**

15 SEPTEMBER–29 OCTOBER 2011

THE WAREHOUSE GALLERY  
 GUIDE#15



Apex, *Untitled (Syracuse Mural)*, 2011

## THE PERSISTENT POWER OF ART

BY  
ANJA CHÁVEZ

"Even more than politicians, the artist is the guardian of freedoms in a society that is dedicated, although it does not openly confess it, to restricting them."

-- Paul-Armand Gette<sup>1</sup>

"A museum that can excite people about art and encourage them to take initiative and action is a genuinely public one."

-- Cher Krause Knight<sup>2</sup>

This fall, the Warehouse Gallery's exhibitions focus on street art in both of its spaces. The curatorial vision comes from a desire to introduce our community to the rarely exhibited art processes of street art, in order to inspire and promote discussions and debates surrounding urban revitalization.<sup>3</sup>

Placing street art (by definition a public art form) in the more formal space of the Warehouse Gallery offers new perspectives on the role and place of street art, specifically its pivotal role in California. The exhibitions at the Warehouse Gallery are all the more timely given the national attention to street art in spring 2011 through the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art's exhibition

*Art in the Streets*. Often inaccurately associated only with spraypaint, graffiti, and tagging, today's street art includes a range of media and forms (representational, abstract, conceptual, and three-dimensional) and it has a long history with varied definitions in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco.

During their three-week stay in Syracuse, the internationally renowned artists Apex, Chor Boogie, and Jet Martinez created new site-specific artworks for the Warehouse Gallery. Martinez' acrylic paint mural depicts the harmony of life and a paradisiac atmosphere through the representation of colorful birds and a deer in an imaginary landscape reminiscent of the



Installation view; main gallery, 2011  
From left to right: Jet Martinez, *Untitled*, 2011; Apex, *Untitled (Syracuse Mural)*, 2011



Apex working on *Untitled (Syracuse Mural)*, 2011

rich tradition in European illuminated manuscripts, Medieval tapestry, and frescoes, as well as through the Mexican folk art tradition of 'papel amate' (or bark painting). An extraordinary draftsman and painter with a keen eye to detail and a striking color palette, Martinez celebrates the richness of his cultural heritage, its tradition of murals, and the positive power of art, claiming that in today's world, "painting beautiful things is a form of revolution."<sup>4</sup>

Apex's spray painted mural of abstract forms reads like an homage to the utopian architecture, as in Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1927); a response to urban settings in general; and a nod in the direction of Syracuse's own architectural landmarks. The artist achieves three-dimensionality through the subtle use of color ranges. A quick sketch preceded the mural. Close-up images reveal his signature technique that consists of successive layers of spray paint colors. Questions such as "How can you layer spray paint like oil paint?" and "how far can you go?"<sup>5</sup> express Apex's artistic belief that spray paint is on equal footing with any other artistic medium. In this regard, both Apex and Chor Boogie have a similar drive to bring spray painting to the same level of acclaim in the art historical canon as any other painterly medium.

Chor Boogie spray painted five panels to reveal visions where dream and reality are one. The use of a pregnant female figure is a metaphor for the life cycle and human existence, and it points to the European traditions of Hieronymus Bosch and Francisco Goya and to the more modern works of Giorgio de Chirico and Salvador Dali. The male face with its mouth contorted into a scream is reminiscent of Edvard Munch and it reveals Boogie's recognition of the place his art can occupy in today's world. Boogie does not sketch but he does often take photographs, especially of faces. The photographs

then offer a way to focus on a specific facial angle and on how the light is reflected only from this one perspective. Boogie has also developed a way of spray painting with the can upside down, obtaining effects that are similar to airbrushing and creating fine nuances of color shades and light as if striving to revive the painterly ambitions of a Caravaggio or a Vermeer. All three artists emphasize the persistent contemporary power of painting and art as a means of bringing beauty and new life to neighborhoods and as a way to create "open museums"<sup>6</sup> accessible to anyone who happens to walk by.

The adjacent space in the Warehouse Gallery (the vault) shows still images, video clips, and a film by SU'10 alumna and Engagement Fellow Sarah Trad, in which she documents and contextualizes the artists' work process in Syracuse. Her focus on the artists' painterly innovations also reveals her own artistic qualities as a young filmmaker.

Based in San Francisco, CA, Apex (b.1978), Chor Boogie (b. 1979), and Jet Martinez (b. 1973) have contributed significantly to public art in San Francisco, San Diego, and other major cities within and outside of the United States through their use of spray and traditional paint to achieve elaborate compositions with high attention to detail.

<sup>1</sup> Paul-Armand Gette, "Notes on Art and the Public," quoted from Florian Matzner, Ed., *Public Art – A Reader*. (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Publisher 2004), 288.

<sup>2</sup> Cher Krause Knight, *Public Art: Theory, Practice and Populism* (Malden, MA; Oxford, UK; Carlton Victoria, Australia: Blackwell Publishing 2008), 69.



Installation view; main gallery with view into vault, 2011  
Paintings by Chor Boogie (from left to right: *Substance*; *A Boogie Bird's Dream II*; *Monolith*)



Installation view; main gallery, 2011  
Jet Martinez in front of his mural *Untitled (in progress)*, 2011

<sup>3</sup> The round-table "Street Art and the Use of Spray Paint" took place September 13, 2011. It included the following panelists: Apex; Chor Boogie; Bill Delavan, Delavan Center, Inc.; Tara Helfman, Assistant Professor of Law, College of Law, Syracuse University; Jet Martinez. Moderator: Luis M. Castañeda, Assistant Professor of Art History, Department of Art and Music Histories, Syracuse University.

<sup>4</sup> Jet Martinez during the round-table discussion (September 13, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Apex during the round-table discussion (September 13, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Apex in a conversation with the author (August 31, 2011).

Cover:  
Jet Martinez  
*Untitled (detail)*, 2011



Sarah Trad  
*Untitled (detail)*, 2011