



The Arts Council of Greater New Haven

EXPANDING THE ARTS • ENRICHING THE REGION

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Family Business at The Parachute Factory Gallery

The Arts Council of Greater New Haven, in collaboration with Yale Program for Recovery and Community Health and the Community Services Network of Greater New Haven, presents *Family Business* at The Parachute Factory Gallery at Erector Square, 319 Peck Street, Building 1, New Haven. The exhibit takes place from November 18 to February 27, with a reception on Tuesday, November 18, 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Prior to the reception at 4:30 pm, Joshua Blaine, a recent Princeton graduate, will speak about his experience coping with bipolar disorder and how it has affected his social and familial network. There will also be an artists' talk at 5:30 pm. The public is invited to attend. Regular gallery hours are Wednesday, 10 am-2 pm; Thursday and Friday, 12-5 pm and by appointment.

Family Business brings together diverse artists and mediums to explore the business of being a family. Family structures—both traditional and unconventional—and family dynamics—both functional and dysfunctional—are explored in this engaging exhibition. Featured artists include: Steven DiGiovanni, Larissa Hall, Joe Saccio, Hrvoje Slovinc and the Broell Bresnick family of New Haven, CT; Bob Gregson of Orange, CT; Erika Van Natta of Bethany, CT; Thuan Vu of Hamden, CT; Gary Duehr, Kelly Sherman and Paul Nash of Massachusetts; Judy Gelles of Pennsylvania; Lilianne Milgrom of Maryland; James Montford of Rhode Island; and Yoon Cho of New York. The exhibition was curated by Howard el-Yasin and Debbie Hesse.

The Arts Council is a regional non-profit membership arts organization dedicated to enhancing, developing and promoting opportunities for artists, arts organizations and audiences throughout the Greater New Haven area. The Arts Council strives to build a vibrant artistic and cultural community that is representative of all disciplines, fiscally strong, supportive of all artists and organizations, rich in ethnic and socioeconomic diversity and accessible to all audiences.

A unique new initiative of the Community Services Network of Greater New Haven (CSN) and the Yale Program for Recovery and Community Health (PRCH), The Parachute Factory seeks to foster community health through the arts by sponsoring interdisciplinary, artistic programs and collaborations that expand opportunity for people within the greater New Haven community. PRCH conducts research, training, education and policy development in the field of behavioral health. Its guiding philosophy is recovery, defined as the regaining of a person's place in the community as a way of living with and living beyond the experiences of mental illness and addiction. The CSN, administered by the Yale Department of Psychiatry through the



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Connecticut Mental Health Center, is a consortium of 18 community-based organizations that provide a variety of behavioral health services to people throughout the greater New Haven area. The mission of the CSN is to help families and individuals enjoy meaningful and satisfying lives through the coordination of recovery-oriented clinical, housing, social rehabilitation, vocational, and other services.

For further information about this exhibition, please call the Arts Council at 203-772-2788.

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Description of Work

Family Business Part 1

Notions of what an ideal family might look like are seen in **Yoon Cho's** "Nuclear Family Project," a series of photographs that show two individuals working together to build a new identity as a unit. In these photographs, silhouettes of an imaginary baby are superimposed over the artist's "pre-baby" suburban life. In contrast, **Judy Gelles's** black and white photo series "Family Portrait," capture the messy reality of daily family life—dirty diapers, dirty dishes, potty training—moments not usually found in the typical family album. **James Montford's** video "Wife" is about the person we marry, and the union and confluence of family and identity. Montford's family is white, black and Native American.

Gender and role stereotypes are confronted in works by **Lilianne Milgrom** and **Hrvoje Slovinc**. Slovinc reconstructs Victorian-era portraits, substituting same-sex couples for their heterosexual counterparts. Lilianne Milgrom gives us a glimpse of a seemingly cohesive traditional family, yet they are untraditional in appearance—sexy, relaxed, hip and synchronized in movement.

Gary Duehr and **Thuan Vu** explore memory and distortion in their work. Duehr, in his photographic series *Fracture*, questions our memory of events within a family, in his "autobiographical fiction" displayed in gold frames. Trompe l'oeil cracks in the glass, interrupting intact faces beneath, beg the question 'are these fissures in memory, or within the family itself.' Thuan Vu creates large scale "faux ancestral" paintings of family members based on a traditional Vietnamese technique, *ve voi bot*. Deliberately out of focus and without detail, they seek to capture the idea of losing a memory of a person.

Expressions of familial affection and devotion are noted in works by **Joe Saccio**, **Paul Nash** and **Steven DiGiovanni**. Joe Saccio commemorates family events—prom night, birthdays—by creating sculptural objects that he gives to family members to mark their significance. These artifacts are representations of expressions of love and exchange within a family. **Paul Nash** captures "snapshots" of his infant son daily in a video documentation that condenses four years of face shots into a two minute piece that is updated daily. Steven DiGiovanni's large scale



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figurative paintings of his partner Chisato and her daughter serve as validation and acknowledgement of the fundamentals that bond their uniquely blended family structure.

Family dysfunction dominates in works by **Erika Van Natta, Larissa Hall** and **Kelly Sherman**. Erika Van Natta's video, *Grey Matters to Me*, focuses on three men, each with psychiatric disorders or physical brain injuries, and the effects their conditions have had on them and their family members. One vignette relates the story of a man with schizophrenia, who dies of heat exhaustion when removed from a bus, as told from his brother's perspective. Larissa Hall takes the family annual holiday letter to convey how family stories are constructed to maintain social networks. Hall, in her wall installation, offers a glimpse of devastation in the life of a modern family. Kelly Sherman quietly and coolly chronicles a divorce through diagrammatic prints of changing floor plans, and moving and packing lists, in her anthropological study of social networks.

Bob Gregson's interactive installation *Because I Said So* uses phrases familiar to most families. His "bicker booth" allows the audience to become active participants and role play family interactions with ready-made "conversations."

Family Business: Part 2

Family Business: Part 2 is a companion show that features the **Broell Bresnick Family** and aims to show how three generations of artists have influenced each others' lives and each others' art.