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O Exhibition Comes To SICA



(Long Branch, NJ) -- The Shore Institute of the Contemporary Arts (SICA) presents O - an exhibition paying homage to all that is round, curvy and looped. Curated by MatCh-Art (Matthew Fisher and Christina Vassallo), O will open November 30 and run through January 7, 2006. The opening reception will be held on Sunday, December 11th from 3 to 6 p.m. SICA's "Speaking of Art..." series will feature a round table discussion and gallery tour with the curators on Thursday, December 16, at 7 p.m.

MatCh-Art selected a group of artists working in a diverse range of media to explore the circle in contemporary art. Used as a formal and conceptual device, the circle embodies infinity, which can mean eternal existence or endless ennui. In art and in life, the circle's perfection is a sought after goal but an unattainable ideal. Many of the artists included in the exhibition already incorporate the circular format into their oeuvre to confront these issues, while others were challenged to work with the shape specifically for this exhibition and document their experiences.

Artists participating in O include Lisa Beck, Louis Cameron, Moriah Carlson, Orly Cogan, Mark Dagley, Joel Edwards, Rob Grunder, Francis Holstrom, Sharon Horvath, Jim Houser, Jasper Johns, Chris Kasper, Laura Ledbetter, Jim Lee, Monique Luchetti, Noah Lyon, Andrew Masullo, Rob Matthews, Derick Melander, Tom Moody, Matthew Northridge, John Phillips, James Rosenthal, Savako, Randall Sellers, Mark Shetabi, Jordan Tinker, John Torreano, Alice Wu, B. Wurtz and Nami Yamamoto.

The circle commands respect—as a staple of art history it's got a reputation to maintain. During the Italian Renaissance the circle was considered to be a divinely inspired shape and throughout the fourteenth century the tondo (Italian for "round") was reserved for religious icons or allegorical scenes. In neo-Platonic thought, the circle epitomized the perfectibility of man. The history of portraiture owes a large debt to the formal characteristics of the roundel;

many government buildings are filled with oval canvases celebrating VIPs.

Despite this impressive lineage and evocative nature, many works utilizing the circle – either as a dominant element or as the format circular canvases have assumed a kitschy appeal. Today they are often relegated to the wire racks of thrift stores or are doomed to adorn the wood paneling in grandma's basement. Sensing that "serious" art might not be restricted to right angles and straight lines, MatCh-Art decided to investigate whether artists were making thought-provoking and engaging work with shapely objects or perimeters. Indeed, this exhibition is a collection of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and installations that serve as an ode to the O.

MatCh-Art was born during the winter of 2003 in a quaint apartment in Ridgewood, Queens. Artist Matthew Fisher decided to host a series of weekend-long exhibitions in his abode and beseeched the help of art writer Christina Vassallo. The pair proved to have a seemingly endless supply of irreverent exhibition concepts. Since their first show, Wagon's East, the curating duo has created several online exhibitions for their website and coordinated group shows for non-profit organizations, galleries, and art fairs.

MatCh-Art espouses curating as an art form. Inspired by the thriving creativity of artist collectives, MatCh-Art is a singular vision shared by two curators. The show concepts are the driving force behind the selection of the art and the mission is to create cohesive group exhibitions that spark a dialogue between the work of emerging and established artists. MatCh-Art is a migratory curating machine operating in venues across the country.

SICA is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to establish a uniquely stimulating and creative environment in which to experience the contemporary arts. The primary goal of the center is to increase the general public's accessibility, awareness and appreciation of the contemporary arts in central New Jersey. By establishing close relationships with major art organizations and educational institutions, we will seek to complement and augment those programs currently available through the establishment of classes, lectures, exhibitions and performances.

SICA is located at 20 Third Avenue in Long Branch. For more information, please call 732.263.1121 or visit www.sica.org. Gallery hours are as follows: Monday and Tuesday closed, Wednesday and Thursday 1-5 p.m., Friday 11-8 p.m., Saturday 11-6 p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m.