assume vivid astro focus: avalanches volcanoes asteroids floods

Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB) will present assume vivid astro focus, two newly commissioned installations by the vibrant New York/Paris based artist duo assume vivid astro focus (avf) from August 14 – December 31, 2016. The exhibition is a site-specific retrospective featuring various media including painting, rugs printed with never before seen imagery from the artist’s archives, hand-painted and stenciled murals, and a video installation. assume vivid astro focus was founded by El Sudbrack (b. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1968) in 2001. Sudbrack began working with Christophe Hamalde Piens (b. Paris, 1973) in 2005 as a duo that often merges into a collective, depending on the different projects they are involved in. avf works in a vast array of media, including painting, drawing, installations, video, sculpture, neons, wallpaper, decals, and often confronts gender, politics, and embedded cultural codes through pop imagery and neon colors. The duo brings a passionate collaborative spirit to every aspect of their work—from conceiving projects in tandem, to employing an extensive range of references and materials, to executing large-scale installations with expert, animated, diverse and talented teams. avf approaches every project with a combination of all-encompassing, unbridled vision and keen pragmatism.

Personal expression and a lust for life are prominently emphasized in projects that are simultaneously rooted in politics of free speech, civil rights, classifications of class, gender and national identity. Influenced by pop culture and political references, avf is influenced by multiple sources and visual traits from art, culture, politics, sociology, fashion and music, creating stunning and visually explosive mash-ups of transformed and re-contextualized references. Tactile with a hedonistic spirit, and engages in frequent collaborations with musicians, designers, dancers and other artists, challenging conventional assumptions about authorship and the role of the artist’s persona in society and the contemporary art world with their core belief as foundation: “share, generosity, contemplate, be contaminated, devour, be devoured, travel, and spread”.

The title, avalanches volcanoes asteroids floods uses the avf acronym, a play on words often utilized by the artists, to refer to our collective anxiety around natural disasters (particularly sensitive in California and Brazil at the moment), avf fuses drawing, sculpture, and performance into carnivalesque Installations in which gender, politics, and cultural codes float freely. avf Interfaces geometric abstraction and transgender imagery in paintings that challenge social and sexual norms.

avf has also been the subject of major exhibitions and public art projects around the world. These include Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2015); The Faena Art Center, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2014); Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), North Miami (2013); The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, Norway (2009); Sao Paulo Bienal, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2008); Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York (2006); Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Los Angeles (2005); The Whitney Biennial, New York (2004); among others.

Some of the content in this exhibition may not be appropriate for all audiences as it contains adult material.

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