



## Inner Selves and Animal Instincts

*Visual Fringe gets intimate and primal this year*

**MATT MORRIS** // MAY 26, 2010

"Fringe suggests that (which is) set apart from work aiming at marketability. It probably has a tendency to disturb. Fringe won't answer questions, it will present them."

So says Cincinnati artist Robin Stinetorf in his statement for this year's Visual Fringe Festival. Stinetorf is one of six artists to comprise the visual art appendage of the Cincy Fringe Festival, the 12-day-long showcase of progressive projects in theater, film and art that's entering its seventh year.

The opening reception of the Visual Fringe is part of the June 1 Kick-Off Party for Fringe. Check out the art show in the basement of the Art Academy of Cincinnati (1212 Jackson St. in Over-the-Rhine) starting at 6 p.m., then migrate over to the Know Theatre just a block away for food, drink and special "underground" entertainment. For the suggested \$5, enthusiasts can enjoy both events and party all evening.

The 2010 incarnation of the art show looks to be a leaner, perhaps more streamlined attempt to articulate the idea of "fringe." If Stinetorf is right in asserting that Fringe opens inquiries without

necessarily resolving them (and I think he is), then this year's artists seem to gather around a smaller number of enigmas, with a repeated emphasis on distortions of body politics and art that refers back to its maker — either through self-portraiture or the unusual circumstances surrounding the making of several artworks on display.

By the way, now seems as good a time as any to tell you that one of the artists in the exhibition is Cholla, a horse that paints.

Cholla the Painting Horse (from Reno, Nev.) has been making slapdash marks in paint on various surfaces since his interest in painting surfaced in 2004. He's been featured on CNN, USAToday.com and other national news sources.

Cholla's paintings are obviously abstract, expressive gestures that recall similar paintings from other artist-animals, like Ruby, the abstract expressionist elephant that lived at the Phoenix Zoo. Cholla's owner, Renee Chambers, provides plenty more about the horse (along with a gallery of herself jumping about in various swimsuits) on the enthusiastically maintained web site [www.artistisahorse.com](http://www.artistisahorse.com).

Stinetorf's mixed-media constructions are one of the four takes on photography in the Visual Fringe this year. His "Swan Series" makes the hand positions for shadow puppetry its subject matter.

Julie M. Hucke (based in Springdale) offers a photographic series of self-portraits entitled "Learning to Live with Myself" that seeks to contrast and reconcile inner and outer selves. Deogracias Lerma, from Cincinnati, is a photographer who's worked closely with Know Theatre and the Fringe Festival over the years to create iconic, silly and edgy images for their promotional material.

Kent Krugh, a photographer based in Fairfield, explains in his artist statement that he uses a "synthesis of invisible and visible photon imaging techniques ... the spectral entities are fully revealed via the capture of both high and low energies." Using mementos of his mother's travels abroad, Krugh seems to hope to reveal not only the nature of the objects themselves but also their connections to his mother, and in so doing perhaps her nature is also revealed. Aside from the horse who paints, there is one other painter in the exhibition, Boris Zakic of Georgetown, Ky. He says he began the "Oval Portrait" project in response to a short story by Edgar Allan Poe by the same title. Zakic's place in this show seems intended to link the expressive efforts of Cholla with the various explorations into the body by the human artists exhibiting.

There is a hefty dose of sensationalism when an open call to artists results in a show of five humans and a horse. I suggest we approach with open minds, tempered with skepticism and the thrill to be at another new Fringe Festival in our city.

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**VISUAL FRINGE FESTIVAL is presented at Chidlaw Gallery in the Art Academy of Cincinnati's lower level June 1-12. Opening reception is 6-9 p.m. June 1, with a \$5 suggested donation. Get details at [www.cincyfringe.com/visual](http://www.cincyfringe.com/visual).**

**<https://www.citybeat.com/arts-culture/visual-arts/article/13014397/inner-selves-and-animal-instincts>**