

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MICHAEL SCOGGINS *US AGAINST THEM* March 1<sup>st</sup>-April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 @

FREIGHT+VOLUME

and DAVID KRAMER *AGE-OLD STORY* in the video room.

Amidst the ebb and flow, the wax and wane of fashion and trend in the art world, Michael Scoggins has been consistently true to himself. His bold, very real and idiosyncratic style, his ability to channel an eight year-old schoolboy looking wide-eyed at the world, his handwriting itself, is instantly recognizable. His work has been often imitated - but never as successfully, unabashedly and with such seeming ease and effortlessness as the original.

I first encountered Scoggins' art at Art Basel Miami in 2002. At that point, fresh from a SCAD MFA and living in Georgia, he was creating faux chalkboards - raw, trompe l'oeil affairs with half-erased messages and kernels of wisdom from the classroom. Shortly after, Michael arrived at his present mode - 70x50 inch oversize notebook paper, hand-cut, crumpled and torn with trademark blue lines, spiral holes and rounded edges. Throughout many genres he has maintained this look - his All American Families, his Superhero Comics, his Presidents series, his journal-entry confessionals. Employing an admixture of graphite, prismacolor, and assorted media, Scoggins manages to say quite a bit with very little - and always with insight, irony and timeliness.

His newest exhibition, *Us Against Them* (Scoggins' first solo in NYC in five years) dives in and tackles current global issues of unrest and inequality, corporate greed and bailout, peacekeepers vs war crime perpetrators, giant banks vs the little guy. His ingenuous, pre-teen alter ego "Michael S." again slews the Goliaths like a David with his mighty (albeit mistake-ridden) cursive and magic-markers. The lessons learned in grade school are nowhere more relevant than now: share the sandbox, play nice with others, be a real Patriot, whatever goes around comes around, etc. In works such as *Art is A Weapon*, *Poor Little Drawing*, and *All American Family XVI (in front of the Guggenheim)*, Scoggins deftly skewers art world posturing and hype; in others, like *The King is Dead (Long Live the King)*, and *I Promise I'll Be A Better Patriot*, he calls into question our civil liberties and the abuse of same by the government administrations.

The "Us Against Them" theme is exemplified perfectly in Scoggins' exploration of the 99% vs. 1% championed in the current Occupy movement. Over the years, Scoggins has developed a justice system of his own in both his large format and fragmented drawings: part vigilante, part seer, part trickster, he disarms the viewer through his easy, innocent humor and swift satire, before he delivers the knockout punch. Similar to that of great political writers and cartoonists, such as GB Trudeau and PG Wodehouse, Scoggins' America is not without its truth and beauty, although inseparable from the wrongdoing, avarice and corruption waiting at every turn. His awkward, homegrown *Superman* can best be seen as a triumph of artistic spirit and

Id, in the face of the Art World's marketeering, smoke and mirrors. Scoggins' honest and unwavering Southern attitude, his homespun vision, ultimately shines through.

Michael Scoggins was born in Washington D.C. in 1973. Growing up in Virginia he relocated later to Savannah, Georgia where he gained an MFA in painting from the Savannah College of Art and Design in 2006. In the summer 2003 he attended the prestigious Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Skowhegan, Maine. He has shown extensively, earned international recognition and has gallery representation in Atlanta, Miami, New York, San Francisco, Vienna and Seoul. He has work in the collections of the MoMA and the Hammer museums, among other institutions. Scoggins currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

In the video room this month, we are very excited to present the work of another champion of the underdog, David Kramer. His silent movie *AGE OLD STORY* is a poignant take on the trials and tribulations of a starving, struggling artist in New York. In recent years David Kramer's reputation for humorous drawings with zinger one-liners has grown steadily. Behind the catch-phrases from Kramer's work is a long history of storytelling and text-based drawings originally banged out on a manual typewriter that he says he once found in an apartment in Brooklyn he lived in, while attending Pratt Institute in the late 1980's. Kramer's written word pieces soon led him into the world of performance art, as many writers and artists encouraged him to read his tales of woe out loud and in front of audiences. The gritty and sometimes boozy performances soon led to videos and films that ranged between impromptu stand up monologues in front of a camera in his studio, to elaborate short films complete with scripts, costumes, set and props all built by Kramer himself.

*AGE OLD STORY* tells the tale of two young artists who struggle out of the gate on their paths towards artistic greatness. Both careers are heavily influenced by luck and circumstance. One artist's luck is wonderful and good, while the other's (Kramer's) luck is strictly bad and often bordering on disaster. The film is shot on black + white super 8 film stock, and the sets are built in early DIY fashion to mimic the legendary silent movie masters like Chaplin and Keaton. Everything from the frozen toilet to the toney uptown apartment of a wealthy patron of the arts has been built by Kramer alone to set the background for the story. Like Chaplin and Keaton before him, Kramer's lot in life in this film is to walk through the earth as a victim of circumstance, while watching his friend's career ascend to greatness purely by being always in the right place, at the right time.

Freight + Volume is pleased to house the first formal gallery installation of *AGE OLD STORY* (2008) in the U.S. The film has been screened at the Pordenone Silent Film Festival, Italy (2008); the Coney Island Film Festival (2009); Aeroplastics Contemporary, Brussels; and Five Myles Gallery in Brooklyn, NY. David Kramer received his MFA in Sculpture from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY in 1987, and a BA in Fine Arts, from The George Washington University, Washington, DC in 1985.

Kramer's recent exhibitions include "American Exports" (2012) at ESSI, Auguleme, France; "...This Is What It's Like."(2012) Galerie Laurent Godin, Paris; "NEON" (2012), Maison Rouge, Paris; "Prequel to the Sequel" (2011), Heiner Contemporary, Washington, DC; and "The Hangover, Too" (2011) Mulherin+Pollard, NYC. He currently lives in Manhattan and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Please join us for a gala public reception on Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup> from 6-8pm, as well as a more intimate artist's gathering during Armory week on Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm. For more information please contact Nick Lawrence at 212-691-7700, or [nick@freightandvolume.com](mailto:nick@freightandvolume.com).