

# CUE

ART FOUNDATION

## Mitchell Squire

Curated by Theaster Gates

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012

*(Opening reception Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm)*

“Mitchell moves comfortably through the world of story and makes harmonies from this country’s disparities. Mitchell is willing to engage Power in ways that allow us into a conversation about the value of histories, the right to speak and the way we are.”

—Theaster Gates



The work of Iowa-based artist, Mitchell Squire investigates the potent agency of material culture to allow us reflect upon society, race, and history – both shared and personal – by intertwining them within found, inherited, mass-produced and general everyday objects and materials. Narratives either inherent to, or constructed within them are very simply reorganized and manipulated by Squire to bring undercurrents in the American historical narrative to the surface, poetically underlining the moments of struggle and loss that accompany the various circumstances to which they loosely refer, and certainly that still influence the contemporary national dialogue.

On view at CUE Art Foundation, Squire’s first solo show in New York City, are ten of the artist’s most recent mixed-media works – two wall pieces, seven free-standing installations and one video. These works are a clear but certainly aligned evolution from past projects that were more archival and collection-based, moving to direct combination and thus more physical in their presence. Through the use of the objects – toys, baby shoes, rope, costume jewelry, and even materials like fur, feathers and human hair – the work

is made universally accessible and functions as vessels for personal reflection through the viewer’s exploration of their own associations and assumptions. Much like the materials in these assemblages, the viewer is positioned to reevaluate their own reactions within a larger social context referred to in this selection of work. While interpretation is purposely left open-ended, an air of critique is palpable. The items and materials selected seem to reverberate with foreboding and precariousness as they appear to be just moments from falling, tipping or crushing. At the same time, many objects are tightly wrapped, gouged, torn, or simply weighed down. The implication conjured is of the unease felt when placed in the often dichotomous, complex position of reflecting upon cultural and historical instances and the constriction assigned when attempting to transcend instances of adversity while at the same time being called to acknowledge and reform them. Implication and is as far as these works travel – they do not support or further an authoritarian approach, nor do they provide absolution. Rather, they prepare use to move forward by supplying the means for looking back.



**(More, over)**

For additional information, please contact Ryan Thomas, Programs Coordinator, CUE Art Foundation, 212-206-3583, or email [ryan.thomas@cueartfoundation.org](mailto:ryan.thomas@cueartfoundation.org)

Free catalogues available.

### **ARTIST'S BIO:**

Mitchell Squire is an installation artist, sculptor and performance artist based in Iowa. He is primarily known for his work that explores culture through collected artifacts. He historicizes the performative aspects of objects through strategies of association and the incorporation of provocative materials including human hair, candy, and athletic tape, in an attempt to tease out the presence of complex structures of desire. In 2010, Squire was the recipient of the *Midwest Voices and Vision* award, administered by the Alliance of Artists Communities and funded by The Joyce Foundation, and the *Camille Hanks Cosby Fellowship* to participate in the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. A nationally recognized educator in the field of architecture, his published works include the poetic treatise "Paris Done Burnt!" in *White Papers, Black Marks: Architecture, Race and Culture* (2000), and the object collection "cultureWARE: Implements of Desire; or EAT THIS!" in *Eating Architecture* (2004). He is currently an Associate Professor of Architecture and holds both Bachelor and Master of Architecture degrees from Iowa State University. Squire's exhibition at CUE Art Foundation marks his first solo show in New York City.

### **About CUE:**

CUE Art Foundation is a non-profit arts organization dedicated to promoting culture by supporting the creativity of under-recognized visual artists by offering comprehensive arts education programming for artists and students, and interdisciplinary arts events for public audiences.

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