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“DIRRRTY HARRIET TUBMAN” AND MOCK MOVIE POSTERS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN ICONS CHALLENGE 1970s BLAXPLOITATION REPRESENTATIONS

ArtCenter Shows Subversive Exhibit by 12 Graphic Artists – Opens June 13, 2009

“Freedom Fighters is their name. Freedom Fighters is their game.”

MIAMI BEACH, FL (May 19, 2009) – ArtCenter/South Florida (“ACSF”) turns Blaxploitation on its “sweet baadasssss” with ***Freedom Fighters: American Legends Re-Imagined***. Opening on **Friday, June 13 at 7:00 p.m.** and on view through July 19, 2009, 12 graphic artists from across the country have designed mock posters of iconic African Americans including Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner and the Black Panthers. This subversive exhibition uses movie poster artwork to examine the 1970s Black Exploitation film genre and its role in casting contemporary truths and challenging fixed notions of history. Curated by Roderick Southall of Obsidian Arts (MN) with the assistance of Jacquenette Arnette, ArtCenter Director of Exhibitions, *Freedom Fighters* at 800 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach, is free and open to the public. For more information, please call 305.674. 8278 or visit www.artcentersf.org.

“ArtCenter/South Florida’s exhibitions strive to test audiences’ perceptions and understanding of contemporary art and artists,” said Jeremy Chestler, ACSF Executive Director. “*Freedom Fighters* provides visitors with an ironic and intelligent look at common assumptions and stereotypes of African American activists and their role in defining popular culture.”

Participating artists include Arvay Adams, Michael Paul Britto, Ernest Arthur Bryant III, Caiphus, Roger Cummings, Detekh, Christopher Harrison, Rodney Jackson, Jason Scott Jones, Kobe Mowatt, Duane Smith and Shalette Cauley Wandrick.

Freedom Fighters comprises a powerful mix of fact, myth and perspectives, with illustrations depicting the historical journey of African American people in popular media in the United States. The exhibit forces its audience to question what they know about the featured equal

rights activists by presenting them outside of their historical context with pieces titled “Madam C.J. Walker: The Black Godmother (There’s a new godmother in town);” “Sojourner Truth: Truth’s her name, justice is her game, can you face... the truth;” “Harriet: Queen of Spades;” and “Nat Turner: He clobbers the white man as black belt Killmaster Jones”.

“The *Freedom Fighters* project examines the discourse of Black icons from a wide range of subject positions – humor, satire, irony,” said LeRonn P. Brooks, guest writer with Rush Arts Gallery and lecturer at New York University and Parsons School of Design (NY). “The artists in this exhibit use the poster as platform to turn these histories on their heads by conflating and scattering time, narrative and allegory, while challenging the notion of the Black body as a nation’s image, or as a super moral or immoral icon.”

While movies often receive the glory for shifting popular social understandings, movie posters create both anticipation for the film and canonize its message. *Freedom Fighters*’ artists isolate the poster medium as a communication tool and take aim at the fixed history of an American legend. They play with meaning and assumptions, recasting the 1970s genre’s characters as “Blaxploitation Superstars.”

Freedom Fighters has been made possible with the generous support of Diaspora Vibe Gallery, Grolsch and Eno’s.

About ArtCenter/South Florida

Established in 1984, ArtCenter/South Florida (located at 800, 810 and 924 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach) is a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization that provides subsidized studio and exhibition space as well as teaching opportunities for emerging and career artists in their facilities at 800, 810 and 924 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach. The mission of the ArtCenter is to advance the knowledge and practice of contemporary visual arts and culture in South Florida while providing affordable programming and work-space for professional artists. ArtCenter/South Florida is open Monday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. and Friday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. For further information please call 305.674.8278 or visit the website at www.artcentersf.org.

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Editor's Note: Artist biographies and high-resolution images available upon request.

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