



### Drawing crowds: Outpost's Monster Drawing Rally brings out the wild side of artists

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Two years ago, artist Evan Holloway used Trader Joe's peanut butter to draw stick figures. Last year, Susan Silton brought an old typewriter to work with fonts. Most artists use more traditional mediums like pencils, pen and charcoal but the message is clear: Monster Drawing Rally, the annual fundraising event for the nonprofit Outpost for Contemporary Art, is not your usual benefit auction.

This fundraiser, which will take place Sunday at the Center for the Arts in Eagle Rock, is actually not an auction at all — and both the process and price point are meant to be accessible. One hundred artists draw over the course of a long afternoon and supporters can show up to watch (\$10 for adults, and kids are free) and purchase works (\$75 each). If more than one buyer eyes the same work, they draw cards to see who gets the right to purchase.

Julie Deamer, the founder of Outpost, says the event does compare to a monster truck rally in one respect. "It's big and behemoth and crazy," she says. "Having 100 artists drawing in the same place over the course of a day really does create this wild energy."

Deamer, who used to run a gallery in San Francisco, says she borrowed the event concept from Southern Exposure, the alternative space that has made Monster Drawing Rally a popular event there for the last decade.

The idea has legs. The nonprofit gallery Midway in Minneapolis tried its hand at the event a couple years ago, and 1708 Gallery in Richmond, Va., just held its first version this August. Southern Exposure director Courtney Fink says they are happy to share the event name and procedures with other nonprofit spaces. "All we ask in exchange is formal credit and a nod to Southern Exposure," she says.

Deamer says she likes the concept because of its emphasis on making art -- and artists -- more accessible. "This event really breaks down the barriers between artist and audience, so they interact with each other," she says.

This year Deamer enlisted 20 curators to invite the artists instead of choosing them herself. Most artists are new to the event, including Chris Johanson, Euan Macdonald, Kaari Upson, Stephanie Washburn and Jonas Wood. The full list of artists and other event details are on Outpost's website.

-- Jori Finkel

[www.twitter.com/jorifinkel](http://www.twitter.com/jorifinkel)

*Image: 2008 Monster Drawing Rally, photograph by Anita K. Marto. Courtesy Outpost for Contemporary Art.*