



## Rochester Contemporary Art Center

137 East Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14604  
585.461.2222

hours: Wed – Sun 1-5 pm / Fri 1-10pm

admission: \$2 / free for members



## NEWS RELEASE

for more information contact:

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Rochester Contemporary Art Center (RoCo) announces a new group exhibition of national and local artists who explore the serious side of toys and play.

**Opening Reception:** Friday, April 7, 6-9pm

**Artist Talk:** Saturday, April 8, 1pm

**First Friday:** May 5, 6-9 pm

(Rochester, NY) *It's Not Funny* brings together artists, designers, and collectives who use toys and humor to engage with serious subject matter. The diverse projects featured in this exhibition combine playful objects with unexpected and deeper cultural critique. *It's Not Funny* includes new and recent work by Airigami (Rochester, NY) Bob Conge AKA Plaseebo (Rochester, NY), Chris Cosnowski (Chicago, IL), Dan Gunderson (DeLand, FL), Dina Goldstein (Tel Aviv, Israel / Vancouver, BC), Jason Schulmerich (Rochester, NY), and Tyler Bohm (Columbus, Ohio).

**Airigami** (Rochester, NY) is an art group formed by Larry Moss and Kelly Cheatle. They work collectively and specialize in the fine art of folding air: making massive sculptures entirely out of balloons. Airigami has created a range of high-impact designs for world-recognized brands. Some of their projects such as Elastic Park, Airigami Balloon Adventure, Balloon Manor and Fantastic Flying Octopus have been the subject of local, national and international media attention. Airigami recently made a highly visible installation for the New York Fashion Week.

**Bob Conge** AKA Plaseebo (Rochester, NY) graduated from Syracuse University with an MFA in painting. He taught in the Art schools of Syracuse and RIT, followed by a freelance illustration career then moving on to painting and printmaking. Conge's work is known internationally and he is represented in public and university collections in the United States, Europe, Japan and China including the Museum of Modern Art in Toyama, Japan, the Musee de la Publicite in Paris, France among others. In 2005 Conge founded his sculpture studio Plaseebo, quickly becoming one of the prominent figure in the world of custom vinyl and resin toys. Conge recently collaborated with KAWS on a limited edition series of toys.

**Chris Cosnowski** (Chicago, IL) examines metaphoric and symbolic ideas of American Society through his hyperrealistic oil paintings. The subjects of these impossible still lifes come from the world of toys and Americana. The scenes create a high-low culture clash as the difficulty of the realistic painting style contrasts with the absurdity of the subject matter. Cosnowski received his MFA in Painting from Northwestern University and his BFA from Columbus College of Art and Design in Columbus, OH. His work has been exhibited in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, London and beyond. Cosnowski currently lives and works in Chicago and has been represented by Lyons Wier Gallery since 2001.

**Dan Gunderson** (DeLand, Florida) is a renowned sculptor and a long-time professor of art at Stetson University in Florida. Featured in *It's Not Funny* are several of Gunderson's luminous photographs of the mesmerizing toy mandalas he creates. His kaleidoscopic images vacillate between the overall pattern and the familiar toys that comprise them. The exhibition will also feature a transfixing video documenting many of the artist's works from this project. Dan has had numerous museum exhibitions, including at the Polk Museum of Art and at the Mennello Museum of American Art.

**Dina Goldstein** (Tel Aviv, Israel) is an Internationally known photographer based in Vancouver Canada. Her projects challenge the conventional conceptions of the feminine ideal and gender stereotypes. Her photographic series *In the Dollhouse*, have been described by critic Barry Dumka as, "social documentary photography masquerading as a puppet show." A ten-part sequential narrative that takes place within a dollhouse belonging to Barbie and Ken and their not so happily ever after. Dina Goldstein has received international recognition and has been exhibited widely throughout North America, Europe and the Middle East. In 2014, she received the Prix Virginia Award, an international prize for women photographers.

**Tyler Bohm** (Columbus, Ohio) uses plexiglas and other materials to interrogate the complex role of technology in our lives. He has held solo exhibitions at the Van Der Plas Gallery in New York, the Ohio State University Urban Arts Space in Columbus and the Northeastern Illinois University Fine Arts Center Gallery in Chicago. His work has been included in group shows at Trestle Gallery in Brooklyn, Contemporary Arts Institute of Detroit, Cube Gallery in Ottawa, Lumos Gallery in Columbus, and the Dayton Visual Arts Center.

**Jason Schulmerich** (Rochester, NY) is a self-taught artist whose weird, science fiction inspired drawings depict part robotic, part organically mutated citizens. *It's Not Funny* includes two participatory magazines: *Hell Bart* and *Hell Mickey*. For these publications, the artist asked strangers and friends to quickly depict popular animated characters without reference imagery. Schulmerich and RoCo have teamed up to re-print a limited number of these two publications which will be given to visitors as supplies last. Jason has participated in the Rochester Contemporary Art Center's past Members Exhibitions.



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