

RUSH ARTS GALLERY CHELSEA

For Immediate Release
info@rushphilanthropic.org
+1.212.691.9552

RUSH ARTS GALLERY CHELSEA

526 W26TH ST., #311
NEW YORK, NY 10001
T. 212.691.9552
www.rushartsgallery.org
WED - SAT 12:00pm – 6:00pm

Michael De Feo : *A pocket full of posies*

Thursday, September 4 – Saturday, September 20, 2014

Opening reception: Thursday, September 4th, from 6:00 to 8:00pm

Artist talk: Saturday, September 20th, from 3:00 to 5:00pm



Rush Arts Gallery is pleased to present, *A pocket full of posies*, an exhibition of new paintings by artist, Michael De Feo in what will be his first solo gallery exhibition in New York in more than ten years.

From his illegal art installations on the streets of international cities to his widely exhibited paintings, Michael's works of the past twenty and more years merge a childlike wonder of the world with universal themes of loss and renewal. Sometimes utilizing cheerful imagery such as his globally recognized flower project juxtaposed with its ephemeral installation on the streets highlights the cycle of life while also spreading smiles and whimsy. His studio paintings are frequently on collaged maps on canvas which create new geographies and links his desire to spread his art on the streets at a worldwide level. For Michael, painting on maps acts as a metaphor for painting the entire world.

Beginning September 4, 2014, Rush Arts Chelsea will present the first exhibition ever organized to focus exclusively on Michael De Feo's flower paintings. *A pocket full of posies* showcases paintings on canvas and board that range in size from small portrait format to wall height.

These new paintings are a departure from Michael's iconic street flower while also continuing his exploration of flowers as subject. Throughout history, flowers have been present in times of celebration as well as times of grief. In a similar duality, Michael's paintings seem to depict the flowers blooming and wilting simultaneously. De Feo's interest in Dutch 17th century flower painting as well as Vanitas Painting is evident and Michael's new works are an homage as well as a revolt against them. The title of the exhibition, *A pocket full of posies* is a line from the over one hundred year old nursery rhyme, "Ring Around the Rosie" which legend says originally described the plague. At that time, many people believed that carrying sweet smelling flowers such as posies on one's person could ward off illness and disease.

About the Artist

Best known in the street art movement for his ubiquitous and iconic flower image, artist Michael De Feo has been creating illegal works on the streets for more than 20 years in more than 40 international cities including New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Cabo San Lucas, Amsterdam, Paris, Venice, Buenos Aires, Panama City and Hong Kong. Although his flower is the only image he repeats in his street art, Michael has created a variety of other works in the public sphere.

Not limited to the streets as his canvas, De Feo's work has also appeared in numerous galleries and museums around the world: The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Conn.; MASS MoCA, North Adams, Mass.; Museo de Arte, San Juan, Puerto Rico; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Colette, Paris; Stolen Space, London; The National Art Gallery, Bangladesh; and more. Notable exhibitions include Wooster on Spring at New York's Candle Building, which Roberta Smith of The New York Times noted as one of 2006's top 10 cultural events; 2005's *Two Atmospheres* at The Aldrich Art Museum in Ridgefield, Conn.; 2008's *Flowers* at Manifesta 7 in Trento, Italy; 2010's *Mining for Splinters and Diamonds* at No Borders Art in Hong Kong; 2013's *10 Years of Woostercollective*, at Jonathan Levine Gallery in New York and most recently *The 80's Past + Present* at the Bleecker Street Arts Club in New York.

Michael's work has appeared in countless media outlets, including three covers of New York Magazine's "Reasons to Love New York" issues, The New York Times, The London Sunday Times and TIME Magazine. In addition, De Feo's work has appeared in a variety of film documentaries including Alice Arnold's To Be Seen (aired on PBS/WNET and screened at The Museum of Modern Art, 2006); and Banksy's Exit Through The Gift Shop: A Banksy Film (Paranoid Pictures, 2010) which was an Academy Award best documentary nominee. De Feo's work has appeared in nearly 40 books such as Trespass: A History of Uncommissioned Urban Art by Carlo McCormick, Marc & Sara Schiller, and Ethel Sono (Tachen, 2010); Paris Graffiti by Fabienne Grevy (Edition de La Martiniere, 2008); and Home By Novogratz by Robert and Cortney Novogratz (Artisan, 2012).

De Feo's award-winning children's book, Alphabet City: Out on the Streets, employees New York City as his canvas – using his paintings glued on the streets of Manhattan to illustrate each letter of the alphabet. Currently in its fourth printing by Gingko Press, an initial review by Newsweek International said, "De Feo's art evokes beauty and optimism with a childlike simplicity while paying homage to gritty Manhattan."

Michael De Feo has been selected by The **Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation (RPAF)** as their featured artist of 2014. Along with working with urban youth on arts programming through Rush, Michael created and donated a series of three new flower prints and two paintings to benefit the Foundation.

Michael is available for comment and interview, please call the gallery or email info@rushphilanthropic.org

Explore De Feo's work at his web site: www.mdefeo.com

About Rush Arts and Rush Arts Chelsea

Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation (RPAF) is dedicated to providing inner city youth across New York City with significant exposure to the arts, as well as to supporting emerging artists with exhibition opportunities.

Rush was founded in 1995 by three brothers: **Danny Simmons**, visual artist and community builder; media mogul **Russell Simmons**; and **Joseph "Rev. Run" Simmons** of the legendary hip-hop group **Run-DMC**. Their goal was to fill the gap that the disenfranchised and people of color faced in both accessing the arts and exhibition opportunities.

Over the past 19 years with the help of a broad base of friends, collaborators and supporters, Rush have been able to develop their main two program areas – **Rush Education** art programs for our youth and **Rush Arts Galleries** supporting and featuring emerging artists nationwide – working together in a seamless way to open up the arts to populations facing hurdles to the joy and benefits of these experiences.

Designed to inspire students, provide positive alternatives to high risk behaviors and support increased academic performance, Rush Education programs - **Toddlers, Rush Kids, Rush Teens** and **Rush Galleries in Schools** - directly serve over 3,000 students annually. In addition, each year through the Rush Arts Galleries- **Rush Arts Gallery** in Chelsea, Manhattan and **Corridor Gallery** in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn- exhibit the work of over 100 emerging and community-based artists; welcomes over 10,000 gallery visitors; and provides unique opportunities for young people interested in careers in the arts.

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