

My Hero! Contemporary Art & Superhero Action

Jan 17 - Mar 20, 2016



Andreas Englund, *Fight*, 2015, print, 19.7 x 27.6 inches

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My Hero! celebrates and re-envision the possibilities that exist when you have a magic cape, lasso, or some superhuman power that changes everything. Bedford Curator Carrie Lederer says: “For decades, artists have tapped the world of the superhero, eager to explore the alluring concept of what it means to have an *avatar*. We’re captivated by miraculous, superhuman strength, startling bravery, the enthralling adventures, and even their weaknesses. A number of artists are also asking: What happens when Superman gets old and checks into Assisted Living? What does he look like and what’s he up to?”

My Hero! will feature art by nationally renowned artist Mark Newport (Keego Harbor, Michigan), who, for years, has been using superhero imagery to explore issues of identity and the definition of a “hero”. Newport says about his work: “Turning the superhero inside out is a way for me to present an understanding of masculinity. Superheroes suggest strength, but knitting them or covering them with embroidery provides a softness that is contradictory to their image.” Dulce Pinzon (Brooklyn, NY) makes photographs depicting the lives of immigrants

as society's "real superheroes," with images of Catwoman working as a nanny and Superman delivering pizzas on his trusty bike.

Sacramento artist Mel Ramos anchors the *My Hero!* exhibition. A pioneer in the genre of superhero art, Ramos has been using iconic images in his work for over 50 years. One of his earlier works, an oil painting of Superman (1962), is currently on display at the de Young Museum in San Francisco.

Bedford Gallery also commissioned San Francisco artist, Lizabeth Rossof to create a Batman warrior for *My Hero!* Created in Xi'an, China, this piece features Batman as a historic Terracotta Warrior. The Batman warrior is authentic in composition and detail and is crafted using the same natural material as the original statues. Other notable Batman-themed art include Robert Burden's *The Holy Batman*, a large-scale oil painting, Simon Monk's *Tim Drake* featuring a Robin action figure and Steve Seeley's *Family Portrait* of Batman and Batwoman.

My Hero!'s international roster of artists includes a series of humorous, sardonic superhero paintings by Laurina Paperina (Rovereto, Italy), and a sultry rendering of Supergirl laying across Mount Taranaki by Graham Kirk (New Plymouth, New Zealand) that is both dramatic and comic. The Italian photography duo by the name Foto Marvellini (Vercelli, Italy) create rich, somber Victorian-like sepia toned images of our superheroes that appear as vintage photographs, circa 1850. After the Bedford exhibition, *My Hero!* will travel nationally through 2019.

Participating Artists

National Artists

Mike Alcantara (Austin, TX), **Katherine Bradford** (Brooklyn, NY), **Robert Xavier Burden** (San Francisco, CA), **Enrique Chagoya** (San Francisco, CA), **Bill Concannon** (Crockett, CA), **Jeremy Fisher** (Los Angeles, CA), **Justin Hager** (San Francisco, CA), **Cheong-ah Hwang** (Columbus, OH), **Dave Laro** (White River Junction, VT), **Adam Lister** (Beacon, NY), **Mark Newport** (Keego Harbor, MI), **Aaron Noble** (Los Angeles, CA), **Jennie Ottinger** (San Francisco, CA), **Jenny Parks** (Denver, CO), **Dulce Pinzon** (Brooklyn, NY), **Peter and Madeline Powell** (Maui, HI), **Mel Ramos** (Oakland, CA), **Cheyenne Randall** (Seattle, WA), **Lizabeth Rossof** (San Francisco, CA), **Hannah Rothstein** (San Francisco, CA), **Samuel Rowlett** (Western MA), **Matt Ritchie** (Castro Valley, CA), **Steve Seeley** (Chicago, IL), **Rose Sellery**, (Santa Cruz, CA), **Inez Storer** (Inverness, CA), **Mark Todd** (Sierra Madre, CA), **Frank Trankina** (Chicago, IL), **Winston Tseng** (New York, NY), **Linda Vallejo** (Topanga, CA), **Dan Willner** (Charlotte, NC), **William Wray** (Sierra Madre, CA), **Jason Yarmosky** (Brooklyn, NY), **Maurizio Zuluaga** (Jersey City, NJ)

International Artists

Sandra Chevrier (Montreal, Quebec), **Marcus D'Alfonso** (Markham, Ontario), **Andreas Englund** (Stockholm, Sweden), **Ole Marius Joergensen** (Oslo, Norway), **Graham Kirk** (New Plymouth, New Zealand), **Jannis Markopoulos** (Berlin, Germany), **Foto Marvellini** (Vercelli, Italy), **Simon Monk** (Essex, UK), **Rémi Noël** (Paris, France), **Laurina Paperina** (Rovereto, Italy), **Alessandro Rabatti** (Florence, Italy), **Patricia Waller** (Berlin, Germany)