



**I.U.D.**

***BAKERMAN***

North Galleries & Drawing room

2014

Mixed media and video

*BAKERMAN* is an exhibition in multiple media, beginning with a musical performance at MOCA Tucson by I.U.D., the collective entity that brings together the disparate, yet related, artistic and sonic effusions of Lizzi Bougatsos, Sadie Laska and Spencer Sweeney. As part of their participation in MOCA's Artist in Residence program, I.U.D. occupied the East Wing and Great Hall galleries during their stay leading up to the show's opening, turning them into temporary freeform studio spaces that spawned various installations, comprising a video created during a pilgrimage to the Grand Canyon, a large multi-part sewn together totem flag that will be raised during museum hours on MOCA's flagpole, as well as drawings, paintings, and sculptures made from equal parts traditional and scavenged materials, a hallmark of I.U.D.'s production *modus operandi*. Road thoughts, unrealized manifestoes, the desire to ensure heartfelt intensity in opposition to the Andy Warhol artist-turned-machine "philosophy"-slash-brand juggernaut, *BAKERMAN* represents process and the melding of ecology and mind, nature and the hand. Getting back to the soul in revolt against the pernicious forces of the market through imaginative communism and resistance to brain-directed "making." Through the subjugation of the ego the spirit of true communalism is harnessed to create genuinely improvisational art and music, building on meaningful relationships with all the people involved, in two and three and auditory dimensions.

Bougatsos, Laska and Sweeney have all operated as visual artists and musicians based in New York going back to the mid-1990s, and all are deeply involved with projects that investigate and innovatively deconstruct the nature of sound. Bougatsos as the leader of long-running electronic neo-psychedelic band Gang Gang Dance, and Laska and Sweeney with a myriad of band alliances to their credit. Together they comprise I.U.D., who previously presented "Greetings From Bitburg" at Le Confort Moderne in Poitiers, France while their audio manifestation has performed at PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Art, Oslo, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and most recently at the Brant Foundation in Greenwich, Connecticut. The interrelationship between the three is key to their aesthetic output, going back to their performance art/rock band Actress, an association with Colin de

Land's legendary American Fine Arts Gallery in Soho, and a constant stream of creative emanations into the present. A connective strand is their enduring friendships that connect their life and art, seamlessly plumbing the continuum between both and annihilating the oft-artificially maintained gap between the two. Sound-wise, they create animalistic music with minimal pounding, a contagious noise that hints at modern industrial rituals, with an inventive distorting and stealing of everything audibly available, while transforming and mixing that with feminine nihilism and humor. That unbridled and flexible melding, from mutual bonds in a personal sense to ties and links in two-dimensional and aural domains, makes *BAKERMAN* a distinctly passionate pooling of resources and a simultaneously disorderly and tightly wound tripartite artistic outburst.

*BAKERMAN* is a metaphor for the way I.U.D. makes work and how they perceive the world around them. It's baking bread, in the sky, and the Danish duo Laid Back playing "Bakerman" on their instruments during freefall parachuting from 5,000 feet in Lars Van Trier's 1989 video. "The night train is coming, slow down and relax, it's too late to worry." Bakerman is a touchstone, with fertile associations: Curtis Mayfield's (and later Live Skull's rendition) "Pusherman," the painting seen by I.U.D. of a "baker man" at a winery in northern Arizona, and Ginger Baker-"man." Automatic poetry, almost but not quite nonsensical. For the exhibition the walls of MOCA's North Galleries were painted like a chalkboard, referencing the blackened walls of the gallery in Poitiers, petroglyphs, and a feeling linked to Sweeney's Santos Party House club in New York. On the walls one member draws, then another adds something (a hat, per chance), and then something else is incorporated. Freedom of collaboration, not censoring each other, an additive as opposed to reductive experience. Consciously doing unconscious drawing. With the sculptures the tropes of Arizona life that residents often take for granted but are immediately salient to outsiders were brought in, with everything from windshield sunshades to bottle caps, pool noodles, yoga mats, and remnants of Saguaro cacti. The video component "Larry Clark Nose, Grand Canyon", alludes to how we collect olfactory information from the nose, Gogol's "The Nose," and "The nose knows." Partially filmed at a Honky-tonk in Jerome, it also includes footage of the trio hiking up Bell Rock in Sedona, a pizza pub on the Grand Canyon's rim, and them drawing on rocks (petroglyphs, like marking on a chalkboard), combined with absurd close-ups of noses in conversation, with a nod to Dada. Sounds include the motor of an automatic door, and Laska's father PJ Laska reading two of his own poems. Outside, out of the galleries, flowing, flapping, is their flag, an abstract, non-denominational, non-geographic extended fabric painting, made from material found at Tucson's Miller's Surplus, a major inspiration. The flag brings the "painting," into the public space, an action based artwork, improvisatory like all I.U.D. does, an allegorical emblem embodying I.U.D.'s deliberate and ad hoc eruption of fervent expressiveness.