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# It's Gonna Be Reverything

Project, Kansas City

2009

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Okay Mountain

Untitled (detail), 2008

Ink and latex

16 x 14 feet

Courtesy Charlotte Street Foundation

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The artists from Okay Mountain are mining a rich vein of self-supporting artist collectives more often found in larger cities with bottomless resources. Their work is on display at Urban Culture Project's Paragraph Gallery and Project Space in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. Urban Culture Project, which operates a series of venues for multi-disciplinary contemporary arts programming, is an initiative of the [Charlotte Street Foundation](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting artists in Kansas City. Thanks to an exchange of ideas and like-mindedness, a hand-selected group of works by Austin artists, the Okay Mountain group among them, are on display in Kansas City.

To create the sensation of being within their own work environment, for *It's Gonna Be Reverything*, Okay Mountain devised a work station to bring to Kansas City: *Conference Table* (2008), a colorful picnic table of hand-painted wood, allowed visitors to relax and appreciate the mural created specifically for this exhibition. This mural, *Untitled* (2008), a 16 by 14 foot wall of ink and latex, was devised from an original idea and contrived from about fifteen



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drawings by different group members. It can be seen as a skewed, modernist vision of Edward Hicks' *The Peaceable Kingdom* (c. 1834). And like Hicks' expression of faith, this piece (a bright blue background adorned with animals in a near-sylvan setting) illustrates the objects (boom boxes, cell phones, televisions) that underscore the inherent strength in the group's freedom to create in their own self-contained Eden.

The "beeramyd," *All The Beers We Drank Together* (2008), which got a few eye rolls but was nonetheless well-crafted and great fun, went right to the point of Okay Mountains' mission. The interior of their 11-foot high Lone Star label-papered pyramid was adorned with a color scheme of blankets directly linking the work hung on the walls, confirming the camaraderie and communal experience of all the artists involved.

*Texposé* in Paragraph Gallery features other Austin-based artists: Erin Curtis, Ryan Lauderdale, Erick Michaud, Jill Pangallo, Joseph Phillips and Virigina Yount. Their work is curated by Kate Hackman, Associate Director at the Charlotte Street Foundation, Kansas City-based artist Grant Miller and Sterling Allen, Founding Partner of Okay Mountain. Ryan Lauderdale's drawings are reminiscent of Werner Erhard-like gatherings with the bold, saturated colors of Aztec textiles. His felt tip marker and ink drawings reach out to the audience with a sense of ease that becomes more emboldened as the viewer stands back and soaks in the whole experience to—using est-speak—"get it." Images like *Glorious Group Therapy* (2008) and *Mayan Choir* (2008) lead you right to the precipice before submersion into a suffocating miasma of groupthink.

Through Joseph Phillips one sees an eerily precise suburban landscape. From the prim backyard perfection of *Oak Ridge Gardening Club* (2008), to the hale and hardy *WaveMaker Beach with Bar and Waterslide* (2008), Phillips' work of pencil, ink and gouache reveals a fanatically antiseptic existence—an existence that is both enchanting for its precision and slightly unnerving for exactly that reason. At the same time, his use of orange work cones in the farthest parameters of each image confesses a telling state of "flux" in these environments. Erin Curtis' *Pool Shot* (2008) is a more relaxed metaphor for this good life, but behind the luxury one could imagine an equally high price for contentment.

*Texposé* and *It's Gonna Be Reverything* bring the artists of Austin to Kansas City, creating a productive dialogue between the artists of two mid-sized cities that empowers the local arts scenes in each. This exchange further impresses upon these communities what their support brings to the surface.

*Based in Kansas City, Missouri, Blair Schulman has been a Contributing Writer to Review, Mid-America's visual art magazine, since 2002. He is also a contributor to Kansas City Home Design magazine.*

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