

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARCTIC BOOK CLUB

Artists Respond to An African in Greenland

September 18 – October 24, 2009

Opening Reception, Thursday, September 17 6-8 pm

Curators:

Jean Barberis, Artistic Director, Flux Factory
Michelle Levy, Program Director, EFA Project Space

Artists:

Amber Cortes, Jenelle Covino, The Green and Bold Cooperative,
Katerina Lanfranco, Fabienne Lasserre, Valerie Piraino, Greg Pond,
Annie Reichert, Julian Rogers, Ranbir Sidhu, Christopher Ulivo

EFA Project Space

323 West 39th Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10018
between 8th and 9th Avenues

Gallery Hours: Wed through Sat, 12-6 PM

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Flux Factory and EFA Project Space are proud to present *Arctic Book Club*, on view from September 18 through October 24, at EFA Project Space in Manhattan. Curated by Jean Barberis and Michelle Levy, this exhibition is the result of a several-month long process embarked on by a group of artists responding to the book, "An African in Greenland."

By partnering with Flux Factory on this exhibition, EFA Project Space furthers its goal to provide a space for collaboration with other art and cultural organizations, thus bridging gaps in the art community and expanding audiences for the arts.

Tété Michel Kpomassie's book, "An African in Greenland," serves as memoir, ethnography, and travelogue, and is the account of the author's unique journey from his native Togo to Greenland. As a young man living in Africa, Kpomassie happened across a children's book about Greenland. Fascinated with the distant Arctic island, he embarked on a remarkable ten-year journey across Africa and Europe, working as a translator along the way, and eventually saving enough money to complete his odyssey and live in Greenland.

In the Spring of 2009, Flux Factory and EFA assembled a cross-disciplinary group of artists to respond to Kpomassie's book, meeting regularly in the form of a book club. Upon completion of the book, the artists were then tasked to create new work inspired by their internalization of Kpomassie's narrative and the resulting discussions.

Highlights of the exhibition include The Green and Bold Cooperative's installation and interactive performance: the artists welcome visitors with *coffee-mik*, a common Greenland tradition of hospitality, while continuously hand-scribing a manuscript of the narrative. Another performance is Christopher Ulivo's theatrical tribute to the story through a shadow puppet theater. The artist has created whimsical scenery and puppet silhouettes for a script that will be acted out by the artists in the show. Live performances will take place at the opening, and a video with a musical score will be on view throughout the show.

Fabienne Lasserre’s wall-mounted installation of (fake) human hair encased in dripping plaster incorporates visceral interpretations of psychological environment, suggesting a haunting other-worldly realm. Katerina Lanfranco’s large-scale paper cutout, dramatically depicting icebergs submerged in water, stands in bold contrast to her small, precious glass “snowflakes.” Also playing with perception, documentary artist Amber Cortes projects an altered version of the 1922 “Nanook of the North,” providing, through the use of superimposed text and sound, a contradiction to this classic, naive representation of the Arctic Greenlanders.

Ranbir Sidhu, novelist, playwright, and book club moderator, will provide a creative text in response to Kpomassie’s narrative.

The complete list of artists is: Amber Cortes, Jenelle Covino, The Green and Bold Cooperative, Katerina Lanfranco, Fabienne Lasserre, Valerie Piraino, Greg Pond, Annie Reichert, Julian Rogers, Ranbir Sidhu, Christopher Ulivo.

On **September 23rd** at 6:30 pm, *Arctic Bookclub* welcomes Tété Michel Kpomassie in a public conversation exploring his response to the exhibition and reflections on his experiences since having left Greenland.

An illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition.

For more information on exhibition related events, images and support materials, please contact Michelle Levy at michelle@efa1.org, 212-563-5855x227

Flux Factory is an open artists collective and non-profit artist-run center. Located in Long Island City, Flux Factory supports innovative and collaborative art works. It is thus primarily an incubation and laboratory space, a forum for experimental collaboration. □

EFA Project Space, a Program of The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, is a multi-disciplinary arts venue that encourages creative expression and new interactions in the arts. By collaborating with organizations and individuals to present a variety of programs including exhibitions, performances, screenings, workshops, and conversations, EFA Project Space generates an ongoing dialogue about the creative process.

Flux Factory is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and by private funds from The Carnegie Corporation and the Greenwall Foundation.

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efa project space

A Program of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts

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