

ARTSPACE BUFFALO GALLERY



Rumors and Folktales : New Collages by Brian A. Kavanaugh

September 18—October 19, 2009

Opening Reception: Friday, September 18, 2009, 6—10 pm

Artspace Buffalo Gallery
1219 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14209
www.artspacebuffalo.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rumors and Folktales: New Collages by Brian A. Kavanaugh Marks the First Solo Exhibition of the Artspace Buffalo Artist's Career.

BUFFALO, September 1, 2009—Artspace Buffalo Gallery presents ***Rumors and Folktales: New Collages by Brian A. Kavanaugh*** from **September 18 through October 19, 2009**. Artspace Buffalo Gallery will host a free **opening reception** with the artist and the general public on **Friday, September 18, 2009** from **6-10 pm** at its **1219 Main Street** gallery space. Also opening on this evening is a group exhibition, running concurrent with *Rumors and Folktales*, entitled, *Ecologies of Decay*.

Rumors and Folktales marks Brian A. Kavanaugh's first solo exhibition since he began making and exhibiting art in the Western New York area ten years ago. This is also the first solo exhibition to be held in the Artspace Buffalo Gallery since its debut in May of 2008.

Kavanaugh began his art studies as a photographer, but his practice soon shifted toward manipulating and combining his own photographic images, and later to the use of ready-made, found images. Kavanaugh became fascinated with collage and the way a work changed organically as a result of combining images culled from magazines, books, and the Internet.

A foundation of Kavanaugh's collage work is the construction of an icon or fictional character which represents an idea or belief system more than simply a portrait in repose. In his earlier work, his characters would often stand in singularity on a flat background. In Kavanaugh's most recent work, his characters inhabit vast and detailed worlds, often appearing with multiple attributes which serve to elaborate on their iconographic meaning. Kavanaugh's work is also focused on the transformative nature of rituals, myths, and folktales in the contemporary world. He explains, "*I am fascinated by the myriad ways in which individuals find meaning, articulate ideals, or comprehend consequences through ceremony, religion, or story telling.*"

Rumors and Folktales includes several, large-scale collages, each densely-packed with historical, religious, and pop culture references and imagery. In one moment the artist is reinterpreting Renaissance art; in the next he is delving into the psyche of a comic book hero. *The Three Gardens*, a 7x12-foot epic and sprawling nod to *Hieronymus Bosch's* 1504 triptych, *Garden of Earthly Delights*, a Christ type deity is deconstructed into a completely ambiguous creature whose existence could easily be questioned but whose power cannot be denied. In *True Believer*, Clark Kent's arms tear apart his own torso, alluding to the moment of sacrifice in his transformation from citizen to superhero.

Rumors and Folktales highlights the artist's development of characters and narrative through collage, as well as his ongoing investigation of human motives, actions, and consequences. Kavanaugh adds, "*While I personally do not subscribe to any specific dogma, I do recognize a person's desire to try to explain what seems impossible to understand.*" Kavanaugh will also exhibit a mini retrospective of his earlier work, including five works created before 2008. The earlier works have been carefully selected by the artist as a means of articulating, for himself and the viewer, a common thread in his practice over the past decade.

Brian A. Kavanaugh, born in Buffalo in 1983, earned a BFA from SUNY Purchase in 2005 and was a Buffalo Arts Studio resident artist in 2006. He is a founding board member of the Artspace Buffalo Alliance, and one of the original Artspace Buffalo resident artists, moving into his live/work loft upon the project's completion in 2007. While exhibiting work in New York State since 1998, Kavanaugh has also worked as an art instructor for Autistic Services, Inc. since 2006.

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Artspace Buffalo Gallery, 1219 Main Street, Buffalo, New York 14209



LEFT:

Brian A. Kavanaugh
Three Gardens (triptych, left panel)
2009
mixed media collage
36 x 84 inches (left panel)

BELOW:

Detail





Brian A. Kavanaugh
True Believer
2009
mixed media collage