

# 80WSE

For Immediate Release

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**Uzi Parnes, Carmelita Tropicana, and Ela Troyano**

***RECYCLING ATLANTIS***

**A live exhibition celebrating the radical philosophies of Jack Smith**

80WSE Gallery is pleased to present *RECYCLING ATLANTIS*, a live exhibition by Uzi Parnes, Carmelita Tropicana, and Ela Troyano in celebration of the artist, philosopher and educator Jack Smith. The exhibition will be on view November 12th, 13th & 14th from 5:00pm - 9:00pm and is free and open to the public.

Uzi Parnes, Carmelita Tropicana and Ela Troyano have been collaborating on film and performance since the early 1980's when they first met legendary filmmaker Jack Smith. Twenty-five years after his death from AIDS in 1989, *RECYCLING ATLANTIS* celebrates Smith's radical philosophies about the role of art in society through an interactive exhibition project, produced live in collaboration with 80WSE Director Jonathan Berger and NYU students and faculty over the course of three evenings.

Some time around 1978 Jack Smith penned a manifesto in which he outlined a utopian futuristic urban environment, centering around a series of proposed social programs and articulated in the form of an unrealized film, which employed numerous Hollywood movie stars in service roles for Smith's new progressive world. The manifesto as a whole is emblematic of the entirety of Smith's creative practice and philosophical approach, where the boundary between art and life was non-existent and the act of creation became the literal construction of a new reality. Among the proposals in Smith's manifesto were a "free paradise abandoned objects in the center of the city near where the community movie sets would also be." These two projects highlight integral practices that remain a constant throughout Smith's work: the fantastical transformation and repurposing of discarded materials and trash for both his home and film sets, often one and the same, and the discovery and employment of unknown and unwanted performers as "superstars" for his films, a concept that he pioneered ahead of his contemporary Andy Warhol.

*RECYCLING ATLANTIS* centers around Parnes, Tropicana, and Troyano's revisiting of Smith's manifesto and their subsequent interest in interpreting and realizing his proposed "free paradise of abandoned objects" and "community movie set" within the space and time of an exhibition. In 80WSE's front gallery space, visitors will be able to take or leave their own objects to recycle, growing and shrinking a large and varied mound of items in the center of the room, while an accompanying audio recording of Tropicana's performance *Cry a la Jack* chronicles one of Smith's legendary performances hinging on his powerful transformation of a common toilet plunger. A second gallery presents four simultaneous slideshows of performance and portrait photographs created between 1981 and 1989 through an ongoing collaboration between Smith and Parnes, most notably a series of images shown publically in NYC for the first time documenting Smith's play *I Was A Male Yvonne DeCarlo for the Lucky Landlord Underground*, with accompanying audio from the performance, shot over the course of three nights in 1982.

80WSE's remaining three conjoined gallery spaces will serve as the site for a live film, existing in a permanent state of development, in which the boundaries between design, production, and presentation are dissolved, much as in Troyano's first film *Bubble People*, which featured Jack Smith

and was shot at Parnes' loft performance space "Performances Staged" in 1982. One production area will serve as the setting for an ongoing improvised film shoot, featuring Tropicana as "Yolanda La Pinguina," (one of Smith's recurring characters), using Smith's philosophical texts as a script, NYU students and visitors as performers, and "abandoned objects" as props. In a second area, Parnes and Troyano will establish a working editing studio where they will merge footage spanning three decades, making selections from their collaborations with Smith and Tropicana on film, video, photo, and theater works. Through live mixing, layering, and altering these historical materials the artists will generate a new composite ongoing and ever-changing film. A third area will serve as a cinema continuously screening live feed footage from both Parnes and Troyano's studio as well as the active "community movie set".

The format of the exhibition seeks to reflect the critique of arts culture with which Smith was concerned for the entirety of his career, as well as the holistic approach to art making that he chose to pursue as a result of those concerns, one where he considered every part of the creative process, from thought to distribution, as an essential contributing artistic gesture towards achieving the total work. Through their open collaborative re-invention of materials from the recent and distant past, in the space and time of the present, Parnes, Tropicana, and Troyano focus *RECYCLING ATLANTIS* on the continued and increasing relevance of the question which opens Smith's 1978 manifesto: "Could art be useful?"

Uzi Parnes is a New York based filmmaker, photographer, curator, and actor. Presentations of his work have been shown internationally, most recently in a career survey at The Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art (Berlin, 2012). His dissertation, *Pop Performance: Four Seminal Influences*, was published in 1988 and has become an influential reference for scholarship around Jack Smith's work. Parnes was founder and co-director with Ela Troyano of legendary 1980's performance club "Chandelier."

Carmelita Tropicana is an Obie award winning performance artist and writer. Her work has been presented by INTAR Theatre (NYC), Performance Space 122 (NYC), Institute of Contemporary Art (London), Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo (Sevilla), El Museo del Barrio (NYC), and Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin). *I, Carmelita Tropicana – Performing Between Cultures*, a book surveying her work, was published in 2000.

Ela Troyano is an interdisciplinary filmmaker, born in Cuba and based in NYC. Most recently, Troyano and Carmelita Tropicana were commissioned by Performance Space 122 to create the performance *Post Plastica*, which was presented at El Museo del Barrio in 2012. In 2010 she and Uzi Parnes were invited by the Berlin Film Festival to present *The Silence of Marcel Duchamp*, a collaborative live cinema performance. Troyano's work has been supported through numerous fellowships including Creative Capital, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Sundance Lab.

Concurrently with *RECYCLING ATLANTIS*, Uzi Parnes's installation of photographs, *BASRA ON FIRST AVENUE: Jack Smith's Last Apartment*, will be on view from October 29, 2014 - January 26, 2015 at 80WSE Gallery's satellite space, a series of five street-level windows located at the corner of Broadway and East 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The installation is on view 24 hours a day.

80WSE Gallery is located at 80 Washington Square East, between West 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Washington Street. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10:30AM-6PM. Admission is free and open to the public. For more information about the exhibition, please contact the gallery at 212-998-5751 or email [80wsefrontdesk@nyu.edu](mailto:80wsefrontdesk@nyu.edu).

Special thanks to Gladstone Gallery and Fales Library. *RECYCLING ATLANTIS* is made possible through the generous support of Materials for the Arts.

