



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**EVENTS**

Opening Reception

Fri, October 4, 2019, 6 – 9 pm

**JRB Art at The Elms Presents**

**“OKLAHOMA RED DIRT ARTISTS”**

*OKLAHOMA CITY* – JRB Art at The Elms will feature four solo shows by Oklahoma Red Dirt Artists: Romy Owens, Jack Fowler, Rea Baldrige and Joseph Mills. “Widely known for their mastery of the technical aspects of painting and photography, these artists are rebels,” states Joy Reed Belt, owner, JRB Art Gallery. “Their work is not easily categorized and is created with the goal to provoke and create dialogue and understanding. Oklahomans born and bred, these artists masterfully manipulate style, technique and subject matter to find yet deeper meaning in their work.”

Jack Fowler was born in Ada and raised in eastern Oklahoma. He worked as a journalist, school teacher, cowboy, and musician before becoming a full-time artist in 2011, and since then, his work has been shown from Arizona to Uganda. Fowler has also created three large murals in downtown Oklahoma City, including the controversial "Bricktown Okctopus," the first non-historical mural allowed in Bricktown. He is a freelance writer and cartoonist, and hosts "Tumbleweeds All the Way Down," a weekly roots music show on 91.7 The Spy. His studio is in the Paseo neighborhood of Oklahoma City.

Known for his “pop western” style, Jack states: “I don’t think western art should always be about nostalgia. I think it should be about trying to see how beautiful the west is right now. It’s knowing that cowboys still go on cattle drives, but sometimes they wear t-shirts and cell phone holders. It’s realizing that an interstate can be as romantic as a railroad, and a wind turbine can be as pretty as a tree.”

For the past three decades Joseph Mills has worked as a commercial advertising photographer based in Oklahoma City, while continuing a "personal pursuit for a realization of self within the photographic conceit." Joseph expresses a deep interest in both "film and digital, straight-photography, with its formal concerns, and a more experimental photography that is sometimes extreme in nature and of problematical aesthetics."

Joseph's photographs for this exhibit center around both representational and abstracted architectural remnants. Current efforts are directed at discovering the power of surface and form within a given compositional context.

Oklahoma native Rea Baldrige is an artist who has worked in several disciplines and a variety of media, and whose unconventional views on the intersection of art and culture have found expression for 40 years in conceptual works related to commerce, society and politics.

Beginning in 1975 with "The Making of the Re-Make of Gone With The Wind," a project in which all the participants were simultaneously acting their jobs...and doing their jobs, the film being an artifact of the creative act. Rea Baldrige has made movies of fires burning down real buildings that contained metaphors (art museums). The Beaux Arts Ball became Bozeaux, then morphed into a social media movement, the "BLO." In the worlds she creates, Corporations "almost mean business." Buy-Products are not for sale, virtual crimes go virtually unpunished, and the Socialite Party moves us towards a "more polite society." In concrete form, these works resemble "artifacts" left in the wake of ideas.

During the past 10 years, Rea has turned her attention to painting. Real painting, where the artifact becomes "art-in-fact." The act of painting becomes the object. Rea's work has appeared in many exhibitions and venues, locally and nationally.

Romy Owens is an artist and curator living in Enid, Oklahoma. She makes site-specific installations, as well as smaller objects, in reaction to place, community, and transformation. Her curatorial work attends to a similar focus. Both Romy's artistic and curatorial practices are presently centered around community art designed to impact social change, using art as a method to broaden our understanding of specific issues.

She began her practice as an artist in 2006 and as a curator in 2009. Romy was selected as the first Emerging Curator for Momentum OKC (2009), the first Emerging Artist of the Year by the Paseo Art Association (2010), the first Artist in Residence (2012) at the Skirvin Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City, the first Curator in Residence of the Artist Invitational (2014-17) for Downtown OKC, Inc, and the first artist selected for the Artist Series at Leap Coffee Roasters. She has exhibited extensively with solo exhibitions and in group exhibitions.

In 2016, Romy Owens co-founded Current Studio with Kelsey Karper. She is currently working on Under Her Wing was the Universe, an artist-led public art initiative in the City of Enid which creates a prairie, a pavilion, and a thousand stars. Romy holds an MA in Photography and a BA in Media Studies.

The acrylic mounted digital art signage presented in this month's show, **#BLESSED**, is very different from her previous works. Romy explains, "Sometimes you read inspirational signage for sale in a super warehouse store, and you hope the intention is sincere. Maybe that sign will remind the buyer to *Live Laugh Love*. Maybe that sign will help people *Be Kind*. Maybe the people who buy those fabrications are living their best lives; maybe the people who work in the factories that make mass produced art are living their best lives. But maybe it's just decorative lies." She says that her word art takes a more melancholy approach, and "just like the state of Nebraska, it's not for everyone."

All of these artists' works will be available to view at JRB Art at the Elms from October 4 – October 27, 2019.

### **About JRB Art at the Elms**

JRB Art at The Elms presents a diverse roster of emerging, established, and internationally exhibited artists who create in a wide range of media including paintings, drawings, sculpture, ceramics, glass, fine crafts, functional objects, fiber art and photographs. This 8,000-square foot award-winning gallery in Oklahoma City's Paseo Arts District changes its exhibits monthly in a gracious environment that fosters a dialogue between the arts and the larger community while providing quality art for first time buyers as well as individual, corporate and museum collections.

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