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Katrina del Mar, *GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS*

January 13 - February 17, 2013

Opening Reception, Sunday, January 13, 7-9pm



From January 13 - February 17, 2013, PARTICIPANT INC is proud to present *GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS*, a solo exhibition featuring photographs, videos, and hand-made books by New York-based artist **Katrina del Mar**.

Katrina del Mar is perhaps best known for her decades-long work in video and photography, chronicling the reality and illusion of her Lower East Side friends and lovers as punk heroines; or within her girl gang movie world of strictly female population. Creating a family tree indebted equally to B-movies and diaristic photography, del Mar's defiantly queer photographs and videos are iconic alternatives to the cultural status quo, offering an exuberant, hyper-stylized sexuality, an unapologetic feminist voice, and often guerilla-style production tactics.

Particularly informed by the Greek word *ekphrasis*, a rhetorical device in which a description of a work becomes the work in and of itself, del Mar has described her practice as operating in a similar exchange: book covers and movie posters come before the books and movies and, in some instances, stand alone. She has noted, "Long after my films are finished, I am writing the novels they should have been based on. I write modern myths set in urban environments."

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With this logic in mind, *GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS* presents an expansive selection of photographic works, beginning with a shelf of handmade pulp fiction paperbacks. Their covers, designed first, become starting points for del Mar's fictional excursions inside, though some remain empty. On the walls, photographs are grouped into loose narratives. Arcs and archetypes—surfer girls, bike gangs, girls playing in their rooms, bedroom scenes including the artist and others—feature dogs, cars, leather, tattoos. These become fictionalized signifiers of the threat of women's violence, which the artist, as ringleader, marshals as an active participant. Adding light and color to the powers that urban life has to offer, del Mar creates "...a fantasy that moves from violence to sex rather than vice versa..." (Chicago Reader)

Jenifer P. Borum has noted of del Mar's work: "These glimpses she gives us are not of marginal inhabitants of our world. Those leather femmes with their dogs. Those pierced, sleeved-out dykes on the street. They look like they're from the cool neighborhood of the city, but they're not from here. Like Henry Darger's *In the Realms of the Unreal*, del Mar's world is both epic and dystopian—a fictional reality that seems very much like our own, only with different rules."

Katrina del Mar is a New York-based photographer and award winning film director. Her solo exhibition *Gangs of New York* was presented in 2010 at Wrong Weather Gallery in Porto, Portugal. Invited to teach at the University of the Arts in Bremen, Germany, she conducted the first ever *Queer Trash Feminist Film Workshop*, also in 2010. In 2012, she presented a series of films and photographs from the Golden Age of Performance Art (1988-2000) with Dona Ann McAdams, *On the Edge of Society: Moments in Live Art*, at Warehouse 9, Copenhagen, Denmark. Her work has shown at Deitch Projects, NY; Museum for Contemporary Art (CAPC), Bordeaux, France; American Fine Arts Company, NY; Binz 39, Zurich, Switzerland; Bass Museum of Art, Miami; Miami Light Project; P.S.122, NY; FabLab, Berlin; and the University of Cardiff, Wales.

Her first film, *Gang Girls 2000*, shot entirely on super 8mm film, received a four and a half star review in *Film Threat* magazine, among other glowing reviews, inviting comparisons to the legendary Kenneth Anger. The follow up, *Surf Gang*, about a gang of women surfers from Rockaway Beach, landed del Mar a fellowship in video from the New York Foundation for the Arts, "Best Experimental Film" from the Planet Out Short Movie Awards announced at the Sundance Film Festival 2006, and was screened at the Museum for Contemporary Art (CAPC), Bordeaux, France. Her latest film project, *Hell on Wheels Gang Girls Forever*, completes the *Girl Gang Trilogy* and was the recipient of the 2010 Accolade Award of Merit. Recent screenings include *Girl Gang Trilogy*, Nightingale Cinema, co-presented by Chicago Underground Film Festival, 2012; *Super 8 Film Portraits*, curated by Stephanie Gray, Millennium Film Workshop, NY, 2012; *Surf Gang (excerpt)*, Sound & Light, and winner of Juried Competition, Schoolhouse Gallery, Provincetown, MA, 2012; *Girl Gang Trilogy*, Fringe Film Festival, London, UK, 2012; and *Girl Gang Trilogy*, Bio Paradis, Reykjavik, Iceland, 2012.

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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the LES. Subway: F to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit or JMZ to Essex/Delancey. participantinc.org