

MICHAEL SMOLER
THE UNIVERSE IS PART OF OURSELVES
JUNE 21 – JULY 23, 2010
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LIGHT
& WIRE

Light & Wire Gallery presents an exhibition of new and recent collages by Los Angeles-based artist Michael Smoler. The exhibition, *the universe is part of ourselves* will display twenty-six works from an on-going series of collages that combine reprinted Hubble images of the cosmos with such things as historical figures, animals and other iconic elements. The collages are accompanied by a serialized poem entitled *this here and now*, written by the poet Lisa Johns for the occasion of this exhibition.

In the spirit of Dada and The New York School, Smoler's collages function as an entry point into the limitless, associative possibilities of visual poetry. The works seek to integrate a reality where "bodies and celestial backdrops coalesce as if made up of the very substance of the universe itself"—harkening back to the poet Ernesto Cardenal who wrote,

*"The stars you see
are in your retina...*

In the firmament of your eyes.

*What's in a star?
We are."*

These stunning collages recontextualize the found imagery into studies of space, time and the cycle of life while becoming autonomous landscapes for the viewer and reader to enter. Coupled with the text, a poetic narrative is formed that grapples with concerns regarding the state of the world and beyond.

The title of the exhibition is taken from the following poem by Robin Blaser.

"the universe is part of ourselves"

we have been everywhere, suddenly,
and twisted the clarities into bottles
and casements

it was the lintel concerned us
we walked through and wondered
above us

the larks of heaven perch and nothing

over the walls, the vision gossips
like rivers, and wishes, marvellous,
perishes

we have been everywhere, suddenly,
glorious texture the chorus added

eagerness, swiftness

intellect whispers, meanders, softly
landed remarkable ponds and
cattails

the ferns dream as they return
to green the efferation, the
dis-creation, the kindness of fragments

the larks of heaven perch and nothing

Michael Smoler (b. 1973, Chicago) is a collage artist and poet living in Los Angeles. He is the author of five small-press poetry chapbooks, including *in envy in smoke* published by The Healthy Unhealthy Press. His latest collection of poetry entitled, "pieces of water" is forthcoming with Insert Press. Smoler has studied and taught at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado where he received a BA in Writing and Poetics from the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics. He has also studied and taught at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco. From 2006 - 2008 Smoler operated and directed High Energy Constructs—an exhibition and performance venue in Los Angeles' Chinatown.

Lisa Johns (b. 1973, Chicago) is a Los Angeles-based creative entrepreneur and poet. She is the author of poetry collections *No Two Branches the Same to Wren* and *The Line between Lip and Liquid*--a finalist in the Sow's Ear Annual Chapbook Competition. Lisa has translated the work of several international authors and poets and is currently working on a nonfiction project involving James Turrell and his work on the Roden Crater. She holds a BA in French Language and Literature, was educated in Art History and Translation at L'Université Stendhal in Grenoble, France and completed her Master's Degree in Poetry and Nonfiction at the University of Southern California. You can find her online at [lisajohns\[dot\]com](http://lisajohns[dot]com).

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