

News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Shauta Marsh

Phone: (317) 450-6630

Email: shauta@bigcar.org

Big Car receives \$50,000 grant to connect art with community *Made for Each Other series provides city with public art boost*

Thanks to a recently awarded \$50,000 grant from the Great Indianapolis Neighborhood Initiatives IMAGINE Big program, Big Car — a locally based non-profit arts collective with a gallery in Fountain Square — will bring a series of eight community art projects to eight different neighborhoods across Indianapolis in 2009-2010.

The series, titled Made for Each Other (www.made4.org), is designed to connect art with the community and engage people of all walks of life in helping create shows, performances and events within the context of Indianapolis neighborhood. Made for Each Other starts with an exhibition at Lafayette Square Mall in October celebrating the rich cultural diversity of the neighborhood, followed in November by a collaborative community art show in Fountain Square connected with the Spirit & Place Festival.

Internationally known social practice artist Harrell Fletcher will advise Big Car on the series and will participate as the lead artist on at least one of the eight neighborhood projects. Fletcher, one of the creators of the collaborative project Learning to Love You More (www.learningtoloveyoumore.com), is based in Portland, Ore.

Projects in Made for Each Other will bring neighbors together to help with the planning, creating and celebration of each project — bridging gaps between art, artists and art institutions and our neighbors in the community. The artwork will be inclusive, interactive, and dynamic. Most will be temporary, but some — depending on ideas that arise when neighbors and artists collaborate — will likely be longer lasting.

“The end result will be bringing the community together and developing a broader audience for art in our city,” said Big Car curator and co-founder Jim Walker who is coordinating the series. “And now, more than ever, is the time to be working hard together to make this happen in Indianapolis.”

Projects will take place in urban areas across the city: Southeast (Fountain Square), Near Eastside, Martindale-Brightwood, Near West (Haughville), West Indianapolis (southwest of downtown), Lafayette Square, Crooked Creek (Michigan Road north of 38th Street) and the Binford Boulevard area (northeast).

The IMAGINE Big grant covers most of the Made for Each Other project costs but not Big Car staffing and administrative expenses. So Big Car, a 501c3 nonprofit arts organization, is raising dollars through grants and donations to pay for the rest.

With major funding cuts, large-scale public art projects — like those create by the Arts Council of Indianapolis through the city’s Cultural Development Initiative — may be less likely for the city in the immediate future. But Big Car’s Made for Each Other series will help continue the momentum created by the Arts Council’s public art projects of the last several years.

The series will also take public art in some new and important directions. First, it moves public art from the realm of cultural tourism in downtown locations to community locations in city neighborhoods across the city. For this series, the target audience is no longer visitors. It is people who live nearby. Second, the social nature of these projects will more directly connect members of the community with the final product. The work located in each community will be about these communities in authentic ways. The work will be made based on ideas and input from neighbors engaged in the communities. And the community will be part of the creation and celebration of the projects.

“We are calling it Made for Each Other because the projects are just that — made for and by each other in our community,” Walker said. “If it sounds like the title for a romantic comedy that’s just fine. This series is all about exploring a real love for our city and our neighbors — and having fun making art together.”

The Made for Each Other series will include work by local and national artists and features partnerships with the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Susurrus, Herron School of Art, Hoosier Environmental Council, Spirit & Place and more. Projects include an environmental art festival at Skiles Test Nature Park, two sculptures, an urban garden, a dance performance at the former Central State grounds, participation in a parade at Lafayette Square mall and interactive and collaborative art shows in temporary galleries across the city.

As an example, one of the first shows in the series will feature an installation created with help of Fountain Square community members taking portraits of their neighbors and providing profile information about them. Another portion of this show included in the Spirit & Place Festival will feature incidental photos taken with camera phones by local artists and community members while on walks, shopping, driving, etc.

More about Big Car: Big Car, best known for its eclectic gallery in Fountain Square, is a collective of artists that explores — through contemporary art practice and art as social engagement — the notions of people and place, and the unique aspects of community that connect them. It has hosted art, music and spoken-word events at its gallery and performance space since 2004. Big Car also puts on Masterpiece in a Day each year in Fountain Square and has worked with the Indianapolis Theatre Fringe Festival, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Oranje and other events and groups in the community on various projects. Big Car Collective is made up of more than 20 artists, musicians and writers — most located in Indianapolis. Some are students in art school and others have exhibited or published work on national and international levels. To find out more and

see profiles of the artists and images of work from past Big Car shows, visit www.bigcar.org.

More about Harrell Fletcher: He has worked collaboratively and individually on a variety of socially engaged, interdisciplinary projects for over 15 years. His work has been shown at SF MoMA, the de Young Museum, The Berkeley Art Museum, and Yerba Buena Center For The Arts in the San Francisco Bay Area, The Drawing Center, Socrates Sculpture Park, The Sculpture Center, The Wrong Gallery, and Smackmellon in NYC, DiverseWorks and Aurora Picture show in Houston, TX, PICA in Portland, OR, CoCA and The Seattle Art Museum in Seattle, WA, Signal in Malmo, Sweden, Domain de Kerguehenec in France, and The Royal College of Art in London. He was a participant in the 2004 Whitney Biennial. Fletcher has work in the collections of MoMA, The Whitney Museum, The New Museum, SFMoMA, The Berkeley Art Museum, The De Young Museum, and The FRAC Brittany, France. In 2002 Fletcher started Learning To Love You More, a participatory website with Miranda July. A book version LTLYM was published in 2007 by Prestel. Fletcher is the 2005 recipient of the Alpert Award in Visual Arts. His exhibition The American War originated in 2005 at ArtPace in San Antonio, TX, and traveled to Solvent Space in Richmond, VA, White Columns in NYC, The Center For Advanced Visual Studies MIT in Boston, MA, PICA in Portland, OR, and LAXART in Los Angeles among other locations. Fletcher is a Professor of Art and Social Practice at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. His website is www.harrellfletcher.com.

More about IMAGINE Big and GINI: This is the first year for the program offering a grant or grants of up to \$50,000 grant to Indianapolis neighborhood-based organizations courtesy of The Great Indy Neighborhoods Initiatives (GINI). Since 2007, the IMAGINE program has provided small matching grants from \$500 to \$5,000. But IMAGINE Big is designed to deepen and expand the impact of resident engagement efforts. In the highly competitive grant process, GINI asked neighborhoods to think creatively about potential projects to receive IMAGINE Big funding. It sought multi-neighborhood collaborations that increase the quality of life in a community; intergenerational projects that use neighborhood assets to engage neighbors together; or, organizing efforts to support micro-business in a neighborhood. IMAGINE Big grant recipients must offer 1 dollar of matching resources for every 2 dollars granted, but may count volunteer labor, donated materials, supplies, services or cash as part of that match. GINI is a three-year program promotes comprehensive community development to strengthen and improve the quality of life in local neighborhoods. Comprehensive community development focuses on collaboratively improving all aspects of neighborhoods that impact residents' quality of life. Find out more at www.greatindyneighborhoods.org.