

UMOCA

Utah Biennial: Mondo Utah

MAY 10 – DEC 14 Opening Reception MAY 10, 8-10 PM |
Artist Lecture 7:00 PM

Celebrating the diversity of Utah’s cultural landscape. The inaugural Utah Biennial titled *Mondo Utah* consists of succinct artistic statements, collections, artifacts and positions that celebrate the diversity of Utah’s cultural landscape. Cultural lore, forgotten icons and parallel art worlds are explored in this exhibition.

Utah Biennial: Mondo Utah is an anthropological look at the history past and present of contemporary art, folklore and culture in Utah. The theme of this first edition looks at the myriad ways in which Utah has been used as a site, subject, support, and material. Generating new projects and unearthing archival legacies, the exhibition demonstrates how Utah has produced its own language of contemporary art within our country’s cultural puzzle.

This first biennial looks at the myriad of ways in which Utah has been used as a site, subject, support, and material,” says Senior Curator Aaron Moulton. “Mondo Utah celebrates the diversity and richness of Utah’s cultural landscape with a spectrum of voices from all sides of the community. Utah’s cultural lore, forgotten icons and parallel art worlds re-imagine the possibilities and relevance of regionalism within an ever-globalizing perspective on contemporary art and cultural production.”

“Mondo Utah” or “the world of Utah”, is taken from the eponymous book by Utahn filmmaker Trent Harris, a publication of contemporary mythology that looks into the fables and idiosyncrasies originating from the Beehive state. The word “Mondo” references a filmmaking genre dating back to the early 60s from Italian filmmaker Gualtiero Jacopetti whose 1962 film “Mondo Cane” pioneered a filmmaking style known for cinema verite and pseudo-documentary that blurred reality and fiction. The film was structurally divided into short, unrelated vignettes or stories that brought one through a panorama of events unfolding before the camera.

Structured like a Russian doll, the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art is taken over by a series of exhibitions within the larger framework of the biennial. The recursive format reveals parallel worlds of art history, recent cultural productions, contemporary practices, outsider trajectories and aesthetic positions. Projects include Andy Warhol's hoax, Chris Burden's guerrilla art history, a tower of tumbleweeds, a film bathed in the Dead Sea before being thrown into a Spiral Jetty, a survey of faithful abstraction, the sublime of conceptual landscapes, a contemporary guide to a lost Utah, a 72-hour survival blanket, and an attack of a giant brine shrimp on downtown Salt Lake City. Institutional collaborations and collections come from the Church History Museum, the Central Utah Art Center, Summum, Wolf Productions, and the Salt Lake Art Center Collection.