

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN: HARRELL FLETCHER

Selections from the Life and Work of Michael Bravo

January 19, 2010 to April 24, 2010

Curated by Harrell Fletcher as part of *The Magnificent Seven*, this unique, biographical exhibition features artworks by the artist's mentor, family member and friend Michael Bravo. *Selections From the Life and Work of Michael Bravo* presents paintings, drawings, photographs, prints, and sculptures from the artist's large body of work produced over the past fifty years. The exhibition also highlights a wide range of personal objects that Bravo created for his family including wooden ships, airplanes, and mobiles, as well as family snapshots and other ephemera from the artist's life and career.

When Harrell Fletcher was still a baby, Michael Bravo married his older sister Sandra. Noticing early on that Bravo was an artist, a builder, a musician, and a generally unorthodox person different from everyone else in the family, Fletcher wanted to be just like him. Bravo was well-liked among the family, often making toys for the kids, doing work around the house, talking and being friendly with everyone. He took Fletcher fishing, taught him to sing songs, and showed him how to do lithography at an early age. Bravo's artwork also made an early impression on Fletcher; he recalls being confused and intrigued by the abstract, strange, and varied pieces.

After Fletcher's sister and Bravo divorced when he was ten years old, Fletcher did not see the artist again until he was 18 and enrolled in college at Humboldt State University where Bravo was a Professor of Art. Quickly, Fletcher began taking every possible class with the artistâ€”beginning, intermediate, and advanced drawing, and lithographyâ€”in every term for three years. It was strangely familiar for Fletcher to now be an official student of the artist who had been such an important role model to him while growing up. After leaving school at Humboldt State, the two only saw each other occasionally over the next decade. Fletcher eventually attended graduate school at California College of the Artsâ€”the same place where Bravo had received his BFA and MFA degrees, as well as where he met Fletcher's sister when she was an undergraduate at the school.

The two artists' lives continued to coincide in interesting ways. In the same year that Fletcher took a

tenure track job teaching art at Portland State University, Bravo retired from Humboldt State University after over twenty-five years of teaching. The trajectory of Bravo's life and artwork served as guideposts for Fletcher as he pursued his own career as an artist. Bravo instilled in him the idea that he could build a life around what he valued doing by focusing on those activities. While the two artists' work is very different, Fletcher appreciates Bravo's diverse, idiosyncratic and very personal style and is indebted to him for the possibilities that he introduced throughout the artist's life.

Michael Bravo was born in Oakland, California and raised in the outskirts of Sacramento. The artist's work has been included in many group exhibitions at institutions including San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco, Oakland Museum of Art, Downey Museum of Art, and Las Vegas Museum, as well as numerous group and solo exhibitions at other venues throughout the United States. He received both an M.F.A. and B.F.A. from California College of the Arts. From 1973 to 2004, Bravo was a Professor of Art at Humboldt State University and continues to live in Humboldt County, California.

Born in 1967 in Santa Maria, California, Harrell Fletcher has worked collaboratively and individually on a variety of socially engaged, interdisciplinary projects for over a decade. His recent traveling exhibition *The American War*, originated in 2005, has been presented in many art institutions across the United States including White Columns, New York and The Center For Advanced Visual Studies MIT in Boston. A book version of Fletcher's ongoing project *Learning To Love You More*, a participatory web site started in 2002 with Miranda July, was published in 2007. Fletcher received a B.F.A from San Francisco Art Institute in 1990 and an M.F.A. from California College of the Arts in 1994. In 1996, he received a certification in Ecological Horticulture from University of California, Santa Cruz. Fletcher is a Professor of Art at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon where he lives.

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