

*Ruffneck Constructivists*, a group exhibition curated by artist Kara Walker brings together eleven international artists in order to define a contemporary manifesto of urban architecture and change. On view in ICA's First Floor Space from February 12 through August 17, 2014, the exhibition features sculpture, photography, and video. As Walker states, "Ruffneck Constructivists are defiant shapers of environments. Whatever their gender affiliation, Ruffnecks go hard when all around them they see weakness, softness, compromise, sermonizing, poverty, and lack; they don't change the world through conscious actions, instead they build themselves into the world one assault at a time."

The term "Ruffneck Constructivists" is Walker's intentional recasting of "Russian Constructivists." Viewing F.T. Marinetti's 1909 Futurist Manifesto as a precursor to hip hop artist The Notorious B.I.G.'s Machine Gun Funk, the phrase "Ruffneck Constructivists" evokes thuggishness as an expression of abjection. Walker's wordplay suggests a relationship between the works on view in the exhibition and the moment, a century ago, when art and architecture were remaking a modern world. Yet, in place of the ego of the architect, they evoke the censured braggadocio of the hood and its black-market ingenuity. The works in this show don't communicate straight politics or solutions, yet in Walker's words that is "the background hum." Instead the exhibition focuses on structure and space as it is made and remade by policed bodies and identities. As Walker states, "it is my hope that the interaction between these very divergent works and methods could return a viewer to the questions of modernism, architecture, urbanism and the resistant bodies who reshape it."

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