

Downtown's New Art Gallery

Mon Dieu Projects hosts its inaugural exhibit, 'Intimate Exchanges'

By Leah Schwartz

LA Downtown News Staff Writer

In French, "Mon Dieu" translates to the expletive, "My god."

That's the reaction Korean Canadian gallerist Juno Youn and LA-based writer and art collector Spencer Walker hope to inspire with the opening of their gallery, Mon Dieu Projects.

The pair will launch their gallery on Saturday, April 1, at Mohilef Studios with its inaugural show, "Intimate Exchange." The exhibit closes on Saturday, May 6.

Following the opening reception, the studio will be open 2 to 7 p.m. Wednesday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays, and by appointment.

As young creatives, Youn and Walker met at a daytime rave in Montreal, becoming instant friends and bonding over their love of art. When presented with the idea, Walker jumped at the chance to open a gallery with his longtime friend. "I love (Youn's) taste, and I think LA deserves someone with his eye," Walker said.

The show features established artists, including Nadine Faraj, Michael Scoggins, Shen Wei and Hugo Alonso, and up-and-comers Bernice Lum, Ian Stone, Andrew Morrow and Sean Mundy.

The show will encompass various mediums, including sculpture, mixed-media photography, watercolor and paintings.

"We'd like people to come away with

an impression. Art should never be boring; it should always be challenging," Walker said of the exhibit. "The artists are trying to say something, and they're going to get your attention whether you like it or not. ... There's a bit of vulnerability to all the artwork. (The artists) are putting their hearts and egos on the line."

The title "Intimate Exchanges" refers to the dialogue between the art within the exhibit but also points to the international representation of artists, most of whom have been featured in Youn's Montreal gallery, Galerie Youn.

"I hope opening our project in LA will introduce Canadian and other international talents to the area. It's an opportunity to exchange our perspectives, ideas and concepts between Canada and America."

The show is meant to shock, tease and provoke a deeper conversation, exploring themes of sexuality, humor and what most deem "appropriate." "We're not doing decorative art here," Walker explained.

The opening reception is free and open to the public and will include drinks, dancing and DJ group Dos Boiz. "It's going to be an art opening turned dance party," Walker said.

While "Intimate Exchanges" features mainly French Canadian and international artists and figurative art, the gallery's second show, opening Saturday,



Artist Andrew Morrow will be one of eight artists exhibiting work at Mon Dieu Projects' opening show, "Intimate Exchanges."

Andrew Morrow/Submitted



LA-based writer and art collector Spencer Walker founded Mon Dieu Projects.

Lisa Aileen Dragani/Contributor



Korean Canadian gallerist Juno Young founded Mon Dieu Projects.

Renaud Lafrenière/Contributor

May 13, will focus on abstract and LA-based artists like Christopher Kuhn.

Youn, who curates primarily figurative art, is the main curator of this coming exhibit, while Walker, who gravitates toward abstract art, will be the driving force of the next. The aim is to combine

their tastes and love for boundary-pushing, provocative curation.

Going forward, Walker said, "We want to introduce LA to the art we love, and we hope to meet more artists along the way who we can show at the studio."

"Intimate Exchanges" at Mon Dieu Projects

WHEN: Opening Saturday, April 1.