

'Never STOP Dreaming': Brad Novak Solo Show

Exhibition Dates: March 5th-13th, 2016

Opening Reception: Saturday March 5th at 7pm

On Saturday March 5th, Struck Contemporary will host the first North American solo exhibition of New Zealand-based contemporary artist Brad Novak. The exhibition will feature Novak's one-of-a-kind, hand-collaged and stencil-sprayed artworks, involving the layering of popular imagery.

Born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1976 Brad Novak currently shows his work internationally through galleries in the US, Canada, the UK and New Zealand. Novak's art practice focuses on popular culture, specifically the depiction of celebrities from the hyper-inflated world of American stardom.

Artist Website: www.newbloodpop.com

Gallery Website: www.struckcontemporary.com

Location: 571B Adelaide St East, Toronto

Hours: Mon-Sat 10-6 & Sun 12-5

RSVP to info@struckcontemporary.com

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Brad Novak (aka New Blood Pop)

Born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1976, Brad Novak's profile as a leading urban pop artist (aka New Blood Pop) is continuing to rise rapidly, with a significant international fan-base, and a cutting edge body of work sitting sharply at the nexus between fine art and street art. His one-of-a-kind, hand-collaged and stencil-spray-painted works involve the layering of popular imagery. Novak is effectively creating his own walls upon which to make challenging statements about modern existence, such as pointing to an important quality of the human condition... awareness.

Currently showing work internationally through galleries in the US, Canada, the UK and New Zealand, his work calls for a paradigm shift in the way we experience life itself. Our over-reliance on science and technology has taught humanity to see the world through a dreamlike state which can cause suffering. Many of Novak's works depict people shedding tears formed from computer circuitry, or looking at the world through a technological 'lens'. The artist calls this 'subconscious escapism' – the loss of our collective minds. Our ever increasing love affair with technology has definite trade-offs.

Whilst living in London in the early 2000s the urban and street art scenes greatly influenced Novak's work. Additionally, Richard Hamilton's manifesto on Pop Art provided inspiration. In the letter written to Peter and Alison Smithson on the 16th of January 1957, Hamilton, a British artist, defined the different characteristics of pop art - describing it as '*transient, glamorous, expendable, sexy, and popular*'. The frivolity of these terms forms the basis for Novak's artistic exploration.

Novak uses popular culture, specifically the depiction of celebrities from the hyper-inflated world of American stardom. Icons such as Harrison Ford and Marilyn Monroe inhabit his creations. Their iconography is underpinned by the use of repetitive images of fellow superstars, such as Carrie Fisher and Christopher Reeve. Their stardom thus immortalized and shared in the same frame – an unobvious dig at the perversity of world views such as '*fame gives human life value*'. He references larger-than-life personalities, who also suffer, highlighting the delusion of our materialistic society. The artist, who is also a practicing public health doctor, describes his own experience of the works:

'New Blood Pop is concerned with how we experience life itself, the 21st century issues we face such as inequalities in wealth and health, sustainability and globalization. I'm also interested in the idea of escapism, especially through the science fiction and superhero franchises. Of the things we choose to believe, what's real, and what's not? These works are global, flagrant, iconic and ironic.

I endeavor to create powerful multi-layered works, with an emblazoned foreground overlaying a "veiled" background, to show that many of us are living life through a distorting veil, clouding our perception. Our awareness tainted by biases and judgments – an unfulfilling fantasy that we've created for ourselves – the practice of mindfulness promises salvation'.

–New Blood Pop