About the exhibition

New York artist Jordan Eagles began using animal blood as a painting medium 15 years ago in response to a philosophical debate with his best friend about life after death and the connection between body and spirit. Traditional red paint fell short of expressing the emotional vitality that Eagles sought, so he ventured to local slaughterhouses. But the works he created changed shade as the blood oxidized, causing Eagles to develop a means of suspending and encasing the blood in Plexiglas and UV resin in a way that permanently retains the organic material’s natural colors and textures. His innovative technique challenges nature by preventing the works from decomposing. MOCRA is pleased to present for the first time in St. Louis these arresting works that both fascinate and challenge audiences. Eagles’ use of blood evokes reflections on the corporeal and the spiritual, on the scientific and the mystical, on mortality and regeneration. In MOCRA’s unique former chapel space, these potent themes become particularly acute.

Even the very processes by which Eagles prepares his medium show a ritualistic sensibility. He uses various mark-making methods, including layering the blood at different densities as well as burning and aging the material. Copper imparts a fiery energy to some works. Loosely woven gauze saturated with blood echoes burial cloths and ancient wrapping rituals. Decomposed blood is ground into dust and tossed into the works as a sign of passing and change. Transparent preserved blood works projected onto walls create immersive environments. The MOCRA exhibition includes examples of all of these techniques. Highly textural and dimensional works will be presented in the side chapel galleries, while a site-specific installation of “blood illumination” pieces will be projected onto the walls and ceiling of MOCRA’s balcony gallery. The centerpiece is the massive nine-panel, 32-foot-wide installation, BAR 1–9, on display in MOCRA’s central nave gallery.

About the artist

Jordan Eagles received his BA in Fine Arts/Media Studies from New York University’s Gallatin School for Individualized Studies in 1999. Eagles has been profiled in TIME, The New York Times, FRAME, and The Huffington Post, and his work is found in numerous private and public collections, including the Peabody Essex Museum (Salem, MA), the Princeton University Art Museum (Princeton, NJ), the University of Michigan Museum of Art (Ann Arbor, MI), and the Everson Museum (Syracuse, NY). His work has been shown at venues including the University of Michigan Museum of Art, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (Hartford, CT), the High Museum (Atlanta, GA), the Elmhurst Museum (Elmhurst, IL), the Mobile Museum of Art (Mobile, AL), Trinity Museum at Trinity Church, Wall Street (New York, NY) and the International Museum of Surgical Science (Chicago, IL).

January 20 – May 12, 2013

Opening reception with the artist free and open to the public
Sunday, January 20, 2013
1:30 – 3:30 P.M.

MOCRA thanks Causey Contemporary (New York) and Krause Gallery (New York) for their generous assistance in the organization of this exhibition.

Jordan Eagles **BLOOD/SPRIT**


FKTS4, 2011. Blood, copper preserved on Plexiglas, UV resin. 10 × 12 × 2 in.


All images courtesy of the artist.