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**wet heat project**

## PRESS RELEASE

LAAA presents the west coast premiere of Wet Heat Project's new documentary feature film "making sh\*t up" on November 16, 2011.



Miami, FL - October 10, 2011

"making sh\*t up" played its hometown premiere to a sold-out house at the 2011 Miami International Film Festival, followed by two invitational screenings at the prestigious Core Club in New York. And now, art documentary filmmakers Wet Heat Project and Miami-based artist Bert Rodriguez are going to Hollywood.

West Hollywood, that is— the distinct Los Angeles nexus to experience and engage contemporary art. On November 16, 2011 at 7pm, "making sh\*t up" will be presented by the Los Angeles Art Association and its Director Peter Mays in a free, public screening at the brand new West Hollywood Public Library, (just walk through the Shepard Fairey mural and take a comfortable seat).

For three years, contemporary art filmmakers Wet Heat Project documented creative and career turning points in the energetic rise of enterprising, fervent and irreverent young conceptual artist Bert Rodriguez as he ventured beyond his hometown borders to penetrate an international art market.

The film opens at the crowded ArtLA Fair where Rodriguez claimed half his gallery's booth for a bare-knuckled "Clearance Sale" of every artwork he'd ever made from childhood through art school and his emerging career. For as little as \$5 and as much as \$150, Rodriguez sold to feeding-frenzy collectors and lucky passers-by original pieces in all mediums right up to and including current work, like that selling just a few feet away in his gallery's half of the booth for more than 100 times the price.

Whether a subversive twist on the art world's capricious fortunes, or a deeply revealing representation of his most personal life events, Rodriguez drives his work forward to add ever more meaning and dimension, and to advance the stature of his career.

From a "therapy cube" isolation booth in which he personally counseled visitors to the Whitney Biennial, to cooking a traditional Cuban meal with his mother at galleries worldwide, to a futures-market scheme where his gallery pre-sold artwork yet to be conceived or created, Rodriguez' next work often surprises himself as much as his viewers (and his dealers).

"making sh\*t up" captures lively action at bustling art fairs and solo shows in Los Angeles, New York City, Seattle and Miami, includes intimate studio sessions as Rodriguez plans and produces work, takes the artist back to a busy Miami street corner where a bloody accident nearly crushed his dreams, and presents a bounty of on-camera visits with renown movers and shapers sharing their expertise and anecdotes on conceptual art and Rodriguez in particular, such as: Marina Abramovic and Vito Acconci, legendary conceptual / performance artists  
Jerry Saltz, famed New York Magazine Senior Art Critic  
Amy Cappellazzo, Christie's Americas Deputy Chairman  
Yvonne Force Villareal of the Art Production Fund  
Steven Henry Madoff, art journalist and author of "Pop Art: A Critical History"  
C-Monster.net, the uber-popular New York contemporary art blogger

As Rodriguez plans for his Whitney Biennial performative installation in a scene from the film, he claims no separation between daily routines and the exceptional creations "that people end up calling art." He realizes, "if art didn't exist, I would probably still be doing something like this and figuring out a way to share it with other people. And I'd probably fucking look crazy and be homeless. Fortunately there's this system and industry that exists, that supports that sort of behavior."

And even as his work earns him international presence, notability, and dialogue with important art world communities, Rodriguez continues to be humbled and somewhat amazed that he is actually paid to “sit at his desk and make shit up.”

As Rodriguez’s work spans a gamut of disciplines, methods, and established conceptual ideas, Jerry Saltz advises that he “be willing to fail in a flamboyant way. If you are only willing to fail the way someone else has failed – or succeeded – to me, that’s not enough.”

Producer Grela Orihuela observes, “Our story is about an artist that places himself center stage in his work, but absolutely refuses to play a character. He insists on presenting the authentic, everyday, real-world Bert Rodriguez in a creative encounter that’s as strange and new for him as it is for the viewer. Otherwise the work would be phony to him, and of course, to you.”

“Bert is driven, like many good artists, to prove something to himself even more than to collectors and peers and public,” says the film’s director Bill Bilowit. “And it seems to me he needs to be constantly upping the ante of his work’s quality and relevance or he’ll become just a poser, resting on past laurels, the kind of guy he’d want to punch out at a party.”

The on-camera participants in the film are (in alphabetical order): artist Marina Abramovic, artist Vito Acconci, artist María José Arjona, Snitzer Gallery Co-Director Richard Arregui, Deputy Chairman of Christie’s Americas Amy Cappellazzo, C-Monster.net, Wall Street Journal art reporter Kelly Crow, New York Times reporter Susan Dominus, Whitney Biennial Curatorial Coordinator Stacey Goergen, artist Aramis Gutierrez, Bert’s high school art teacher Marion Hanks and New World School of the Arts teacher Susan Banks, ARTnews Contributing Editor and Yale School of Art Senior Critic Steven Henry Madoff, clinical psychiatrist Dr. Scot McAfee, artist Manny Prieres, collector Andrew Reed, Art Production Fund Co-Founders Doreen Remen and Yvonne Force Villareal, Bert’s mom Reneida Rodriguez, New York Magazine Senior Art Critic Jerry Saltz, collectors Michael & Lisa Schweitzer, collector Nancy Seltzer, gallerist Fred Snitzer, and exit interviews among the “patients” of Rodriguez’ Whitney Biennial installation / performance “In the Beginning...”

### *Background info...*

**Bert Rodriguez** is a BFA graduate from New World School of the Arts in Miami; his multi-disciplinary work and site-specific performances have been featured in museums, art fairs and galleries throughout the U.S. and Europe.

The film’s director **Bill Bilowit** and producer **Grela Orihuela** established Wet Heat Project in 2007 to produce original documentary films and exhibitions that personify working artists and art professionals who are shaping (and challenging) the contemporary art world. The partners also own and operate Tareco Pictures,

producing independent features, short films, documentaries and music videos. Orihuela and Bilowit previously owned a New York City production company that developed and produced international events, trade shows and videos for tech sector clients. In the 1980s, Bilowit was an art director and scenic / special effect artist on horror movies such as “CHUD” and “Sleepaway Camp,” and Orihuela was a television producer at Telemundo, coordinated special music events for Bill Graham, and was a stylist and documentary photographer for Senior VP of Fashion Direction Kal Ruttenstein at Bloomingdale’s in New York.

**“making sh\*t up” trailer, info:**

<http://www.makingshitup-themovie.com/>

**West Hollywood Public Library:**

625 N. San Vicente Blvd.  
West Hollywood, CA 90069  
(310) 652-5340

**Los Angeles Art Association:**

<http://www.laaa.org/>

**Wet Heat Project news and background:**

<http://www.wetheatproject.com/>  
<http://wetheatproject.blogspot.com>

**Bert Rodriguez:**

<http://snitzer.com/artists/rodriguez/index.html>  
<http://oh-wow.com/community/bert-rodriguez/>  
<http://www.minegro.com/>

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“miamiHeights” is our previous documentary feature film on a young Miami artist’s career liftoff. That film, an in-depth two-year journey with painter Hernan Bas, is available for museum, collection and educational screenings, and as a DVD homevideo at art museums and specialty retailers:

<http://visitmiamiheights.com/>