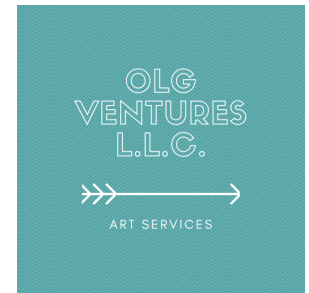


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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 18, 2023**

**RUDO GALLERY AND CULTURAL CENTER GRAND OPENING  
WITH SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION BY ROBERT E. GREEN**

**St. Louis, MO** - Community activist and visionary artist Robert E. Green, who is a recent recipient of a prestigious Divided City Urban Humanities Initiative grant from Washington University in St. Louis funded by the Mellon Foundation, and is also included in the groundbreaking Counterpublic citywide art event, will open a major, site-specific installation of his work, *THINK, IMAGINE, RECLAIM*, at 2205 St. Louis Avenue in the historic St. Louis Place neighborhood on June 3, 2023. The exhibition continues throughout the summer and is open by appointment following the opening.

The free open house runs from 10 am to 4 PM, with an artist talk from 3 to 4 pm by Green in conversation with James McAnally, Executive and Artistic Director of Counterpublic.

The event also serves as the Grand Opening of the new RUDO Gallery and Cultural Center, founded by Green. An 8-page brochure with an essay by Olivia Lahs-Gonzales accompanies the exhibition.

Green's artmaking is situated in the context of social practice art, and the installation and his neighborhood economic activation events are part of what could be considered a "Gesamtkunstwerk," (Total Work of Art) that is designed to counter prevailing racist narratives and close divisions and economic disparities. By championing African American cultural achievement and providing opportunities for generative economic support, he acts to revitalize and empower his neighborhood and its constituents. His mission in his practice is to cultivate awareness and appreciation of the significant contributions made by people of African descent and to shine a spotlight on systemic, racist political processes and their consequences, which have kept the community from flourishing.

Green has been making art for over 10 years and has been combining his object-making practice, which he sees as a diaristic endeavor, with economic and cultural empowerment events like cultural festivals, neighborhood celebrations, and history events that are often collaborations with major St. Louis institutions like the Missouri History Museum, the Mercantile Library, and the St. Louis Public Library.

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Robert E. Green, *Iron Man*, 11/2022, iron and tin, 37 x 46 inches. Image © and courtesy of the artist.

The building at the center of this tour-de-force project, was acquired by Green in 2020 right before the Pandemic lockdown. The building had fallen into disrepair, and Green purchased it with the intention of turning it into his art studio and a community arts gathering space. Over the past 3 years, Green did much of the renovation work on the building himself during the height of the Pandemic.

The exhibition, *THINK, IMAGINE, RECLAIM*, is a multimedia, site-specific installation of assemblage works, paintings, photographs, and video by Green that speaks to the spatial displacement of lives and communities fractured by the racist policies that have fostered years of systemic oppression of African Americans in St. Louis.

Many of the works shown on the first floor were created with elements of the building during the renovation process and in direct response to it, and the neighborhood. On the second floor are works made over the past 10 years that trace Green's development as an artist. Works from his *Abstracted Man*, *Pruitt Igoe*, *COVID Times*, and *Spatial Displacement and Erasure* series will be on view. The sculpture, *Hold Up the World*, 2023, commissioned by Counterpublic for their event, has been installed at the front of the building.

Green is a self-studied artist who has made art privately for more than 10 years. Despite being a painter, sculptor, photographer, filmmaker, and collector, Green gives as much weight if not more in his artistic practice to his community activism, which he undertakes to combat the divisions and inequities in his community. In fact, he sees this part of his practice as primary. These acts of social activism take the form of highly successful cultural festivals and events like his Juneteenth Day "Free Dome" Festival, the Saint Louis African American Artifacts Festival and Bazaar (SAINT LAAA FAB, now in its 8th year), the Pruitt-Igoe Forever community history initiative, and other cultural festivals and gatherings designed to preserve African American history and culture and bring exposure and economic gain to numerous African American-owned small businesses, many of them arts or culture-related. "I believe in putting people before the art, instead of the art before the people," Green says.

Green is a recipient of a 2022 Divided Cities Grant from Washington University in St. Louis and a participant in the 2023 Counterpublic citywide art event. He is a past recipient of an artist grant from the Regional Arts Commission, and his vernacular photography and African Artifact collection were shown alongside examples of his artwork at the Sheldon Art Galleries in 2017. His works have also been in exhibitions at the 10th Street Gallery, the Griot Museum, 14th Street Art Gallery, and Webster University. He is the founder and president of SAINT LAAA FAB, a group that organizes African American cultural festivals and other events that cultivate awareness and appreciation of the significant contributions made by people of African descent. From 1979-2000, Green worked as a computer systems engineer for IBM in St. Louis, Chicago, and San Francisco. Retired since 2000, Green was at the forefront of computing history and only one of four African American systems engineers when he first began his career.

The exhibition is made possible by a grant from the Divided City Initiative, Washington University-St. Louis. The Divided City is an urban humanities initiative, a joint project of the Center for the Humanities and the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, College of Architecture and Graduate School of Architecture & Urban Design at Washington University in St. Louis. The Divided City is funded by the Mellon Foundation.

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