

New Crossroads Artboards Installed for the Summer of 2022



Installation view of **Derrick Benitz's** west facing Artboards
Kiss, 2022

Kansas City, MO, July 20, 2022: The newly installed Charlotte Street Crossroads Artboards featuring artists **Derrick Benitz** and **Christopher Spaw** are now on view at 125 Southwest Boulevard. The Artboards program is a collaboration with the Crossroads Community Association that captures the creative spirit of the Crossroads neighborhood, serving as an alternative outdoor platform where artists' work can be viewed during all hours of the day. The new works will be on view until through the end of September.

Derrick Benitz says "The twin billboards provide a very unique canvas, so I sought to utilize their location and relationship to one another in a bold way. I put together a minimalist portrait with two models, each landing on one billboard, a single second from an embrace. No background, no text, just a single loving moment. In an ideal world, the image of two men nearing an embrace would not cause heads to turn. However, I do not believe this is the case. I expect that people will see this and be confronted with their own biases, hopefully in a way that makes them reconsider such tendencies. "



Installation view of **Christopher Spaw** east facing Artboards
One Hundred Miles West, 2022

Christopher Spaw says “*One Hundred Miles West* utilizes the east side of the Artboards as a portal to look out into the landscape of the Flint Hills of Kansas. Nature enters the urban environment, distance is compressed, departure is marked, shadow gives form, color becomes boundary.

ABOUT DERRICK BENITZ

Derrick Benitz is a photographer, based in Kansas City, utilizing both film and digital techniques to produce fine art photographs. His interest in photography blossomed at the end of his college career and he has practiced the medium since 2007. A self-taught photographer, he has spent a good deal of time studying how to read a photograph, as well as how to create one. In order to pursue his love of photography, he left his corporate job in 2018 and formed his own small business, BlackFox Photography. As demanding as being a business owner can be, he still devotes time to developing photography projects which highlight the human experience and how drastically it differs amongst various groups. He has been heavily influenced by Sally Mann, Cindy Sherman and Irving Penn, to name a few. Artists like these mastered their craft to the point where they knew they could get the look they wanted by purposely breaking the rules laid out before them. Derrick finds inspiration in artists who break with convention, stripping away all that is unnecessary until nothing is left but fine art.

ABOUT CHRISTOPHER SPAW

Christopher Spaw is an artist, educator and licensed architect with twenty plus years of experience in professional practice working within the realms of architecture, art, and design. He received his Bachelor of Architecture (1997) and his Master of Architecture (2005) from Kansas State University. He has designed and built projects from the Flint Hills of Kansas to the rugged coasts of Norway. Christopher is the former Principal and co-owner of boxlab, an award-winning design studio and showroom in Manhattan, Kansas. His experience and understanding of design-thinking and dimensional processes offers perspectives in materials, usability, design, form and spatial dynamics. Currently he collaborates with George Terbovich Inc. Design on commercial buildings, custom homes, additions, renovations, interior and exterior environments within the rolling prairie of the Flint Hills, Kansas City and surrounding areas. As an extension of his architectural practice, Spaw is building two bodies of work: *#cloudfarmer*, a photographic exploration of time and movement as it relates to his existence in the Midwest, and *Tectonic Landscapes*, a series of sculptural reliefs interpreting and exploring the shifts in his everyday surroundings. In 2021 a selection from the *#cloudfarmer* series were part of the Kansas City Flatfile & Digital File exhibition at the H&R Block Art Space. In 2019 Spaw was invited to exhibit work from his *Tectonic Landscapes* series in *NEW, FIVE: KCAI Biennial* at the H&R Block Art Space.

ABOUT CROSSROADS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The mission of the Crossroads Community Association shall be to support, promote, advance, and encourage the revitalization of the community as a thriving, safe and attractive center of art, history, enterprise, commerce, culture, residence, entertainment, education and other activity; to inform and educate the members of this association and the public about community issues; to provide a forum to address community objectives and issues; to build a strong community through communication, cooperation, planning and leadership; to build a strong partnership between business owners, property owners, tenants and residents to ensure community involvement; and to enhance the quality of life within the community. For more information visit <https://kccrossroads.org/about/cca/>

ABOUT ARTBOARDS

The Crossroads Artboards were launched in fall 2008 as a partnership between Charlotte Street Foundation and Missouri Bank (now BOK Financial). The Artboards program is currently supported in part by the Crossroads Community Association. 100 Kansas City area artists have been featured on the ARTBOARDS to date. For a complete listing and more information, visit <https://charlottestreet.org/awards/crossroads-artboards/>

ABOUT CHARLOTTE STREET

Charlotte Street centers Kansas City's most forward-thinking visual artists, writers, and performers—acting as the primary incubator, provocateur, and connector for the region's contemporary arts community, and its leading advocate on the national stage. Since 1997, Charlotte Street has distributed over \$2 million in awards and grants to artists and their innovative projects, and connected individual artists to each other and to the greater Kansas City community. For more information about Charlotte Street, its awards, programs, and initiatives, visit www.charlottestreet.org.

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