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Arts & Culture

AKA Gallery's Gearheads
New Exhibit Explores Masculinity, Car Culture
Gail Jansen



One of Ray Lodoen's custom-built choppers (Photo: Courtesy of the artist)

Saskatoon, SK — Gentlemen, start your engines — rubber burning Toronto performance artist Steven Laurie and Saskatoon motorcycle artist Ray Lodoen are joining forces in a new AKA Gallery exhibition entitled Gearheads.

"Getting a license, learning to drive and tricking out a vehicle to drive faster than the other guy is a rite of passage for boys entering manhood in our culture," says AKA Gallery director Tod Emal, explaining part of the rationale behind hosting the exhibit.

"[By] putting these machines and actions into the gallery context, this exhibition hopefully will lead viewers to look at the culture going on all around us," says Emal.

As part of the show's performance aspect, Laurie will be making his mark on the pavement with his Rubber Burning machines on June 11th and 12th, while Lodoen will be showcasing the rat-bike choppers that he designs and builds from the ground up.

The show will appeal to the mechanically-minded, as Laurie and Lodoen's work deals with a subset of car culture known as Kustom Kulture.

"[Kustom Kulture] values the individual touches and after-market customizations that aficionados put into their creations to enhance performance and make them look... cooler," explains Emal.

"The reworking, retooling and re-purposing of machines is highly creative and entirely concerned with performance, taken in a different sense."

Emel says he thinks the artists' work speaks to the distinction between what some consider simply "life" and others "art".

"Having seen both artists work in the past, this combination of talents seemed like a perfect fit, and I hope that by putting their work together it will get people thinking about why and how we make those distinctions between art and life."

Gearheads
Where: AKA Gallery

