

J. ROACH & KIM CHI, ERODA OTTRA GALLERY

Angela: Give a brief description of your sites.

J. Roach: We currently have two sites in the works and if all goes as planned, one more on the way. The first site (<http://www.infestnation.com>) is a personal site that has played as a pallet of ideas. It is currently in the process of becoming a t-shirt company and my personal portfolio. The second site (<http://www.erodaottra.com>) is a web-based art gallery focused on showcasing a variety of artists free of charge.

Kim Chi: The third site mentioned will be for my fashion designs, photography and basically serving as my portfolio.

Angela: What is your vision for the sites? Why and how did you start them?

J. Roach: My visions are pretty simple, I think. When it comes to Infest Nation, I just got tired of seeing all of these cookie cutter t-shirt companies sprout out with close to no artistic value. So I decided to start learning the silk-screening process and slowly but surely, I'm getting my foot in the door with a handful of assassins. I'm taking over!

As for Eroda Ottra, the idea to show other artists work started on my personal site and then became its own. The reason behind starting it was my way of saying thanks to the handful of local (Riverside) and web (<http://www.rasterized.org>) artists who took me in and helped get me and my art out. When I decided to take the idea from my site and expand it to its own site I knew I would need a lot of help.

Kim Chi: When we first started the art gallery site everybody seemed to be telling us to charge the artists "commission." Well, fuck that. There are enough artists out there who struggle just to be seen, just to sell one piece of work for practically nothing. I know what that is like and I want to give these people some sort of a break. There is a lot of honor in working with and meeting so many talented individuals; the site is the reward in and of itself. The last thing we wanted to do was taint that experience by involving money. This is about exposure for them.

J. Roach: Kim and I decided the only way we could work on our ideas together and get them done right would be to take it a step further and rent a studio. This way everything is in one spot and a lot easier to work on and learn from each other.

Kim Chi: We're still getting settled in, but overall the future is looking good. The process took us away from the site and our own art work, but it was completely necessary for us to be properly productive.

Angela: How has Do-It-Yourself shaped our scene?

J. Roach: I think the DIY process *is* what shapes an art community. The whole concept of a community in my mind is helping and learning from those around you. Besides the fact that it costs too much to pay people to do things. I can't even start to thank the people who have helped me enough.

Kim Chi: Real art, raw art, the kind of stuff that comes from the source ... all that shit is made by struggling people. There seems to be better art coming from the underclass because they are compelled by the future. When you have the security of money you can't understand the desperation to get somewhere; you don't have that need to find meaning in all this chaos and fear. As an artist, your lifestyle is shaped by communication. That's what art is, right? So you have to be very creative in getting across what you have to express because often we have walls in front of us when others do not. Good. That makes us stronger, more evolved. When I did my fashion show, I thought, "I did this whole thing grassroots ... No funding, no publicity, no agents. Fuck you Gucci, my shit rocked. I'm from Riverside and I'm a goddamn ninja."

Angela: What do you think are our local values? Describe the Riverside art scene.

Kim Chi: It depends. It's like everywhere. There are assholes and angels. That should be the name of a monster ballad. But it's true. I have met individuals who are shallow, indecipherable cretins who care nothing about anything, except for their expandable alcohol intake, their hair, and their reputation. I'm a little jaded sometimes because it makes me want to vomit. They're always the first ones to come up to you at an art show and blather some meaningless crap in your ear about how they liked it. The walking dead... But then I've also met some very lovely souls who give a shit about you on a personal level. They care about what you do, what it means, and they can take from your art and use it as their own inspiration. Those people know what real respect is. There are people who will read this and think, "I'm not a cretin," and guess what... they are *wrong*. Yes, you. You are a cretin and you didn't even know it. Everyone talks a lot of shit about Riverside, but that's just because they have nothing better to do. And how sad is that? We know Riverside can be a meth-capped nightmare slum, but why bitch when you can paint it or write a song about it? That kind of subject matter only comes around so often. If you don't like it, move to Orange County and live in suburban hell. Fun.

J. Roach: Well, it's obvious that Riverside in general is growing very quickly and with that comes more people who are going to love it, leave it or help create it. The art in Riverside right now, actually as long as I can remember has been amazing. Also, when I say art I mean art in general. There are so many art forms swimming around this city and I'm proud to be apart of it all.

Angela: How has your gallery been shaped by the art community?

Kim Chi: Personally, I've learned a lot about who is serious and who isn't. There have been a lot of good laughs. It's not always the raw talent, it's the intent. Art, in whatever form or representation, has to come through you. Like a human conduit. Everything else is just a pleasant pastime. It is one of the highest teachers for the soul. It is your crutch and weapon. We live in a dangerous and exciting time. The only sanctity or growth will be because of art, the force of creation. So, I guess, as I have learned these things, so has the intent of the gallery become more important. I'm looking more to art than I ever have as being vital. So the gallery is a way for me to feel as though I can give something back and keep something going, changing, expanding.

Riding the wave. It's my way of being a part of what is going on, what will be our history, sending out the good vibrations.

J. Roach: The Riverside art community has helped shape the gallery a lot but I like to take a step back and look at a wider community effort in the galleries growth. By that I mean all of the artists I have met in other cities and even other states. The beauty of the gallery being on the internet is we can meet and show artists from other communities, thus helping a wider range of people who may have never got it.