

The 2011 ***“Locals Only”*** exhibition series to begin this month
At CENTERpiece Gallery
Featuring the works of Las Vegas based artist Aaron Sheppard

[MCO Fine Art Advisory](http://www.mcofineart.com) and [CENTERpiece Gallery](http://www.centerpiecegallery.com) kicks off its 2011 exhibitions series with its signature program *“Locals Only,”* on February 17, 2011. The series is a biannual exhibition program that features the works of selected local artists from the Las Vegas community.

Opening the season, CENTERpiece Gallery will present the works of contemporary artist, [Aaron Sheppard](http://www.aaron-sheppard.com). This will be the first solo exhibition of Sheppard’s work in the Las Vegas area and will include a VIP opening reception with the artist on Thursday, February 17, 2010, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Drawing influence from the late 19th century [Decadent movement](http://www.decadentmovement.com), Sheppard’s work incorporates layers of material, neon, wood, concrete, and hand drawings. Through his fascination with allegorical narrative and storytelling, Sheppard addresses ideas of desire and cultural norms. Specifically, he incorporates his own body into drawn or collaged images that is meant to juxtapose sexual identity and gender. “I continue to use my body as a canvas and object,” Sheppard says. “Images drawn or collaged are referential of my physical body and mind projections.”



Sheppard intuitively assembles physical materials and literary references to blur the boundaries between feminine and masculine, erotic and sacred. Sheppard’s series of *Maleboxes*, 12 individual *“glory hole”* sculptures with unique personalities alluding to the Twelve Apostles, are displayed at waist height, meaning to engage the viewer with the more suggestive nature of the work. *Shakti SME*, the centerpiece of the exhibition, touches upon themes of both the divine and profane with neon tubes pouring milk, white light from the figure’s breast-like udders, calling to mind the famed Artemis fountain at the Villa D’Este in Tivoli.

Sheppard received his MFA from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2002 and currently lives in Las Vegas. His work is in the collections of the Sheldon Museum of Art and Lied Center of Performing Art in Nebraska. His work can also be viewed at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and the Virginia Cable & Wireless Corp in Vienna, Virginia. Sheppard has exhibited at the Fringe Festival in Australia, and in galleries in New York, Tokyo, Beijing, London, Las Vegas and Washington DC. Most recently, Sheppard held a solo exhibition at [Western Projects](http://www.westernprojects.com) in Los Angeles and has been reviewed and featured in numerous publications including the Las Vegas Review Journal, Las Vegas Sun and Desert Companion magazine.

Aaron Sheppard’s opening reception will be held on **Thursday, February 17, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.** The public is invited to view the exhibition through April 10, during normal business hours, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. For more information on the *“Locals Only”* series and other upcoming events, contact Gallery Director, Nicole Moffatt at (702) 739.3314, or follow us on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/centerpiecegallery) and [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/centerpiecegallery).

CENTERpiece Gallery is a 2,500-square-foot fine art and design venue located at Crystal Place inside CityCenter, Las Vegas. The gallery focuses not only on the traditional mediums of contemporary art such as photography and works on paper, but also presents unique and functional design objects and furniture. Notably, the gallery showcases works by many of the contemporary artists and architects featured throughout CityCenter, including artists Claes Oldenburg, Richard Misrach, Jenny Holzer and David Rockwell. For more information visit: www.centerpiecegallery.com

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