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Larry Krone Brings It Home This September

□ Thursday, August 13 2015

□ Kevin Schmidt



From drawings to sculptures, installations to videos, live performances to costume design, Larry Krone is a multi-media artist with a limitless supply of creativity. Raised in St. Louis and now living and working in Manhattan's East Village, Larry has been exhibiting his unparalleled creations since the early 90s. As a performer, Larry has appeared at music and art venues across the globe, and his costume design and fabrication for his own performances has led to the creation of House of Larréon, a line of custom gowns and stage costumes, outfitting cabaret performers, dancers and rock singers including Bridget Everett, Neal Medlyn, Adrienne Truscott, and Kathleen Hanna. *Vital VOICE* caught up with Larry to chat about his latest creative outlets and his upcoming

exhibition, *The Selling Sound of Country Music*, at projects+gallery in St. Louis this September.

As a man of many talents, what has been your latest project?

The main thing I've been doing creatively has been working on my book, *Look Book*. It documents all of my costumes and fashion work, which are two different lines. There is the House of Larréon, which is the cabaret gowns and stage wear kind of stuff. And then there is the Larry Krone BRAND, which is the western kind of stuff that I started making a long time ago.

What made you want to do a coffee table book?

Someone proposed it to me, and in the end I kind of took the project over myself. I really wanted to document the work that I have been doing most recently, which involves a great group of performers who are all friends of mine, particularly Bridget Everett who is my House of Larréon muse. Bridget's popularity has been rising, so the brand has gotten a lot more attention. I've branched out and done costumes for theater and dance pieces, plus special outfits for events, and it's just been exciting. So the book is a documentation of my work and the downtown scene in New York, which spans from cabaret to performance art to musical performance. The book documents the garments that I create for these people.

Have you talked to 'Queen Bey' about using such a similar name to hers for your label?

[Laughs] The name started out as kind of a jokey take on [Beyonce's] House of Deréon, but when I talk about House of Larréon, it's really this pretend fashion house that I run by myself out of a small studio in my apartment. It's only me. So, I'm not freaking out about it or anything.

You refer to the models in your book as muses. What do you look for in a muse?

It's really the personality. One thing that I am proud of in the book that I didn't really realize until I started making it is how diverse and broad of an idea of beauty I have been working with. I'm not really pushing for a traditional model type when it comes to size, age, or gender identification. I've had as models trans men and women, and people that define themselves in all sorts of ways. Gender these days is so fluid. The one thing all true Larréon Girls have in common is a dynamic personality

Who are your style icons?

Halston, Bob Mackie and Nudie Cohn, the western designer.

Speaking of western wear, we see a lot of that coming out in your live performances.

I'm a visual artist, and that's really how my career first got started—doing



Photo by Todd Oldham



Photo by Kevin Yatarola

performances that went along with my shows, a sort of performance art. I've done a lot of stuff at museums and galleries and performance type festivals. More recently I have taken the leap and performed at venues outside the art world. Joe's Pub has been especially supportive; it's become like my home. There was a short stint where I would be getting booked with my husband as a duet act in comedy shows at gay bars. My friend Wendy Ho, who has performed a lot in St. Louis, was the one that was booking us to do those shows, but they didn't really fly. I don't know, I guess we weren't funny enough [laughs].

So tell us what you have planned for your preview here in St. Louis.

projects+gallery is brand new and they are speaking directly to me in wanting to challenge boundaries and categories in art. Susan Barrett and Dorte Probststein, who run the gallery, they are very into fashion. Me too, I guess, but I have horrible taste- it's gaudy. But the gallery is great, and they are showing a lot of the sculptural pieces that I have done. The work that I do is labor-intensive and kind of obsessive. I've done these pieces made from Mylar fringe curtains, the kind that you see being used as backdrops. So I cut these curtains up and tape them back together to put pictures into them. Things like that.

I think we are also going to fill the whole gallery with hay, that's the plan! It's going to be sort of a "Hee Haw" environment with my work on the walls and some other additions. Also, for the first time, I am going to be selling clothes that I have made. I call it my "patchwork couture"—t-shirts that I have patched together, embroidering every seam and putting Swarovski crystals on them. I'll have a few of those for sale in addition to the ones that are on display.

I'll also be doing a few songs at the opening. Nothing to take away from the exhibit, but I do have some things in store.

Do you have a particular favorite medium as an artist?

I love working with my hands, and I love making things. As far as how I like to spend my time, that's it. But I do feel that if someone wants to understand who I am as an artist, the key is my performance. It really tells people who I am and what my work is about. Those layers of identity being revealed and the way I present myself as sincere yet showy illustrate how I feel about humanity and are good entry points for the rest of my work.

Have you picked out what you are going to wear to the opening?

I haven't! You know, I hate dressing up, so it will probably be a t-shirt and jeans. But I will have costumes for the performance that I do.

Any style tips for attendees?

I love looking at crazy outfits, so if the goal is to make me happy, people should wear something crazy. I like a lot of skin too. It would be fun to see people in western wear and in kind of 'artsy-craftsy' wear. That would be a kick to have a crowd of people all dressed like that.



Photo by Todd Oldham

What are you most looking forward to being back in St. Louis?

I love being back in my hometown, so I'm always looking for excuses to be there and to just hang out. I'll probably go to Blueberry Hill. It's where I grew up and it's just my favorite place. I might actually be doing a show there in the Elvis Room in the future. I also love World's Fair Donuts. That's always a stop. It's really all about the food, and I try to make my rounds while I am there. I was just talking about the 'Slinger' to some people here in New York. They were not sold. There are also the thrift shops. I was raised on St. Louis thrift shops, and they are still good. That was my entire wardrobe growing up, and I still wear some of the things that I've had since I was a teenager.

Join Pearl Vodka & *Vital VOICE* in welcoming St. Louisan Larry Krone home for the preview of his new exhibit, *The Selling Sound of Country Music*, at projects+gallery on Thursday, September 10 from 6 – 8 p.m. Pick up The Design Issue of *Vital VOICE* and enjoy signature cocktails by Pearl Vodka while Larry showcases his latest works. For more information on the event and to reserve your spot, [click here](#). **V**

Written by Kevin Schmidt

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About the Author



Kevin Schmidt

Managing Editor

kevin@thevitalvoice.com

Connect on: Facebook Twitter

Kevin Schmidt is the Managing Editor at Vital VOICE Magazine. You can find him in the office writing and editing content and updating the website, providing the latest lifestyle and entertainment news in our community. A perfect day for him would be eating carrot cake with Taylor Swift while binge-watching YouTube videos. Here's to hoping!

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