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For immediate release:
August 12, 2013

“Alien She” Exhibition on Riot Grrrl’s Impact Premieres at Carnegie Mellon’s Miller Gallery

PITTSBURGH—The Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University will present “Alien She,” the first exhibition on the lasting impact on artists and cultural producers of the pioneering punk feminist movement Riot Grrrl, before touring it nationally.

The exhibition focuses on seven contemporary artists working in a wide range of disciplines, including visual art, music, documentary film, new media, writing and performance, and provides a view into the passion and diversity of the original Riot Grrrl movement.

The exhibition will open Friday, Sept. 20, with a reception, “Revolution and Reception,” from 6 - 8 p.m., preceded by a tour at 5 p.m., led by the curators and many of the artists. The exhibition and opening events are free and open to the public.

Formed in reaction to violent sexism, racism and homophobia in the punk music scene and in the culture at large, Riot Grrrl emerged in the early 1990s and inspired many people around the world to pursue socially and politically progressive careers as artists, activists, authors and educators. Emphasizing female and youth empowerment, collaborative organization, creative resistance and DIY ethics, Riot Grrrl helped a new generation to become active feminists who created their own culture and communities to reflect their values and experiences. The movement spread, with chapters opening in at least 29 states and 21 countries, and with many new chapters forming in recent years.

Exhibition curators Astria Suparak of CMU’s Miller Gallery and Ceci Moss of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco observe in a curatorial statement that Riot Grrrl’s influence on



contemporary global culture is increasingly evident — from the Russian collective Pussy Riot's protest against corrupt government-church relations to the popular teen website "Rookie," and the launch of Girls Rock Camps and Ladyfest music and art festivals around the world.

"Riot Grrrl fostered community, action and creation," Suparak said. "This exhibition provides a view into the passion and diversity of the original Riot Grrrl movement and highlights how these ideas have broadened, evolved and mutated in the work of contemporary artists."

The exhibiting artists are [Ginger Brooks Takahashi](#) (North Braddock, Pittsburgh), [Tammy Rae Carland](#) (Oakland, Calif.), [Miranda July](#) (Los Angeles), [Faythe Levine](#) (Milwaukee), [Allyson Mitchell](#) (Toronto), [L.J. Roberts](#) (Brooklyn) and [Stephanie Syjuco](#) (San Francisco). Each artist is represented by several projects from the last 20 years, including new and rarely seen works, providing an insight into the development of their creative practices and individual trajectories.

Of the historic section of the exhibition, Moss said, "This is a living history, not a sealed past. By representing numerous voices and experiences, rather than outlining one single definitive story, we hope the historical section of the show will reflect the multiplicity that was such an integral part of the original movement."

Hundreds of self-published zines and hand-designed posters from institutional and personal archives were solicited through open calls, word-of-mouth and invitations, similar to the way Riot Grrrl expanded. Music playlists represent different Riot Grrrl scenes across the United States, Canada, South America and Europe. These playlists are guest-curated by musicians, DJs and music label owners internationally and accompanied by records, set lists, band T-shirts and other ephemera. Video interviews and ongoing, online projects like the Riot Grrrl Census (<http://riotgrrrlcensus.tumblr.com>) and Riot Grrrl Chapters Map (bit.ly/RGmap) provide an expanded oral history.

In addition, the Miller Gallery will host public programs including workshops, discussions, film screenings, and dance parties in collaboration with several local groups and institutions.

The Miller Gallery is in the Purnell Center for the Arts on Carnegie Mellon's Pittsburgh campus. The gallery is open to the public from noon to 6 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.

For more information, including print-ready images and a list of events, visit www.bit.ly/AlienShe

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Photo caption: "Untitled (Lesbian Bed #8)," Tammy Rae Carland, photograph, 2002

Archival Materials from: EMP Museum, Seattle; Interference Archive; Jabberjaw; the Riot Grrrl Collection at the Fales Library & Special Collections, NYU; and many personal collections.

Regional Music Curators: Tammy Rae Carland of Mr. Lady Records and *I (heart) Amy Carter* zine (American South); Pete Dale of Slampt Records and Pussycat Trash (England); Donna Dresch of Chainsaw Records and Team Dresch (Pacific Northwest); Maaike Muntinga of Riot Grrrl Benelux and Ladyfest Amsterdam + Jessica Gysel of *Girls Like Us* magazine (Belgium + the Netherlands); Lynne T + Bernie Bankrupt of Lesbians on Ecstasy (Canada); Allison Wolfe of Bratmobile, *Girl Germs* zine and Ladyfest Olympia (D.C. + Olympia); Elisa Gargiulo of Dominatrix (Brazil); and Ceci Moss + Astria Suparak, exhibition curators and former Riot Grrrls (California).

About some of the works:

In various ways, these artists have incorporated, expanded upon, or reacted to Riot Grrrl's ideology, tactics and aesthetics. For instance, many continue to cultivate and nurture alternative communities. Ginger Brooks Takahashi creates spaces for conversation and exchange with jubilant publications, dance parties, mobile reading rooms and soup delivery service. Through photography and video, Faythe Levine documents groups committed to DIY independence and handmade aesthetics, such as crafters, off-the-gridders, and, in her new book and documentary, traditional hand-lettered sign painters. L.J. Roberts fabricates declarations of protest and solidarity with evocative banners and textile works.

Riot Grrrl thrived through the establishment of DIY networks and information sharing, an aspect manifest in Stephanie Syjuco's project for freely distributing copyrighted critical texts and in Miranda July's video chain letter for "lady moviemakers." Recalling forgotten her/histories also was central to Riot Grrrl, and in that vein, Allyson Mitchell pays homage to key writings, feminist presses, bookstores and libraries with lesbian feminist library wallpaper, while Tammy Rae Carland reveals intimate relationships in her autobiographical photo series. All of the artists included here have worked collaboratively and many have built platforms for other artists and under-recognized groups to connect, encourage, share resources and self-publish. For more details about the artists and exhibition, visit www.bit.ly/AlienShe

About Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University: As Carnegie Mellon University's contemporary art gallery, the Miller Gallery (www.cmu.edu/millergallery) supports experimentation that expands the notions of art and culture, providing a forum for engaged conversations about creativity and innovation. The Miller Gallery has organized and produced tours of the first Yes Men solo exhibition, "Keep It Slick: Infiltrating Capitalism with The Yes Men" (2008); "Your Town, Inc.: Big Box Reuse with Julia Christensen" (2008); and "Intimate Science" (2012). Recent exhibitions and events from the Miller Gallery include the "2011 Pittsburgh Biennial," "Whatever It Takes: Steelers Fan Collections, Rituals, and Obsession" (2010); and the "Contestational Cartographies Symposium" (2010). The gallery produces

exhibitions, projects, events and publications with a focus on social issues, and is free and open to the public.

About Carnegie Mellon University: Carnegie Mellon (www.cmu.edu) is a private, internationally ranked research university with programs in areas ranging from science, technology and business, to public policy, the humanities and the arts. More than 12,000 students in the university's seven schools and colleges benefit from a small student-to-faculty ratio and an education characterized by its focus on creating and implementing solutions for real problems, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. A global university, Carnegie Mellon has campuses in Pittsburgh, Pa., California's Silicon Valley and Qatar, and programs in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and Mexico. The university recently completed "Inspire Innovation: The Campaign for Carnegie Mellon University," exceeding its \$1 billion goal to build its endowment, support faculty, students and innovative research, and enhance the physical campus with equipment and facility improvements. The campaign closed June 30, 2013.