

September 9, 2010

Art Score: The Immaculate Reception



SEPTEMBER 10, 5-8P.M.
MILLER GALLERY AT CARNEGIE MELLON

If you're reading this, chances are you've waved a Terrible Towel, had your picture taken with Steely McBeam and chanted the phrase "one for the thumb." Maybe you've even seen the eerie yet endearing news footage about one extreme Steelers fan who choose to be laid to rest on a recliner, wearing black and gold, with a beer at his side and remote control in hand, watching a continuous loop of Steelers highlights on TV.

But have you ever stopped to think about the millions of fans around the world who have taken the design and display of Steeler-themed totems and traditions into their own hands?

The latest pop subculture to be tackled by the [Miller Gallery](#) is one that's very close to home. With an unapologetic look at the "collections, rituals, and obsessions" of Steeler fans, co-curators Jon Rubin and Astria Suparak left no black and gold stone unturned, culling objects, artifacts and habits via social media sites and enthusiastic calls for submissions.

Delving into the heart and soul of Steeler Nation via the products, possessions and peculiarities of its most passionate fans, *Whatever It Takes* presents an intimate look at how Steeler supporters construct their own personal and social identities, relate to the team, and form active communities of cultural producers. Lifting its title from the words of famed coach Chuck Noll, *Whatever It Takes* also considers the context of the city's economic climate during the 1970s, when a die-hard Steelers fan base emerged.

From the low-fi home-taped web show, *Yinz Luv 'Da Stillers*, to countless costumes, tattoos, videos, and unlicensed merchandise, the ambitious display embraces the Steeler diaspora, which spans some 2,000 self-proclaimed Steelers bars and fan clubs worldwide.



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Reflecting a DIY aesthetic seen in current music and craft subcultures, *Whatever It Takes* gives voice to an authentic community of producers not typically considered with the gallery setting. Via gameday rituals such as setting aside 62 minutes to kiss every Steelers item in the house, the first-of-its-kind exhibition reflects the cultural, psychological and emotional forces at work behind the Steel Curtain.??

One fan has amassed 100 signed footballs, while another spent eight years tattooing his torso with players, plays, trophies, a stadium full of fans, and the Pittsburgh skyline. Think you can top that? Contribute to the exhibition by reenacting Franco Harris' famous catch, video-chatting with patrons in a Steelers bar in Rome, having your Steelers tattoo photographed, and relaying personal fan obsessions in the videobooth.

Don't miss the show's "Immaculate Reception" kick-off this Friday, Sept. 10. Arrive at 5p.m. to tour Denny DeLuca's "Steelers Room," which was moved from the fan's basement into the gallery.