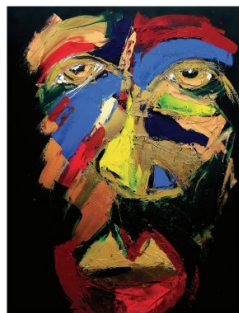




## COLLECTIVE STRENGTH



### WORKS BY COLLECT LEVEL

ARTISTS INCLUDING:  
 HECTOR CASANOVA  
 NICOLE CAWLFIELD  
 LORI RAYE ERICKSON  
 JOSE FAUS  
 JOSEPH GREGORY  
 CHRISTEL HIGHLAND  
 MARCELLA LALLY  
 PAUL MALLORY  
 CHICO SAN  
 CHRISTIAN SIMMS  
 HAROLD SMITH  
 SABRINA STAIRES  
 TROY SWANGSTU



Collect Level, hosted by The Leedy-Voulikos Art Center, presents:

## *ARTicles for a New Era*

This evolving series will feature artists and their work from Collect Level's Spring 2020 group show titled *Collective Strength* shuttered by the Covid-19 global pandemic. Collect Level was founded by Artists Lori Raye Erickson and Christel Highland to increase success for productive, mid-career regional artists in the Kansas City Area.



## Chico San Creatively Connects to Cultures

By: Christel Highland

Long before Artist Chico San moved to Kansas City, he knew exactly where he wanted to be. As a student at Mizzou, he studied painting and printmaking. During undergrad, he would venture into the city for First Fridays with his pal Shawwna Jernnagan of The Living Room notoriety. They both fell in love with the energy and vitality in the art scene that we all have grown so accustomed to.

Embraced by Community Art Leaders like Hector Casanova and Renee Cinderhouse, he leapt into a very collaborative segment of the Kansas City art scene. San participated in Art Battles hosted by Artist Tyson Schroeder held at the former Westport location of the Record Bar. Like many artists, Chico San thrives in collaborative spaces. “The art challenges at they really got me going,” he said. “ I like how artists react to other artists work- sharing, fostering new ideas...having fun.”

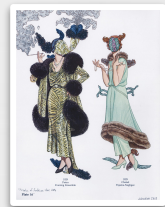
With limited time for his art practice due to the practical demands of earning a living, San found the desire for collaboration welling up. One evening, hanging out with one of his close friends, who also happens to be a drag queen, San discovered the intense detail and beauty contained in vintage reproductions of paper doll art. He felt a welling up, a “reconnecting to a part of myself.” His friend scanned the images needed for costume inspiration, and generously gave the book to San. Chico San has been interacting with these images for more than two years now. Starting with fashion from the roaring 20’s, he embraces each image as a “study to see how I can react to something existing, like a collaboration.” In this process he is actively rekindling a connection to his childhood, and his first professional aspiration, archaeology and anthropology. Not claiming to be a fashion plate himself, he says “I do love how people express themselves through clothing. I also have a deep love and respect for design.”

When we spoke, he was hopeful that during this time of relative isolation that we each take the time to reconnect with ourselves what really makes us happy. He will be collaborating with artists he’s never met- looking forward to diving into a Japanese paper doll series, he has been studying Yokai and Oni. These bewitching supernatural monsters, spirits, and demons, ogres, trolls, and otherwise fantastical creatures embraced by Japanese culture and art for centuries have been part of performance, folklore, and are still incorporated into contemporary culture. He is also looking forward to a deep dive into an Ancient Egyptian series that he hasn’t had the time to interact with yet- something he has been looking forward to since seeing the Queen Nefertari: Eternal Egypt exhibit at The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art.

San approaches each image with utter creativity and imaginative abandon measured with careful consideration. Each piece is not only a collaboration with the original artist, but a collaboration with history itself, playing with visual cues, form and function. He brings tidy lines to the surface, layering and extending the original fashion elements while weaving creatures into each piece with bright precision. In these incredible collaborations Artist Chico San explores whimsy, the grotesque, the surreal, the ambiguous, the impossible, color, and pattern all while remaining precise and process-focused.



Next Wall



Previous Wall

Next Wall





Kimono with  
crane pattern

***Beasts From the East: Plate  
9-Nurarihyon & Jijja Hime, 2020***

Chico San

Acrylic and pen on paper

22 x 19 inches, framed

\$450

Purchase this work today by clicking on this [link](#).

Back



***Beasts From the East: Plate  
12-Nurikabe, 2019***

original illustration by Ming-Ju Sun

Chico San

Acrylic and Ink on Paper

22 x 19 inches, framed

\$450

Purchase this work today by clicking on this [link](#).

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***Freaks of Fashion: The 20s***  
***Plate 13, 2018***

original illustration by Tom Tierney

Chico San

Acrylic and Ink on Paper

22 x 19 inches, framed

\$450

Purchase this work today by clicking on this [link](#).

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***Freaks of Fashion: The 20s Plate  
16, 2019***

Chico San  
Acrylic and ink on paper  
22 x 19 inches, framed  
\$450

Purchase this work today by clicking on this [link](#).

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