

**The Urban Edge Apartment Living:** 'The Fabled Collective of Bruces, the Bruce High Quality Foundation, Take over the Brooklyn Museum', July 19, 2013.

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Tackling Love, Part of the Ode to Joy Exhibition

The Bruce High Quality Foundation is an anonymous collective—all members seem to be named Bruce, coincidentally—with a made-up past (their fictitious founder, Bruce High Quality, died on the attacks of September 11) and a mischievous sense of humor about creating public art spectacles. Their extremely loose, populist contemporary art survey The Brucennial, on display every two years to coincide with the Whitney's heavily-moneyed Biennial, is always one of my favorite exhibitions of whatever year it happens to fall on. And now the Bruces have their own show at the Brooklyn Museum, titled Ode to Joy, 2001 - 2013, and promising to bring "less than 17,000 of their greatest hits to a much larger public than anything else they've done before.



The Gate (a Response to Christo's Central Park Installation)

The mission of the Bruce High Quality Foundation is to fill “the experience of public space with wonder, to resurrect art history from the bowels of despair, and to impregnate the institutions of art with the joy of man’s desiring.” Which is a lot, but if anyone can do it, it’s the Bruces. Take the 2005 piece, *The Gate: Not the Idea of the Thing but the Thing Itself*, which they created in direct response to 1. Christo’s massive Central Park installation and 2. the Whitney-sponsored *Floating Island* by art star Robert Smithson, which was on a barge circling Manhattan. Basically, BHQF built their own Gate (just one), attached it to a little speedboat, and went out into the river in pursuit of the barge. That’s the sort of thing that do, the Bruce High Quality Foundation.



Recreation of Raft of Medusa, by the Bruce High Quality Foundation

Other highlights from among the 50 or so pieces at the Brooklyn Museum Ode to Joy exhibition would include the collective's recreations of Géricault's Raft of Medusa (complete with shopping cart) and Picasso's masterpiece, retitled here for reasons of gender "The Bachelors of Avignon"; the inflatable rat which puffs itself up and deflates, puffs itself and deflates, at the exhibition's entrance; the Rentstrike!! staged at a Mets game in Citi-field; and the Public Sculpture Tackles, in which several Bruces donned pads and helmets and literally tackled high-end public art around the city, including Robert Indiana's Love.



Rentstrike!! Staged at Citifield During a Mets Game

Lots of the pieces here are conceptual, or performance-based, but there are also a number of excellent collage-y pieces, many involving cigarette butts on display, as well as, for example, a pile of plaster noses and other body parts. Although it only takes up two small galleries on the Brooklyn Museum's first floor, there are so many interesting, engaging pieces here that it feels like a much larger show. Definitely worth the trip, especially if you haven't seen the big El Antasui exhibition on the 5th floor, which runs through August 4th.



Thank You New York, part of Ode to Joy at the Brooklyn Museum

The Bruce High Quality Foundation show, Ode To Joy, will be at the Brooklyn Museum through September 22. The Brooklyn Museum is located on Eastern Parkway in Prospect Heights, and the 2 and 3 trains stop right at the front door. Lots more information about BHQF and the Brooklyn Museum can be found [here](#).