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In Focus | Steve Powers (a k a Espo)

By JUDITH PUCKETT-RINELLA

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If you happen to find yourself in the Gateway City — St. Louis — before June 7, check out “2 Fists of Iron and a Bottle of Beer,” the latest interactive installation by Steve Powers (formerly known as ESPO), which is currently on display at White Flag Projects gallery. For the show, the New York-based graffiti artist has merged the two places people flock to in tough times — the church (the house of the holy spirit) and the bar (the house of many spirits). The altar is a juke box, and sinners are depicted as saints in spray-painted stained glass windows. There’s also a drive-through wedding chapel and a custom auto-graphics shop. But the most provocative pieces are the posters, done in his signature style, announcing recession-era slogans like “We Buy Gold,” “Get on Disability” and “Tent City.”

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“Saint Elliott Smith,” by Steve Powers.



Steve Powers's saints, behind jukebox, from left: Darby Crash, Kurt Cobain, John Coltrane, Billie Holiday, Ian Curtis and Jeffrey Lee Pierce.