

Hyde Park **ARTCENTER** Gallery 1

April 26 - July 6, 2008

ary purpose of using architecture as an instrument for social and governmental action. Much like the socialist ideology behind Tatlin's utopian design, *'Olympus Manger,' Scene II* cannot function properly, i.e. be a complete artwork, unless there are many people to simultaneously pull on both ends of the rope. Literally and figuratively speaking, it takes many people to move a mountain.

Allison Peters
Director of Exhibitions, Hyde Park Art Center

Kelly Kaczynski received an M.F.A. from Bard College and a B.A. from Evergreen State College in Washington. Previous installations include *Scenes from Olympus Manger*, exhibited at the University of Buffalo Art Gallery in 2005 (NY) and *air is air and thing is thing*, shown at Triple Candy (NYC) in 2004. Among her public installations are projects with the Main Line Art Center in Haverford, Pa.; the Institute for Contemporary Art in Boston; and the Boston National Historic Parks. Kaczynski has held a number of teaching positions and currently is a faculty member in the Department of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University.

Related Events:

All events are free and open to the public.

Opening Reception

Saturday, April 26, 6-8 pm

Art Thing

Tuesday, May 6, 4-6 pm

The artist will speak informally about her work and answer questions from the audience. Join us for wine, cheese and insightful discussion!

Who's Afraid of Vladimir Tatlin?: A Responsive Situation

Tuesday, July 1, 6-8 pm

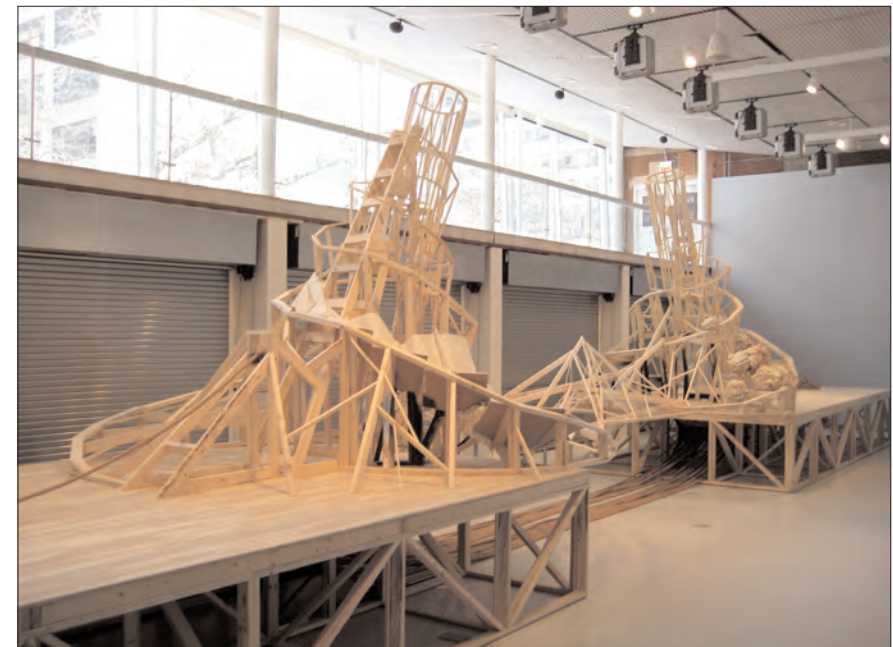
The revolutionary architecture by Russian Constructivist, Vladimir Tatlin informs the recent work of contemporary artists including Kaczynski and Michael Rakowitz, who will complete a related project for the Sydney Biennial in May 2008. Both artists, along with architect Doug Garofalo, will discuss the responsive process of structuring space.

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5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 www.hydeparkart.org

The Hyde Park Art Center is a not-for-profit organization that presents innovative exhibitions, primarily work by Chicago-area artists, and educational programs in the visual arts for children and adults of diverse backgrounds. The Center is funded in part by the Alphawood Foundation; The Chicago Community Trust; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council; The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Leo S. Guthman Fund; The Irving Harris Foundation; The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Joyce Foundation; JPMorgan Chase Foundation; The Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; The MacArthur Foundation; The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The Orbit Fund; Polk Bros. Foundation; The Clinton Family Fund; The Sara Lee Foundation; South East Chicago Commission; The Wallace Foundation; and the generosity of its members and friends.

'Olympus Manger,' Scene II by Kelly Kaczynski



This project is supported in part by a Research Grant from the University Research Grants Committee at Northwestern University, The Department of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University, Podmajersky, Inc. and the Chicago Arts District, Stay Straight Manufacture, and the Hyde Park Art Center. Assistance to the artist has been provided by David Wolf.

'*Olympus Manger*, Scene II, is a large-scale installation involving the juncture between art, architecture, theatre and landscape. It is the second installation in a continuing series of a singular artwork: a conceptual play titled '*Olympus Manger*'. In this proposed production of Scene II, there are two stages initially positioned 20 feet apart with one mountain on each stage, mirroring one another. Between the two mountains lay a "valley" bridging the span. The entire installation is built from common construction materials: lumber, insulation foam, luan flooring, screws and nails. The mountains are built in the likeness of the Russian Constructivist artist, Vladimir Tatlin's infamous and never fully realized Monument to the Third International, 1919.

'*Olympus Manger*' is an investigation of scale, landscape, the built environment and its relationship to the body. As viewers enter the space, they are given the choice of assuming the "actor" role, or remaining "spectator". There is a rope connecting each stage via a pulley system below. In pursuing the position of "actor", two or more participants can partake in a tug-of-war that results in the slow and inevitable collision of the two stages, thus folding the landscape in between and collapsing the mountains to create a new formation.

'*Olympus Manger*, Scene II is a monument to geological time and psycho-social relationships.

-----Kelly Kaczynski

*Please enter onto the stage and give the ropes a strong tug.
You just may cause the piece to move and shift.*

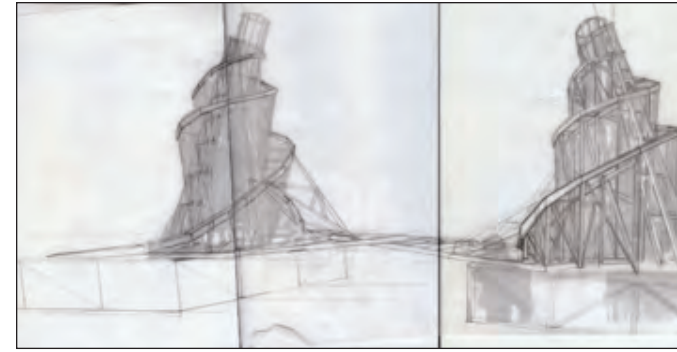
Attempting to see or experience plate tectonics (the theory that the earth's plates interact with each other causing mountains to build, and earthquakes or volcanoes to occur) in real time could be likened to watching paint dry. Such massive natural accomplishments as the Grand Canyon are breathtaking, but the pace of their development is yawn-making. How can we humans feel significant in the presence of something so much greater - physically and historically? Originally from the Pacific Northwest and having grown up between the Olympic and Cascade mountain ranges, artist Kelly Kaczynski is preoccupied with a longing for the physical and metaphorical experiences one can encounter in nature and attempts to infuse this feeling into her artwork.

The title, *Olympus Manger*, means to combine the notion of opposing scales into one experience. The enormity and vastness of nature mixed with the relative smallness and intimate existence of the body (here symbolized by the manger or vessel) speaks to a certain impossibility of the two colliding together. Yet Kaczynski has engineered an art installation that defies this impossibility setting the stage, for a great catastrophe to occur if the will and action of the public demands it.

Destruction, or the failure of the built structure, is as essential to the artwork as is the viewer's strength or the lumber used to realize the sculptural composition. The artwork is both a kinetic object and a drawing in the way that the pieces of



Installation view from above.



Kelly Kaczynski, *Untitled* (tatlin sketch), 2007, 11 x 14 inches

wood follow the same lines that exist on the artist's preliminary sketches, shown to the left. Volume is hinted through the use of black paint to suggest the mountain cavity or caves. Silver paint trickles down a valley of sheet rock and a bright orange hue glows from the inside of the wooden boulders or geodes, as the artist refers to them. These details are used sparingly to preserve room for the viewer to imagine another geological

structure, which is the result of countless tugs, pulls and crashes into a future form.

Kelly Kaczynski's work consistently oscillates the viewer between active and passive roles making the experience of the work different every time, while encouraging multiple visits to see how the work develops. Here, the public sets the sculpture in motion by tugging at both sides of a rope threaded through the two skeletal mountains. Once the piece is pushed together it will never be returned to its former state. There is no going backward. The pace to which the two stages collide is calculated by the artist. It is intended to last the duration of the exhibition's 13 week run and mimic a slowing down of time similar to geologic sequence. But just as earthquakes happen and volcanoes erupt, the work is subject to bursts of activity, dependent on the amount of pulling. The two stages are engineered to eventually fuse together and re-form into a new sculpture. In the end, the structural debris from the two mountains transforms into a large mass, turning two separate structures into one united peak form. At any point during the exhibition, the audience will most likely see a different piece than what he/she remembered from the last visit.



Detail of a geode.

For '*Olympus Manger*, Scene II, the artist has designed the work to employ the signature feature of Doug Garofalo's architecture of the Art Center - the coiling metal doors along the gallery wall - that defuses the boundary between inside and outside of the building. Kaczynski exploits the spontaneous nature of this feature when all of the doors are open by aligning the stairs of the installation with the sidewalk entrance, automatically placing the passer-by on top of the stage confronted by rows of theater seats. Additionally, the work can be seen from above on the balcony, allowing the work to be seen semi-in-the-round and with a bird's eye view, bringing the experience back to nature.

As the political climate in the United States heats up with the demand for change and we come to terms with the gravity of our own ecological footprint, the new work by Kelly Kaczynski proves extremely relevant to the current discourse of concern for the environment. Kaczynski chose to emulate Vladimir Tatlin's historic model of a building, *Monument to the Third International* (1919), for its vision-