

Related Events:

Hut Office Hours with Carlos Flores

Monday August 14th, 6-7pm, Inside the artist's installation
Tuesday September 12th, 1pm-2pm, Inside the artist's installation

Flux Work with Connie Noyes

Saturday August 26th, 2-4pm, 2nd Floor Pond Area

Playtests with Grace Needlman

Sunday August 27th, 3-5pm, Inside Main Gallery
Sunday September 17th, 3-5pm, Inside Main Gallery

Passport Photo Session with Soohyun Kim

Tuesday August 29th, 7-8pm, Muller Meeting Room
Thursday August 31st, 7-8pm, Muller Meeting Room

Front & Center Public Critique

Sunday September 10th, 1-3pm, 1st Floor

Front & Center Opening Reception

Sunday September 10th, 3-5pm, Muller Meeting Room

Reverse Banditry Workshop with Carlos Flores

Tuesday September 12th, 3pm, Inside the artist's installation

Music Performance: Gesture in Music and Art

Saturday September 16th, 3-4pm, Inside gallery, next to artist's installation

Digital Security 101 with Abhishek Narula and Kia Miakka Natisse

Saturday September 23rd, 2-3pm, Muller Meeting Room

Zine Share: Personal | Political | Preservation

Sunday September 24th, 12:30-3pm, Muller Meeting Room

For more information, please visit the the Events page at hydeparkart.org

Hyde Park **ARTCENTER**

5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 www.hydeparkart.org.
Hyde Park Art Center is a unique resource that advances contemporary visual art in Chicago by connecting artists and communities in unexpected ways. The Art Center is funded in part by the: Alphawood Foundation; Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; Field Foundation of Illinois; Harpo Foundation; Harper Court Arts Council; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Irving Harris Foundation; The Joyce Foundation; Leo S. Guthman Fund; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; Polk Bros. Foundation; Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust; and the generosity of people like you.

The Center Program's Class of 2017 presents: *Front & Center*

Cleve E. Carney Gallery, Gallery 1 & Gallery 2
August 6 - October 8, 2017



Installation view of *Front & Center* 2017

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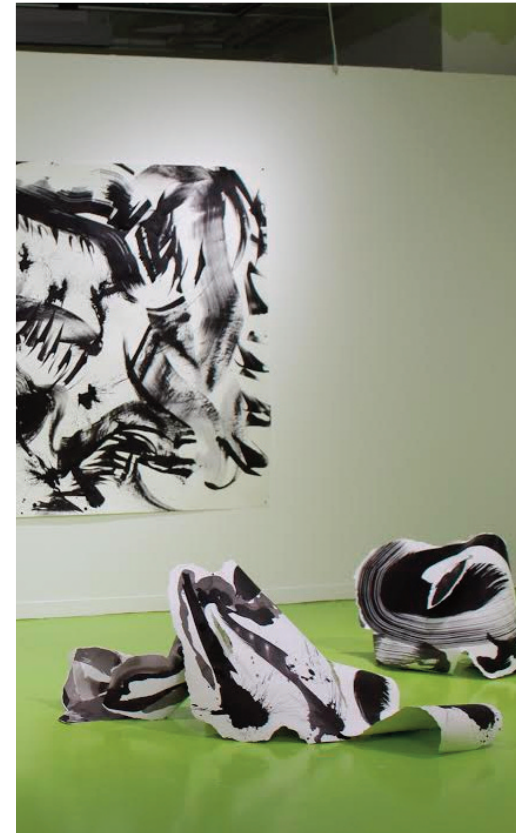
The Center Program is rooted in the Hyde Park Art Center's mission to support Chicago Artists. It is uniquely positioned to leverage the Art Center's history, network, and resources, each year pushing a select group of artists towards developing new works, sharing the results within a curated exhibition, and beginning a new professional chapter. We start with an application process that casts a wide net to a diverse network of working artists from around the city. Ideal candidates have a track record in the field, and demonstrate a capacity for creating new work alongside a group of peers. The exhibition acts as the culmination of the six-month program, showcasing new projects developed by the selected 25 Chicago Artists.

Center Program artists look to stimulate conversations with professionals in the field, colleagues, and public audiences. They start with proposing topics, considering media, and presenting a vision. Each artist then works towards seminar presentations that involve visiting professionals and a group of peers, generating feedback to incorporate into their process. Some conversations can lead to changing directions, incorporating new ideas, and although rare, even changing projects altogether. In this way, the Center Program is not so much one program, as much as 25 different ones, each led by an artist and conversations around their work and development.

Now in its sixth year, the program features a distinctly impressive group of artists with a wide range of backgrounds. In this exhibition, you will see works stemming from social issues, ethics in a changing world, loss, learning, community, and identity, among others. The range of artists includes some who have degrees, some who don't, some with gallery representation, some without, and also extends to other organizations like Luminarts and Marwen, who offer support so that their alums have the ability to participate in the program. Visiting professionals are at the core of the program and come from a wide range of backgrounds. Our 2017 Center Program Curator, Caroline Picard, brings curating and publishing experience, and was joined by other cultural producers Dawoud Bey (Photographer), Jim Dempsey (Gallerist and Educator), Jim Duignan (Educator and Artist), Tricia Van Eck (Curator), Patterson Sims (Curator), Jefferson Pinder (Educator and Curator), Julie Rodrigues Widholm (Curator), Candida Alvarez (Educator), Sabina Ott (Artist, Curator, and Educator), and Claudine Ise (Curator and Educator).

In presenting *Front & Center*, we celebrate the Chicago Artist. We are excited to see our space activated in a truly unique way by the important works of 25 artists influenced by the city we live in, the topics we live with, and the aspirations we work towards. Thank you to all the people, programs, and partners that help make this program a truly special one for our community and beyond.

Mike Nourse
Director of Education, Hyde Park Art Center



Katherine Nemanich, *Time's Mirror*, 2017, Sumi ink on Stohenge cotton paper, wire, grommets, and bolts, 8 x 8 x 8 feet

A bookend to Carlos Flores' Hand In/To Hand is **Abhishek Narula's** *Data De-lights*. Like a vending machine, Narula's piece promises desirable goods in exchange for personal data. The offer is tempting but illustrates the power and invisibility of data trails, urging the public to foster a heightened sense of awareness. Across the hall stands **Katherine Nemanich's**, *Time's Mirror*, a sculptural ink on paper environment that invites viewers to enter the gesture of the artist's hand. **John Metido's** single painting uses multiple frames and painting strategies as well, calling attention once again to the authenticity of mark making. Two other works invite viewers to enter alternate realities: **Kia Miakka Natisse's** suite of boxes, *Meditations on Existence*, rest on the floor with seeming abandon. The cardboard box is so ubiquitous as to be easily taken for granted. Yet each one contains alternate proposals for reality asking how we shape what we see, and further how those framing devices disappear once employed. **Grace Needlman's** masks offer a similar proposition, inviting viewers of the potential to transform into something else. To wear such a mask is to become half-stranger to oneself and others.

It is to the group's credit that so much of the work resonates harmonically. These narrative threads and themes come as a direct result of the durational discussion in which they engaged over the last six months. If a dialectic begins with opposing poles, so those poles start to dissolve in the context of open engagement; participants become less invested in committing to a point for its own sake than exploring the consequences of a dialogue, experimenting with new hypotheses that lead to creative discoveries. In this way, *Front and Center: The Vocabulary of Furniture* captures the beauty of free discussion, intellectual reciprocity, and artistic production. Even in the context of political difficulty, community unfolds, coopting whatever building blocks are available—bandit signs, end tables, compact cases, or ceramic angels—to intervene, demonstrating a sense of agency for makers and viewers alike.

Caroline Picard
Guest Curator, Center Program 2017



Lauren Carter, *A Centerpiece*, 2017, Found objects, foam tubing, scrap metal, upholstery tacks, hydrocal, expandable foam, paper, epoxy putty, silicone, and acrylic paint, 12 x 15 x 10 inches

Just as Carter toys with traditional expectations of painting and breaks the picture plane, so do Gardner and Stroeck. Part of America's promise comes from the accessibility of goods, lifestyle, and self-improvement. **Nico Gardner** explores the formal aesthetics of these boasts, by flattening chairs and upturning tote bags. In each of his sculptures, the semiotics of the original object remains even as its capacity to fulfill any promises: for instance, providing a place to sit, is removed. **Megan Stroeck's** floor assemblage, *Ready, Set*, plays additionally with the translation of images and authenticity. Ceramic baskets, plastic fruit, flowers, and a

log are arranged on a pattern of stripes on the floor. This three-dimensional floor painting looks as though Stroeck took digital representations of these objects and retranslated those pixelated forms into physical space.

In the corner of the main gallery, **Connie Noyes** and **Judith Mullen's** work hang like specters. One cannot tell if Mullen's installation is entering or exiting the wall, but it boasts a figurative presence. Here again, texture is tantamount. Noyes' chairs—bound to one another by old, inherited materials—connect to fabric that stretches up towards the ceiling, like a large web. Furniture is a strange and reoccurring kismet of the group. Chairs, tables and benches are all common architectures around which our lives are organized. In this context they appear flattened, washed out, unsittable, or hovering, divorced from usefulness. **Luis DeLaTorre's** beaded table, *Filth Eater*, leaps into view as another example. He applied intricate beadwork process to a cabinet, transforming its design features from a commonplace, westernized surface into something representative of the artist's hand.



Rambod Vala and Ramyar Vala, *Challenges of Imagination*, 2017, Plywood, speaker, and full HD video 63 ¼ x 9 x 52 ¼ inches, 17:41 minutes

Front and Center: The Vocabulary of Furniture

The 2017 Center Program exhibition is organized in four parts. The corridor is a thesis statement that presents abstraction and representation as two poles illustrating the way both use symbols and formal aesthetics to reflect reality. The entry point of Hyde Park Art Center's main exhibition follows from here, presenting textured and constricted corporeal forms: a net, a hand in a dumpster, a bulbous black chair, or massive drawing that verges on rendering the fur of an animal's coat. The rest of the main gallery reflects on America's cultural and ideological climate today, through unexpected representations of couches, cakes, campfires, and more. Finally, the Cleve Carney Gallery invites viewers to enter or inhabit the artistic gesture and in so doing, experience the potential for change. Peppered throughout all parts of this twenty-five person exhibition are items of furniture and disembodied limbs. Excerpted from everyday life, these disassociated objects become strange stand-ins for instability, desire, and individuality. Participants in this show have been working together for the last six months, developing their work through discussion and critique.

The show is therefore less about a studied hypothesis than a presentation of works developed in a community. Nevertheless, certain themes and threads permeate the group and thus, capture the zeitgeist of artistic concerns today.

One enters the first-floor corridor through **Carlos Flores'** bandit sign hut, *Hand In/To Hand*, a structural installation reflecting home ownership, gentrification, and transience. Further down the hall, **Bambi Breakstone's** delicate paper prints hover between personal meditations and abstract exercises, layering textile patterns and paper. These prints face **Soohyun Kim's** photographic portraits of American individuals and families, recalling the breadth and diversity our country affords. Positioned this way, both bodies of work become portrait-like, highlighting different strategies for symbolic communication.



Luis DeLaTorre, *Filth Eater*, 2017, Acrylic beads on found object, 26 x 12 x 27 inches

Doubling back, one enters the Art Center's main gallery through Yoonshin Park's curtained installation, *Passing Hours, Space in Between*, featuring a self-breathing pillow positioned on the floor of a low-lit antechamber. The installation imposes a moment of defined interiority, asking viewers to share space with another's breath. On the other side of Park's curtain, the rest of the exhibit unfolds: **Manal**



Nico Garner, *Sit No. 1*, 2017, Acrylic and polyester on wood panel, 17 x 48 inches

Kara's mask-and-fabric installation, *The Variety of Banana We Eat Now is Not the Same One We Grew Up Eating*, rests beneath a hanging white leather net, like an archetypal still-life one might pass by in a dream. Nearby, **Dawn Brennan's** suite of drawings evoke fragments of a melodrama that one feels both implicated by and distant from. **Bobbi Meier's** *Easy Chair (Failed Odalisque)* converses with her wall installation of deteriorating ceramics, inspiring a sympathy with materials: how the clays and fabrics feel bound in the forms they inhabit, bouncing additionally off



Grace Needleman, *Practice Helmets (1-4)*, 2017, Sweaters, socks, basket reed, and helmet, Dimensions variable

of **Nico Gardener's** *Compact*. Finally, **Olivia Petrides' lush** landscape, *Asteroid*, hangs like a map of shifting intuition and energy. Whether from the tactile quality of Kara's ceramics and leather, the textures of Petrides' drawings, the reflective black surface of Meier's couch, Gardner's invocation of beauty, or the underwear featured in Brennan's painting, a sense of bound embodiment permeates this constellation of works.



Leonard Suryajaya, *So Long*, 2017, Archival Inkjet Print, Dimensions variable

the country unexpectedly as a camera pans through various computer windows, apartment windows, and framed landscapes. No figure is complete in **Leonard Suryajaya's** *So Long*, a photographic collage of fragmented mountains, naked women, and Trump, all held by an assortment of hands that are further interrupted by a second, bisected picture frame. It is as though this second picture has been grafted onto the first. It features a plate of eggs and bacon on one pink table as a fortune cookie sits on another. Split open, the fortune is exposed. With so many people coming to the US in search of better futures, one wonders what the future holds, especially as the political climate seems ever more constricted and absurd. **Silvia Inés Gonzalez's** installation, *Volver I Return*, stands like a portable memorial with candles, a coat, an aloe plant, photographic prints, and suitcases. A song of heartbreak plays from the assemblage. Finally, *I Sincerely Appreciate the Gesture*, the gilded frame of **Lauren Carter** containing pulped and no longer legible Hallmark cards that spill out into three-dimensional space breaking the picture plane with inaccessible sentiments the artist was previously unable to throw away.

Fragmented bodies follow, leading into the larger exhibit with **Angela Dieffenbach** and **Angela Lopez**: legs, breasts, a nose, a skull. Removed from context, these forms appear like medical specimens or dislocated symbols. They inscribe a sense of absence that continues to echo throughout the show, grafting onto different facets of national controversy. **Mary Porterfield's** nonlinear wall drawing, *Pushing Back the Sea*, picks up on the theme of health and caregiving; in her installation however, it is the figures, not body parts, that seem dislocated, struggling with the confusion of hospitals and old age. In **Rambod Vala's** film, *Challenges of Imagination*, the artist himself is missing and his disembodied voice describes having to leave