

Related Events:

All events are free and open to the public.

Diasporic Vertigo:**A Conversation between Valorie Thomas, Cauleen Smith and Candida Alvarez**

Thursday, March 21, 6-8 pm

(video available at www.hydeparkart.org/exhibitions/cauleen-smith)

Author and cultural scholar Valorie Thomas will be in discussion with painter Candida Alvarez and artist/film maker Cauleen Smith about their artwork. Thomas is an Associate Professor of English and Africana Studies at Pomona College (CA), where she teaches literature and social justice. Additional topics will include Afro-Futurism, Black Feminisms, and African American Literature.

This event is co-sponsored by the Arts+Public Life/Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture at the University of Chicago.

Exhibition Reception:

Sunday, April 14, 3-5 pm

ArtBar:

Friday, June 8, 6-9 pm

Join Cauleen and all of the exhibiting artists at the Art Center for a dance party and art making activities. The evening cocktail will be a Cauleen Smith invention.

About the Artist:

Cauleen Smith received a BA from San Francisco State University and an MFA from UCLA's School of Theater-Television-Film. Smith was a resident artist at ThreeWalls, the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, and the Experimental Sound Studio. A prominent voice in Chicago's artist landscape, Smith had simultaneous shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and ThreeWalls in 2012. Smith has received grants from the Film Arts Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Creative Capital. Recent awards include "Outstanding Artists" by the National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture and "Someone to Watch Award" from the Independent Spirit Awards. Her art works have been exhibited at The Kitchen, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, LA County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, as well as international and domestic festivals. Smith was a faculty member at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She is currently a visiting artist at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an Artist-in-Residence at the Arts + Public Life/Center for the Study of Race Politics and Culture at the University of Chicago.

Hyde ParkARTCENTER

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

The Hyde Park Art Center is at once an contemporary art exhibition space, learning annex, community resource, and social hub for the art curious and professional artists alike — carrying out its mission to stimulate and sustain the visual arts in Chicago. The Art Center is funded in part by the: Alphawood Foundation; Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts; Chicago Community Trust; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; David C. and Sarajean Ruttenberg Arts Foundation; Field Foundation of Illinois; Harper Court Arts Council; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Irving Harris Foundation; Joyce Foundation; Leo S. Guthman Fund; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; National Endowment for the Arts; Polk Bros. Foundation; Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust; and the generosity of its members and people like you. The Hyde Park Art Center does not discriminate against any person for reason of race, gender, age, place of national origin, handicap, religious conviction, marital status, veteran status or sexual preference.

Hyde Park **ARTCENTER**

Gallery 2

March 10 – July 7, 2013

Cauleen Smith: 17



Cauleen Smith, *17* (detail), 2013, print on paper, dimension variable



Cauleen Smith, *17* (detail), 2013, print on paper, dimension variable

Offering homage to the pioneering musician, composer, and performer Sun Ra, Cauleen Smith's wallpaper installation combines rhythm, sights, and sounds that are uniquely south side with an intergalactic twist. Most known for her film, video, and performance work, the award-winning artist and Art Center student successfully introduces printmaking into her repertoire with her first site-specific installation at Hyde Park Art Center.

The installation includes approximately 260 feet of hand-screen-printed paper Smith made in the Art Center's printmaking studio this past December and January. Though there are computer programs that can produce wallpaper patterns, Smith was determined to create her own pattern from scratch. She produced this new series of screen prints with techniques acquired by participating in a printmaking

class under the instruction of printmaker and longtime Art Center faculty member Elke Claus. This exhibition highlights the experimentation going on behind the Coke machine door deep in the Art Center's Oakman Clinton School and Studios.

The show's title, *17*, is fairly open-ended and invites imaginative interpretation. The number equals the highest amount of patterns that can intersect to make wallpaper print convey a consistent image. However, the name also references the many facets of arts and culture traditions from ancient history to the modern day that place stock in the number's spiritual significance as a marker of immortality, as well a variety of noteworthy cultural and historical facts and figures featuring the number itself (see Smith's map on the title wall of the exhibition).

Deeply invested in all things sound and performance, Smith composed the installation with images that combine her passion for music with her ongoing research into the legacy of Sun Ra, who was himself a student of numerology and achieved a kind of cultural immortality the number 17 might be said to refer to. According to

Smith, "I wanted images that referenced things unique to the south side. Monk Parakeets are the ultimate south side treasure. Whenever I see or hear them flying in a flock I take it as a good omen. The records are from charcoal rubbings from the actual Sun Ra Records I have in my collection. The keyboard came from a more elaborate design that included a Moog synthesizer (the instrument Sun Ra favored to explore his signature space sound). Ultimately the only elements from that pattern to survive were the keyboard and the amplifier cable carried by the parakeets."

The three patterns repeated in Smith's wallpaper provide alternative cultural content to traditional commercial wallpaper designs: the chevron, the diamond, and the semi-circle. The three separate patterns are spliced together by Smith in much the same way that a DJ mixes disparate styles of music to create a textured and emotive new experience. Each pattern has an auditory memory attached to it. For example, the aggressive screech of the wild Hyde Park parakeet (active in Harold Washington Park just south of the Art Center) is an organic sound from nature. An image of a keyboard brings to mind piano or organ melodies from a favorite musician, while the record may trigger the more full sound of an orchestra, band, or other machine-made rhythms. Smith adds an interactive component to this visual exploration of sound by including sheets of blank paper in the parakeet's mouths. Her hope is to have viewers write on these sheets, adding space for the sound of conversation.

The exhibition at Hyde Park Art Center is held concurrently with an exhibition of the same work at the Washington Incubator space affiliated with the University of Chicago, where Smith is an Artist-in-Residence, and on a building located near the bus stop on 118 E. Garfield Avenue in Washington Park. The artist has provided a bike route map to encourage viewers to travel the neighborhood and experience the work in both locations. The map is available at the Art Center's front desk.

Allison Peters Quinn
Director of Exhibition



Cauleen Smith, *17* (detail), 2013, print on paper, dimension variable