

## About the artist:

**Alex Chitty** (b. 1979, Miami) is an interdisciplinary artist based in Chicago. Her present work is characterized by a strong sculptural quality that brings forth a reservoir of memories onto new contexts through methods of collection and interpretation. She received a Bachelor of Fine Art from Smith College (MA) and a Master in Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she is Professor in the Sculpture and Printmedia departments. Her works have been exhibited in galleries across Chicago, and across the United States. She is currently represented by Patron (Chicago).

## Exhibition Reception

Sunday, February 21  
3:00 - 5:00 pm

Meet the artist and celebrate *Alex Chitty: Turning Spoons Into Forks* along with concurrent exhibitions.

## Hyde Park **ART**CENTER

5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 [www.hydeparkart.org](http://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.

# Alex Chitty *Turning Spoons into Forks*

Cleve E. Carney Gallery  
January 17, 2016 - April 3, 2016



*Ptng#12 (Swipe)*, 2016, Walnut, painted steel, nickel-plated steel, altered spoons, cotton, nylon, lucite, xerox print, teak hull plug, cast brass, 70 x 50 x 7 inches

Hyde Park  
**ART**  
**CEN**  
**TER**

## As Something Else



Installation view. Left to right: *Beebo in they house*, 2014, (*Soft chatter*), 2014

Almost as in a game, the works are composed in refined assemblages bringing together elements and shapes of everyday life: cutlery, a glimpse to a blooming cactus, green grapes, or the recognizable shapes of two hands. These are hints directed at the viewer, intentionally adopted to catch our attention so that we will approach the work with wonder. Indeed, these elements serve as a bridge between common knowledge and Chitty's imaginative narrative.

In *Fletching*, powder-coated steel bars, cotton ribbons, and mahogany plates shape the contours of the frame of two conjoined chairs. Chitty plays with our sense of recognition; there is little that connects this work with the utilitarian piece of furniture besides its soft curvilinear lines. A tiny wooden crouching kitty cheekily carved from one of *Fletching's* armrest attracts further inspection. This element breaks with the uniformity of the piece providing a whimsical facet to the ensemble and encouraging the public to look closer at the details.

The interdisciplinary artist refers to her process of making as 'object manipulation.' Not only does she reunite and mobilize a number of materials, but she also cap

How does an object come to be? What is that intrinsic element that renders it familiar? Chicago-based artist Alex Chitty brings to Hyde Park Art Center an array of highly stylized compositions that disrupt and cause one to question our understanding of the use and aesthetics of the most common of objects.

The playful title of the show "Turning Spoons into Forks" demonstrates Chitty's intentional gesture to challenge the viewer's perception by diverting the utilitarian value of the object. Amid the selection of three-dimensional works on view in the Cleve E. Carney Gallery, the artist has reshaped spoons to look like forks; an earring delicately dangling in front of a framed picture of an ear similar to the composition of the famous Dutch painting *Girl with the Pearl Earring* (1665) by Johannes Vermeer, a chair-like sculpture on which no physical being could ever sit. Chitty brings forth unique and curious compositions in this exhibition, opening up to a vast array of imaginative narratives where the object as we know it serves as a distant referent.

tures and cumulates images that become the foundation for future compositions. Through this mechanism of contemplation and collection, the initial object is appropriated, de-contextualized, turned, into a new element. The artwork sparks new visual and emotional connections that invite us to reconsider how these compositions came to be. The resulting feeling of de-familiarization is embedded in each artwork in this exhibition.

*Ptng #12* encloses a number of recognizable objects and shapes: spoons, forks, a picture of a cat's paw, a woman's tasseled t-shirt, as well as two flaccid glove cut-outs. The spoons have been carefully cut or painted to visually approach the pointy shape of a fork, while maintaining the curvilinear characteristic of the spoon to create what is colloquially known as a spork. These images call to our sense of touch and invite us to imagine, even for a few seconds, the texture of these elements; the soft pressure on the kitty's paw, the cold slippery contact with the cut-out's dripping paint, or the pointy touch of the spork's ends. This emphasis on tactility is accentuated by the sheer contrast between the visual elements and materials; the metal superimposed to the wood, or the two-dimensional black-and-white photograph parallel to the bright pink scarf. This juxtaposition creates a visually rich grouping that could be defined as three-dimensional painting.



Installation view. Back, left to right *Ptng#12 (Swipe)*, 2016, *Beebo in they house*, 2014. Front: *Fletching*, 2016

The playfulness and simplicity of Alex Chitty's work encourages the public to imagine different scenarios that result from a process of mental association. Indeed, the pieces call up to the psyche of the onlooker. The array of shapes and textures attract both the vision and touch of the viewer, teasing him to establish his own connections between the elements; what is the cat's paw in relation to the shape of the hands? How did they come together? So we look at them as something else, as something more, as the spoon that has been optically turned into a fork.