

**Related Events:**

All events are free and open to the public.

**Exhibition Reception:**

**Sunday, April 14, 3-5 pm**

**Performance & Discussion: NeueBody research**

**Saturday, May 18, 3 pm**

Performance and new media artist, Lee Blalock combines speculative fiction strategies with her own personal history and obsession for rules and order to create new work focused on the process of reimagining the body and its daily operations. Her performance will explore what a new movement vocabulary might be for a body with sculptural appendages that provide certain limitation and enhancements.

**About the Artist:**

Lee Blalock is a Chicago-based interdisciplinary artist exploring the possibilities of a post-human and post-gendered world. Through her work, she aims to describe and reimagine the 'amplified' human, destroying the existing framework of identity and replacing it with the reengineered body. For the past five years, Blalock's work has shown internationally, including in Toronto and Korea. She is a recipient of the Archibald Motley Award and a Clare Rosen and Samuel Edes Foundation Prize finalist. Originally from Chester, PA, she received a BS from Spelman College and a MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she currently teaches digital art, core studio, new media, and research topics.



Lee Blalock, *Neue*, 2013, digital illustration, sharpie, 9 x 17 feet

As technology's advance into biology and medicine becomes more invasive, what becomes of the connection between body and machine? Emerging artist Lee Blalock uses performance and new media-based work to question the reality and potential of self-directed evolution. Conscious of queer theory and feminist cyborg manifestos produced over the past twenty years, she considers the "amplified" human as a utopian identity and aims to test its limits



Lee Blalock, *ctrlr.H.rt #116*, 2013, resin, music box movement, acrylic, web component, dimension variable

through her artwork. Blalock's experiments in mark-making that result from human gestures or language are an attempt to redesign new scores for future body movements. The artist finds inspiration from her personal history and arsenal of skills. Her training in martial arts, design, and contemporary dance, and electronic music provides an artistic infrastructure and aid her explorations in rhythm, repetition, and sound.

*Neue* marks Blalock's first solo exhibition, featuring a new series of multi-media work that documents her investigation of a future superbody. Her explorations manifest as works on paper (computer codes, geometric diagrams, and hand-drawn text abstractions), objects, videos, and site-specific performance (see back for more information). Music box tape is one of her signature visual elements that recurs throughout the installation, linking the pieces through its reappearance. The strips of tape all contain the same brief arrangement, which Blalock considers her anthem. Arising out of the arrangement appears a pattern that looks like three overlapping hearts, again relating the score to the pulse of the body. This soundtrack can also be heard in the installation, by playing the music box on the pedestal at the south end of the gallery.

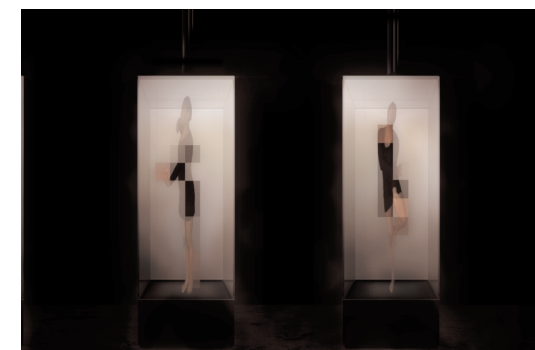
For Blalock, the calculated and ordered operational systems used in digital technology find their parallel in the actions of the body. In her work *NeueBody Drawing Series*, the artist attaches graphite to different parts of her body and performs a set of rigid instructions over paper on the ground. The finished product becomes a score of her body movements. Blalock also incorporates professional dancers into her performances, and re-imagines a collective gestural score. *Score for Render: Loop 1, SndMvmt* is a new variation of a choreographic and musical score Blalock designed for a performance with four dancers at Nuit Blanche/Leitmotif, Toronto in 2011. The origin of sometimes violent mark-making in Blalock's work augments the potential of a future body operational system.

*Chalk for a Quartet* is another example of Blalock engaging her body in the creation of a future self, rooted in the language of repetition. Using performance ephemera from a durational sound performance at Defibrillator Gallery in Chicago (2012), the artist examines the complexities of virtual existence, multiple identities, and myth. The

durational performance consisted of the artist writing words vital to her concept, like "clones," "incalculable," or "me=we" in 15-minute increments over a period of three hours. After each cycle, the artist wiped the product on a black shirt that she was wearing. Blalock manifests her time-based experiences in *Chalk for a Quartet* through printed scores on panel, chalk residue, chalkboard, and worn cloth. By arranging the painting, three chalk boards, and the shirt in a four-part pattern or quartet here, Blalock presents a score or system for the language of a superbody birthed out of the one-time performance.

*Under, V5* is the fifth in a series of mixed media works that Blalock created after undergoing anesthesia for the first time for a surgical procedure. Four arranged white pillows carefully pinned with acupuncture needles are surrounded by the artist's representation of breath. A monitor is placed next to the pillows to suggest the cycle of breath, and the composed sound arrangement is from her own breath during a sleep cycle. This piece raises questions surrounding the validity and source of individual memory. The acupuncture needles on the pillow duplicate the gestures of pinning the music score onto the music box tape that flows throughout the exhibition. Different patterns of the acupuncture needles suggest individual body movement, placement, and surgical precision. In *Under, V5* Blalock questions the relationship between collective reality and personal memory.

*Stereo Test No.1* transforms the screening room into a cloning laboratory and emphasizes the link between mechanical operations and the functions of the body more clearly. Blalock borrows from the familiar format of audio stereo



Lee Blalock, *Stereo Test No.1*, 2013, video, sound, 5:59 minutes (loop)

tests to calibrate the body to its ultimate potential. This artwork is the only moment in the exhibition that Blalock reveals her own complete body, without fragment. However, the uncanny evaporation of the body into digital pixilation at the end of the film suggests that the body as a vessel may eventually become irrelevant. As an artist of color, Blalock challenges stereotypical manners, surpasses predictions, and focus on the unknown.

Lee Blalock's work is often generative, relying on repetitive behavior and actions. Her new body of work presents her recent investigations between the relationship of bodily and machine movements. By a using variety of scores, Blalock uses her movement practice to break convention and find new vocabulary for the 'future' body.

**Zhu Xiaorui**  
Exhibition Assistant