

October 6 – December 1, 2013

**Related Events:**

All events are free and open to the public.

**Exhibition Reception**

Sunday, October 6, 3-5 pm

**Sounding Light**

Friday, November 8, 7 pm

Special performances by Lori Felker and DJ set by Todd Mattei relating to the experience of light.

**About the curator:**

Julie Rudder is an artist and independent curator living in Chicago. She co-directed and co-curated Vega Estates, an artist-run exhibition space in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood, from 2007 to 2009. Recent exhibitions organized by Rudder include Embracing the Farb: Modes of Reenactment at Columbia College's Glass Curtain Gallery (2012). In conjunction with Light and the Unseen, Rudder was the 2011-2012 Library Fellow at the Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities at Northwestern University, where she focused on research for the exhibition.

Light and the Unseen is an exhibition selected by the Exhibitions Committee from the Open Submissions Program. The Art Center welcomes submissions of artists' work and curatorial proposals for group exhibitions on a rolling basis. Submissions are reviewed by the Exhibitions Committee, which consists of artists and art professionals, as well as the Art Center's Director of Exhibitions and Executive Director.

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## Hyde Park **ARTCENTER**

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

# Light and the Unseen

Work by Pamela Bannos

Dana Carter

Joseph Grimm

Roxane Hopper

Michael Robinson

Daniel Sauter

Olivia Schreiner



Pam Banos, Untitled from the series, The Light, archival inkjet print, 2007-2013, dimensions variable

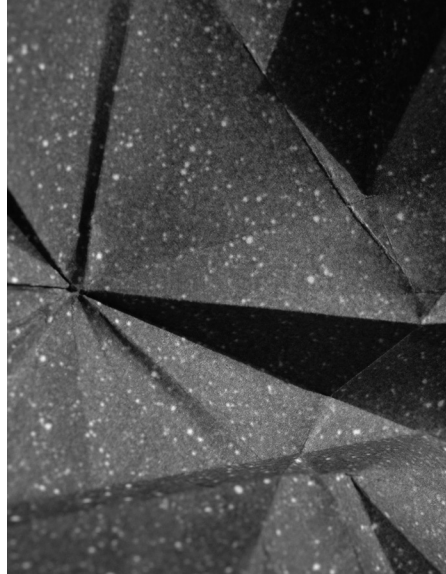
Light and the Unseen features seven artists who use light to explore ideas about the cosmos, physics, belief, and power structures, as well as how we see the world—both physically and metaphorically. These ideas are more broadly considered here as “the unseen.” This idea allows us to dabble in the magic of light and to explore (and perhaps reveal) its not so secret ability to communicate meaning, but also its power to dazzle, inspire, empower, manipulate, and to make us believe.

The subject and representation of light has been of interest to artists, writers, and scientists throughout the centuries. At the beginning of the 17th century, Caravaggio wielded rays of light like the hand of God. In *The Calling of St. Matthew*, light crosses the room and lands on the surprised tax collector’s face. And more recently, Yayoi Kusama’s *Firefly on the Water* on display at the Whitney Museum last year produced long waiting lines, lines that I, too, would endure in order to experience the vast swirling and seemingly infinite number of lights in the piece.

Why does the interest in light persist and what is it about the power of light that holds our interest and inspires artists and thinkers so endlessly? Though the work in this exhibition reflects on the contemporary meaning of light, the artworks emerge out of a history of representation of light that cannot be forgotten. As a result, a conversation forms about the relationship of light to the unseen. The very element that allows us to see, that can ostensibly highlight an object, becomes heavy with meaning itself.

On entering the gallery, we are greeted by **Daniel Sauter**’s *Light Spa*. *Light Spa* is a centerpiece reminiscent of a chandelier showering viewers with light. *Light Spa* has four settings that change the color and pattern of its light. Some settings evoke celebratory or therapeutic feelings in the viewer, while other settings include tactical light and even dangerous strobe light (the strobe setting is displayed as an option but can not be selected for viewing). *Light Spa* provides a dazzling display while exploring how light is employed to affect us—commanding our attention, our behavior, and physically affecting us to our benefit or detriment.

In her series titled *The Light*, **Pamela Bannos** uses old, found photographs, scans them, and then digitally inserts orbs of light into the photograph to introduce light into the scenes—to make seen a new element within the image. Calling to mind spirit photography of the 1920s, Bannos creates a new narrative in these photographs, one in which light is the mysterious main character. Reactions within the artworks in *The Light* vary: some subjects seem joyful, others fearful, still others appear entranced or worshipful. In some photographs the orb appears menacing; in others it is something to be exalted.

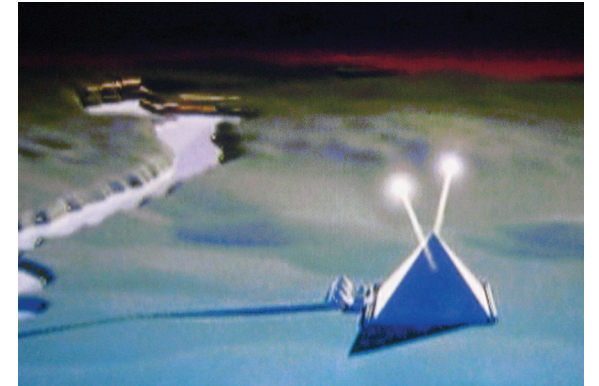


Roxane Hopper, *Reverse Perspective*  
2009-2013, archival inkjet print on cotton rag, series of 5 prints, dimensions variable

Stepping from the visual experience of her daily life, **Olivia Schreiner**’s paintings depict natural and artificial occurrences of light, like the glow of a street light in a wash of gray sky. These experiences are not represented photographically; instead she makes seen her own internal and visual experience. The result is a painting where light is not only a formal element we experience as paint on canvas, but also a method of communicating the human relationship to light’s presence and absence.

**Roxane Hopper**’s photographs are a scientific yet mystical exploration of light. She states, “The idea that light travels through vast distances and illuminates objects within my frame of scope—near and far—is so fascinating to me. I find great beauty in this.” In these photographs the relationship of objects and light feels intentional. It is almost as if the light has a will of its own—choosing these elements out of vast options to interact with and illuminate.

Opposite these works is the dark side of the gallery, delineated by a curtain. **Michael Robinson**’s films use light as emotional cues and narrative elements. In *These Hammers Don’t Hurt Us*, Robinson combines footage of Elizabeth Taylor from the 1963 film *Cleopatra* and Michael Jackson’s *Remember the Time* video, followed by a series of colored lights representing Elizabeth’s and Michael’s imagined journey into the afterlife. Part film, part light show, this piece plays with our emotional connection to light. Robinson winkingly shows us how schmaltzy the effect is, but also allows us to be uninhibitedly dazzled by it.



Michael Robinson, *These Hammers Don't Hurt Us* (still), 2010, digital video with stereo sound, 12:45 minutes

**Joe Grimm** does not consider his medium to be light and sound, but says “A primary subject in my work is the difference between what we can see (or hear) and what there is.” Grimm uses light, color and pattern to encourage trance-like experiences in the viewer, where the mind fills in visual gaps between flickering colors and transitions.

**Dana Carter**’s work references the pace and impermanence of light: light as metaphor. Her installation encourages a meditative experience; however, these beautiful abstractions are not entirely carefree. Carter uses light in the midst of quietly chaotic materials (torn fabric, raw or constructed space) in a way that reminds us of light’s power to imbue architecture with a sense of the spiritual. But it is a kind of spiritual where light is balanced by shadow.

My intention with the exhibition *Light and the Unseen* is not to give a clear definition of the unseen or the role of light in art, but instead to explore how some contemporary artists utilize and represent light. I hope viewers will find themselves considering the meaning of the light they see. With each work we encounter, I think we should wonder: to what sort of light are we brought?

Julie Rudder  
Curator of *Light and the Unseen*