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Exhibition Reception  
Sunday, October 16, 3-5 pm

October 16, 2011 – January 29, 2012

#### About the Artist

Christine Mitchell received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has been a student at the Hyde Park Art Center since 2007. She has been taking painting classes instructed by Darrell Roberts as part of the Art Center's adult art class curriculum, which aims to push the students to test the boundaries of their creative comfort levels and learn to experiment with new tools and techniques. Christine lives and works in Chicago.

## Christine Mitchell: *Realist and Abstract Paintings*



Christine Mitchell, *Self-portrait (pink)*,  
2011, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches

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## Hyde Park ARTCENTER

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

The Hyde Park Art Center is a not-for-profit organization that presents innovative exhibitions, primarily work by Chicago-area artists, and educational programs in the visual arts for children and adults of diverse backgrounds. The Center is funded in part by 3Arts, Alphawood Foundation; Boeing; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council; Creative New Zealand; Harper Court Arts Council; The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Leo S. Guthman Fund; The Irving Harris Foundation; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; JPMorgan Chase Foundation; The Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; The MacArthur Foundation; The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; The Orbit Fund; Polk Bros. Foundation; The Clinton Family Fund; The Wallace Foundation; and the generosity of its members and friends.

With a selection of self-portraits, still-life paintings, and abstract compositions, the exhibition highlights painter, Christine Mitchell's gradual transition between working with realistic representation to an increased interest in adapting formal qualities to an abstract style. The various paintings currently on view in the Cleve Carney Gallery offer the public a chance to follow the artist's growing interest in issues of light and abstraction offering an example of a dynamically changing artistic process. Mitchell's interest in color, tone, shape, form and especially light is evident in all of her paintings.

#### The Artist's Statement:

*I approach my realist paintings from a perceptual point of view. I look at formal issues such as shape, color, light, etc., and try to make these issues the content of my paintings. I play with formal dichotomies (e.g., warms and cools; stillness and motion) rather than narrative, although narratives sometimes assert themselves unintentionally.*

*My self-portraits inevitably suggest psychological content. There is a term called "invasive seeing," where perception of the external and the internal are collapsed, thereby exposing emotional as well as physical substance. It is what gives the paintings presence. But while this process is very much organic, the display of my moods sometimes feels like a breach of privacy.*



Christine Mitchell, *Orange Dance*, 2011, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches

*There are cooler emotions involved with looking at the shapes and colors that become still-lives. But objects can have a presence also. I believe it was the still-life painter, William Bailey, who used the phrase "the power of the mute object." By finding an emotional charge while looking at simple and still objects, the objects are given a kind of status.*



Christine Mitchell,  
*Flowers by a Window*, oil on canvas, 12 x 12 inches

*And I try to balance the austerity of the objects I paint with an abundance of color and weight and light. I try to find some fluidity from light—at least in the shadows and in the shifts in value. More and more, I am using my still-life painting to cut a swath from objective to non-objective painting, especially by using an intuitive interpretation of shape and color and light.*

*I am inclined toward a minimalist aesthetic, so when painting abstractly, I find I am very much attracted to simple shapes, to some extent reminiscent of constructivism. What is startling, is how much the counter-weight of spontaneity determines the resolution. Looking for movement, in addition to shapes and color, is part of the surprise, which includes whimsy and exuberance as well as adherence to formal properties.*

*Some of my influences come from incongruent sources: Vermeer and Van Gogh, for example. In my self-portraits I make use of Vermeer's scheme wherein the light source comes from the left. The authority with which Van Gogh paints is remarkable and in that regard and others, he is a most valuable model.*

Christine Mitchell, August 2011