

household goods come from. With most of our industry being out-sourced to other countries, we are far removed from the process of making the items we consume. As a result, one can deduce this simple equation envisioned here: trees = wood = chairs. There is an elegiac quality to seeing nature's bounty in it's living and dead state all in one. Like the temporality of the installation *Strings*, the drawings depict a fleeting moment of a thought that keep us wondering.

Allison Peters Quinn
Director of Exhibitions

Originally from Mexico City, **Mónica Herrera** is an emerging artist who moved to Chicago in 2005 to complete an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago as a FONCA fellowship award-winner (Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes). She has exhibited at the ARCO Contemporary Art Fair in Madrid, Spain, the University Museum of Science and Arts MUCA, Mexico, and in Chicago at the Smart Museum and the 44/46 Public Art Exhibition. Her constant travels between Chicago and her hometown, Mexico City, have informed her increasingly poetic sensibility of cultural borders and the efficiency and originality of the materials she uses in her sculptures and drawings. Herrera currently lives and works in Hyde Park.

Hyde Park**ARTCENTER**

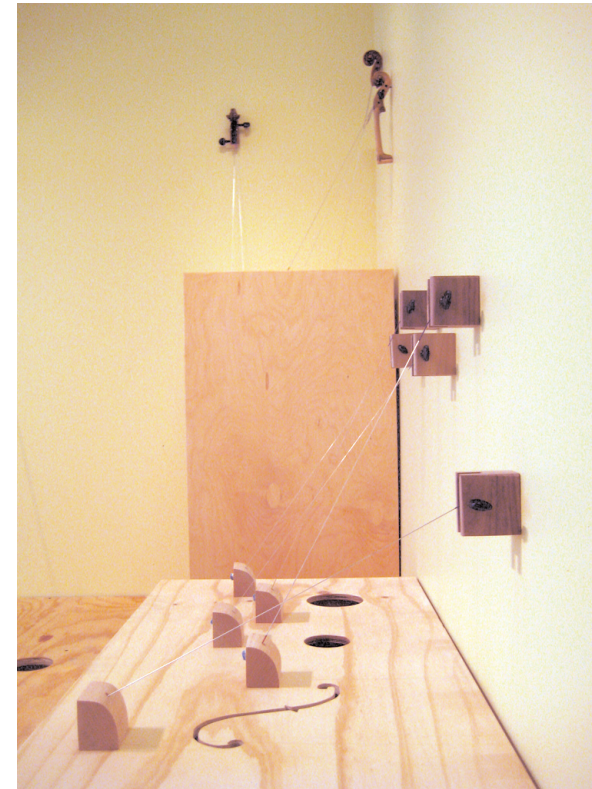
5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 www.hydeparkart.org

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 the Alphawood Foundation; The Chicago Community Trust; a City Arts III grant from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council; The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; The Leo S. Guthman Fund; The Irving Harris Foundation; The Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; The Joyce Foundation; 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 Sara Lee Foundation; South East Chicago Commission; The Wallace Foundation; and the generosity of its members and friends.

Hyde Park**ARTCENTER** Cleve Carney Gallery

July 27 - October 19, 2008

Strings by Mónica Herrera

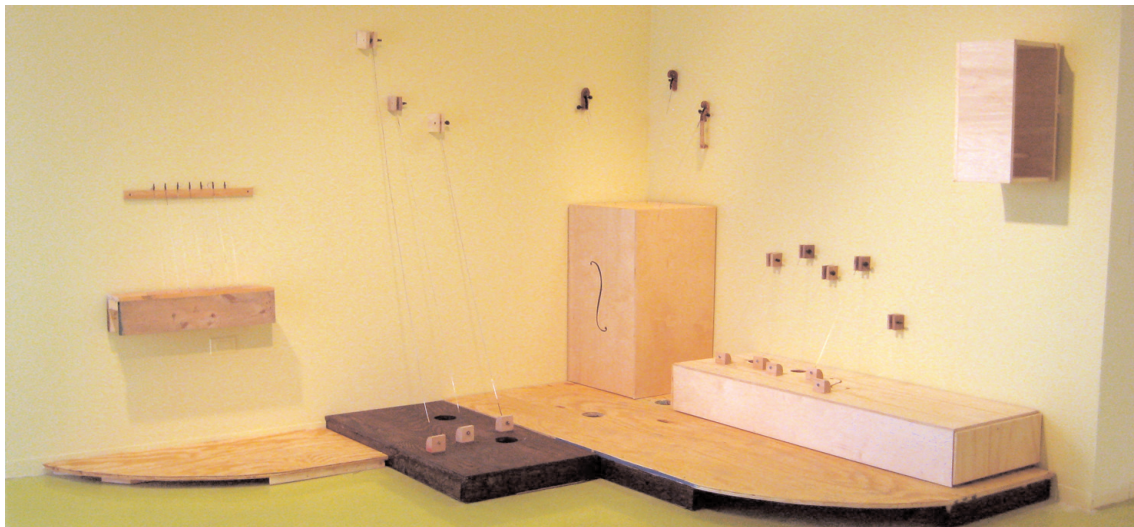


Related Free Events:
Exhibition Reception
Sunday, August 3, 3 - 5 pm

Art Thing: artist talk
Tuesday, October 7, 4 - 5 pm

Mónica Herrera is a glass-half-full kind of artist. Her artwork often presents an oddly cheery notion of everyday objects, surroundings and situations that might not typically be so enjoyable in order to challenge our perception of experiences taken for granted. The participatory aspect of her artwork channels the immediacy and curiosity of our inner child. Pinwheels, chalk dust, and old discarded eyeglasses are just some of the materials she has used in previous installations to create an alternative encounter for the body moving within the artwork. Herrera's work simultaneously draws on our multiple senses making art a corporeal as well as a cognitive experience.

Strings is the first solo Chicago exhibition of new work by the emerging artist, Mónica Herrera. The exhibition includes a walk-in installation, also titled *Strings*, and an unrelated set of 5 drawings titled *Fruits of the Forest*. The combination of the two types of work and different subject matters presents a good understanding of Herrera's art practice.



Exhibition Installation, July 2008

From a strictly material point of view, musical instruments are just tools to produce sounds. Yet, when we hear them they transcend their materiality and become something else. This often causes instruments to be socially enveloped in an aura of strangeness and reverence, especially for people who are not familiar with them. Having grown up in a family of musicians, surrounded by music instruments, this has always caught my attention.

- Mónica Herrera

Mónica Herrera studied the cello intensely as a child and still finds music fascinating. For *Strings* she has turned the gallery into one large instrument by using the walls of the gallery as the shaft and different



Timeout, 2005, outdoor installation with pinwheels

sized boxes made from plywood, wood crates and other found wood to build the sound chambers. Nearly 40 steel strings hang taught in outward diagonals attached to pegboxes mounted on the wall. Careful details in the components of the installation allow each unit to produce a distinct sound while the f-holes carved into the sides of various cubes and the decorative wood scrolls taken from violins add recognizable flare. The strings and pegs once belonged to pianos, guitars, and double bass and have

all been reclaimed from various music stores or musicians around the city for this installation. Each string has its own particular tonal quality and has been tuned and arranged by the artist to facilitate certain standard harmonies.

The installation *Strings* gives new definition to “instrument” as well as the physical activity needed to play an instrument. The work makes clear associations to the chance compositional strategies of composers like John Cage and the performances of conceptual artist Joseph Beuys by giving preference to the raw experience of performance over the outcome. Herrera invites everyone to be a musician regardless of skill, knowledge or practice. The public is invited to stand on the wooden boxes and play the strings to create sounds. One can spend a lifetime practicing the right hand positions, wrist movements, or elbow placements necessary to produce a formal and trained sound. However, Herrera's artwork requires the nothing of the performer but exploration and physical contact with the sculpture. Here, body weight and the subtle shift of that weight on the box determine the key of the cord. *Strings* causes us to rethink our understanding of musical instruments and the body's relationship to them to create sound.

The second part of the exhibition, *Fruits of the Forest*, is an ongoing series of whimsical watercolors on brown paper that connect everyday objects with their original source. Like the cartoon where the hunter Elmer Fudd looks at Bugs Bunny and sees roast dinner in a pan ready to eat, Herrera re-imagines the trees instantly dispensing toilet paper and paper towels. Although these drawings might quickly be read as humorous critique of consumerism, this is not the artist's original intention. The illustrations are daydreams musing upon where



Untitled #3 from Fruits of the Forest, 2008, watercolor and ink on paper, 8 1/2 x 9 3/4 inches