

Earth Song
from the poem *Hamatreya* by Ralph Waldo Emerson

'Mine and yours;
Mine, not yours, Earth endures;
Stars abide--
Shine down in the old sea;
Old are the shores;
But where are old men?
I who have seen much,
Such have I never seen.

'The lawyer's deed
Ran sure,
In tail,
To them, and to their heirs
Who shall succeed,
Without fail,
Forevermore.

'Here is the land,
Shaggy with wood,
With its old valley,
Mound and flood.
"But the heritors?--
Fled like the flood's foam.
The lawyer, and the laws,
And the kingdom,
Clean swept herefrom.

'They called me theirs,
Who so controlled me;
Yet every one
Wished to stay, and is gone,
How am I theirs,
If they cannot hold me,
But I hold them?'

Hyde Park**ARTCENTER**

Black Box Gallery, 2nd Floor

August 3 - October 5, 2008

Catherine Forster: ***They Call Me Theirs***



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.

Exhibition Reception

Sunday, August 3, 3 - 5 pm



Hanging Garden Installation - Weeping Willow, 2008, ink jet prints mounted on 5 aluminum sign panels, 2 x 7 feet

The genesis of this project goes back three years to a trekking trip in Peru. It took me a good three days to “un-plug”, but once I adjusted, an awareness of my surroundings surprised me. There was a presentness that now I can only occasionally attain. However, I’ve come to question the authenticity of my experience. What was truly mine? What had actually been framed by National Geographic and travel videos?

Authentic observation and participation are core to the project. Upon my return, I started documenting the seasonal changes around the perimeter of my home. I began to search for areas with less human influence, including local nature preserves and subsequently, the heartlands of Illinois and Wisconsin. *They call me theirs* creates an experience intended to question the distinctions we make between the natural and mediated world.

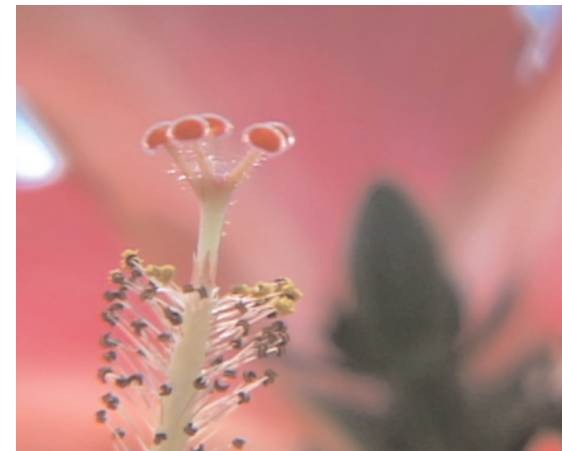
-- Catherine Forster

The art installation reverses the experience of the outdoors by neatly packaging the four seasons in a “box set” that plays on a video monitor inside a rustic cabin, suggesting that our efforts to purify our experience with nature have actually taken us farther away from it. Adjacent to the gallery housing the cabin, is a hanging garden composed of large-scale inkjet prints on aluminum sign panels. The prints were sourced from video stills, then painted, and digitized, creating a luscious though synthetic environment.



Box Set 4 Seasons, 2007/8, multimedia installation including a 14:18 minute looped video

The title of the work is taken from a line in the poem *Hamatreya* by Ralph Waldo Emerson, which questions man’s desire to claim ownership of the land that is inherently owned by nature. In the poem, the Earth responds, “How am I theirs, / If they cannot hold me, / But I hold them?” Similarly, the exhibition holds a sound-insulated cabin or shrine for the viewer to enter. A handcrafted hardwood box containing a small personal monitor with images of the four seasons sits inside. Two different cacophonous soundtracks play from both the interior and exterior, highlighting the tension between the realities of the two environments.



Box Set 4 Seasons, 2007/8, still image - Summer- from looped video, 14:18 minutes



Great care was taken in the sourcing and processing of the materials used in the project. Box Set is made of solid Maple with minimal hardware incorporated in the design. The cabin is built from an extinct Northern White Pine that was salvaged from the old Sears building. A Chicago landmark, built in 1905 at 3333 West Arthington Street.

Hanging Garden installation - Hearts, 2008, ink jet prints mounted on aluminum sign panels, 60 x 60 inches

Catherine Forster is a filmmaker, artist, curator and educator based in the Chicago land area. She received an M.F.A from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her artwork has been shown in exhibitions at the Carnegie Art Museum, South Bend Regional Art Museum, Orange County Contemporary Art Center, Exit Art and Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius, Lithuania, to name a few. Films by Forster have been screened at the Echo Park Film Center, Portsmouth Film Festival (UK), and San Diego Women’s Film Festival. Her artwork explores themes of identity, social development and the impact of popular culture on individuality. Forster is also the founder and director of a non-profit nomadic new media art space, the LiveBox Gallery.

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