

Related Events:

Exhibition Reception

Sunday, November 12

3:00 - 5:00 pm

Celebrate the opening of *O.L.A.F.T.* with the team of artists.

Finding Ourselves In Nature

Thursday, November 30

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Join lead artist **Doug Fogelson**, Openlands Conservation Manager **Aimee Collins**, and Openlands Director of Communications **Brandon Hayes** for a conversation about the year long artist residency project studying boundaries and conservation in preservation parks across Illinois. Openlands mission is to protect the natural and open spaces of northeastern Illinois and the surrounding region to ensure cleaner air and water, protect natural habitats and wildlife, and help balance and enrich our lives.

Openlands Art and Fact Team  
*O.L.A.F.T.*

Gallery 2  
October 15 - December 17, 2017



Panel 3, 2017, inkjet print mounted to gatorboard, 60 x 96 inches

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.



## Preserving the Preserve - Preserving Ourselves

Why are the categories of “natural” versus “manmade” separated so firmly in the human imagination? How can we create a new sense, a new vocabulary of image, word and touch that will disrupt this separation? Can we move humans toward a balanced understanding of their location within and among the ecosystems we encounter and which sustain us? As global warming rises, the imperative of considering these questions becomes clear.



Untitled (photograph from O.L.A.F.T.'s research), 2017, inkjet print

These questions were addressed by the artist-in-residence program conducted by the conservation and, land trust organization Openlands and artist **Doug Fogelson** during a year-long project begun in 2015. The Open Land Art and Fact Team (O.L.A.F.T.) was formed with the collaborators: **Jennifer Bronson, Mary McClosky, Jared Gastreich, Connie Tan, Anthony**

**Laccus, Courtney Kehrmann,** and lead by Fogelson. The collective

examined Openlands preservation locations to experience the tensions between nature and people interacting with those spaces. All of the preservation sites are in northern Illinois and include forest preserves, prairies, and other conservation areas with native flora and fauna under managed care.

Samples from each site were collected and studied as either human made or organic. Investigating these materials was a means for O.L.A.F.T. to come to terms with the current epoch often referred to as the Anthropocene—the era in which human activity is impacting all of the earth's spaces and systems. The O.L.A.F.T. project could be seen as a means to illustrate this era through the



Untitled (photograph from O.L.A.F.T.'s research), 2017, inkjet print

conservation movement itself. Fogelson believes that in this period of radical climate change it is more vital than ever to experience natural spaces with native flora and fauna and re-learn our connection with local ecology.

O.L.A.F.T. sought to highlight the inherent dichotomies in human thinking regarding this perceived split between natural and built environments by looking towards the signs of impact specifically within preserved areas in our region. Their goal is to draw the attention to the history and inevitability of our human footprint so that we may locate ourselves. What may feel like the most serene protected spaces are actually undergoing constant managed care, remediation and multiple civic, social, or environmental encroachments are all taking place simultaneously.

The O.L.A.F.T. project is now bringing these findings and questions into public forums to create meaningful conversations about the relationship between humans and the spaces we occupy and affect. Photographs and found objects on view document the team's process and discoveries.

What is the use and origin of these items? Should such impacts be ignored in favor of our efforts to restore pristine spaces and reinvent a vision of landscape as either untouched by humans or belonging to the exclusive rights of humanity?

The public is invited to explore the Openlands sites through expanded photographic studies, research and selected actual artifacts, and then add their own observations via the “Research Station” desk. Location markers provide points of reference and O.L.A.F.T. would like you to react via the stickers and comment cards.



Image from installation at Hyde Park Art Center, 2017