Sally Morfill & Susan Giles
Found Gestures

Gallery 5
April 14 - May 11, 2019

Related Events

Public Reception
Saturday, April 27, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Susan Giles is an artist working in sculpture and video. She has a MFA from Northwestern University and a MA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Giles’ work has been shown in Chicago at the Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Renaissance Society, among others. She has received several grants, including an Individual Artist Project Grant from DCASE in 2019, 2017, 2015, awards from the Illinois Arts Council in 2014 and 2009, a 2005 Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, and a 1998 Fulbright Grant to Indonesia to conduct research on the intersection of tourism and culture in Bali. Giles is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Contemporary Practices at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Sally Morfill is an artist and educator. She is a Senior Lecturer in the Textiles in Practice programme at Manchester School of Art, and has recently completed a practice-based PhD, making work that investigates the relationship between drawing and different aspects of language, as found in and between speech, movement and writing. Morfill’s practice is cross-disciplinary, often col Since 2007 she has been a member of Five Years, a collaborative artists’ project based in Archway, London, sharing responsibility for the programming of events and exhibitions. Morfill has shown both in the UK and internationally; this is the first time she has exhibited in Chicago.

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Hyde Park ART CENTER

This project is partially supported by an Individual Artists Program Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events, as well as a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency, a state agency through federal funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.
As part of a spring research residency at Hyde Park Art Center, artist Susan Giles (exhibiting artist and Jackman Goldwasser Resident 2014-2015) has returned to the Art Center in a collaboration with Manchester-based artist Sally Morfill to respond to their shared interest in the visual language of co-speech hand gestures. In this collaboration of Found Gestures, Giles and Morfill enact and engage the Art Center’s mission through a visualized oral history.

Using motion-capture technology to record physical movements, the two artists have created a series of visual representations of human gestures in the form of wall and floor drawings, which are presented alongside identifying names and fragments of descriptive quotes. The project calls to attention how distinct moments of interpersonal communication can become as identifying as a fingerprint or a scan of the human eye—yet through an individual’s range of their body. This specificity then becomes linked to individual and collective experiences of one meaningful site, Hyde Park Art Center, when Morfill and Giles prompt people within this community to describe a memory of an exhibition.

Thus, artist and resident Folayemi Wilson speaks about colleague Jefferson Pinder’s exhibition Onyx Odyssey that took place at the Art Center in Winter 2015/2016.

Rodrigo Lara Zendejas, admired teaching artist in the ceramics studio, speaks about the solo exhibition of his work Laz Paz that took place in Spring/Summer 2016. Reaching the youngest members of the community, Found Gestures seeks perspectives from the teen programs that occupy the building, such as Molly Dunson, Ethan Larbi, Ashley Lazaro and Emanuel Wiley speak about Folayemi Wilson’s Dark Matter: Celestial Objects as Messengers of Love in These Troubled Times at Hyde Park Art Center, March 31 - July 14, 2019.

The Hyde Park Art Center’s mission and history focuses on making space for transparent interaction with artistic processes—inspiring creative exploration, and encouraging exchange between practitioners and publics at every level. Quite complementary, Found Gestures functions as both a subject of artistic research and a method of exhibition. Again, the drive of this project is to capture the fleeting gesticulations of longtime community-members—such as Giles is herself—along with newcomers, such as Morfill. In addition to the gesture drawings, the exhibition includes a table of resource materials that document the exhibitions and histories described in the project overall, as well as vintage video footage from an exhibition by Sim parch (2000) that eventually travelled to documenta, a prestigious art exhibition in Germany.

As part of Found Gestures, Giles and Morfill will continue to participate in the Art Center’s Residency Program in Studio 2 through May 2019 to gather research. The Art Center’s residency program is curated based on high potential for cross-cultural exchange; political, social, and interdisciplinary practices; and quality of artists’ work.

A second iteration of Found Gestures will be presented at Five Years, London in June 2019.

Asha Iman Veal
Exhibitions & Residency Coordinator