

Related Programs

Exhibition Reception

Saturday, April 6, 1-4pm

Celebrate the exhibition and meet the artist during our quarterly Center Day.

Exhibition Tour

Tuesday, April 9, 6-8pm

Hear *Through the Hothouse* artist Aimee Beaubien talk about her new installation.

Contemporary Collage Conversations

Thursday, June 6, 6-8pm

Fragmenting, juxtaposing, and assembling media, collage touches a variety of artistic mediums and genres. Contemporary collage artists, **Aimée Beaubien, Cydney Lewis, Victoria Martinez, Mary Lou Zelazny,** and moderator **Dana Boutin** discuss the meaning and contemporary relevance of collage as an art medium. Panelists will respond to the work on view of collagist extraordinaire, Alice Shaddell, and share insights into their own process of collecting materials and techniques. *Alice Shaddell: Fuller Circles* catalogs will also be available for purchase, which includes a short text by Beaubien.

This exhibition is partially supported by:



Aimée Beaubien: *Through the Hothouse*

March 2 - June 2, 2024

Gallery 5



Through the Hothouse, 2024, photographs, lighting, paracord, clothespins, books, paper mache, bioplastic, polymer, gold leaf, plant matter, dimensions variable.

Hyde ParkARTCENTER

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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.



In *Through the Hothouse*, Aimée Beaubien challenges common assumptions about the genre of landscape in photography while raising important questions about preservation, conservation, and care for green space within the built environment. The artist transformed the long corridor gallery of the Art Center into a wild pathway by integrating elements such as plant matter, weaving, photographs, and 3D drawings. These elements symbolize the intricate interplay between ecological, social, and cultural dimensions within the vibrant creative community of the Art Center, prompting the question: How do we protect nature from ourselves?



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is a floating landscape of voluminous, brightly colored sculptures that preserve nature in an uncanny manner. Dead organic substances are entombed in the bright plastic plant-like shapes. The installation surrounds viewers in a rare garden of strange and enticing forms that remind us of the wonder typically only found outdoors.

Through The Hothouse runs concurrently with the exhibition *Alice Shaddle: Fuller Circles* in the adjacent Kanter Family Foundation gallery to highlight a trajectory of Chicago-based women artists using paper and photography with dynamic results. Beaubien was introduced to Alice Shaddle’s (1928-2017) work in summer 2023 by curators Lisa Stone and Nick Lowe and immediately felt an artistic kinship. Through the jewel-toned installation of cut-up photography, tinted lights, and woven sculptures, Beaubien creates a kaleidoscopic effect that simultaneously mixes micro and macro scales in dialogue with Shaddle’s laborious collages. Both Beaubien and Shaddle incorporate clusters of materials that are meticulously gathered, printed, and crafted into intricate compositions and establish connections between often contradictory relationships: natural and constructed environments, the tangible and aspirational, memory and the photographic.

The cut-up collage aesthetics employed in Beaubien’s work in particular bring about sharp recontextualization, mapping connections between contemporary life and the fragmented state of nature. Her material assemblages form intricate webs of interpretive data points, akin to the subjective process of reading a photograph. These webs take on various forms, resembling biological systems. Emulating the adaptable ambition of vine movements, she

Beaubien has been creating a series of site-specific installations since 2015 that are loosely centered on the concept of a hothouse—a deliberately hybrid environment designed to nurture rapid development of plants. The artist’s sensibility for saturated color and a multi-step process to compose a textured and alluring image may be the result of her origins as a photographer. Expanding on the series, this new iteration *Through the Hothouse* features the innovative technique of drawing on recently cut plant material (like tulips, sunflowers, and branches) with a 3D pen using PLA bioplastic filament. The result

cuts, knots, and weaves together independent elements such as snapshots, chains, books, and plant matter, creating networks that traverse visual and architectural spaces. Her ambitious installation emphasizes the interplay between the natural world, displaced nature, and simulation.

With her latest experiment in the infinite reproductive capacity of photography, Aimée Beaubien envisions a limitless propagation of plant life while connecting with the aesthetic of the handmade found in the art practice of Alice Shaddle. Both artists know what it means to sculpt space as well as young artists’ minds. Shaddle dedicated five decades to teaching youth painting and drawing at Hyde Park Art Center while Beaubien has taught at the School of the Art Institute for nearly three decades. *Through the Hothouse* embeds the legacy of Shaddle’s content and material and carries it into the future with the refreshed palette and technique of Beaubien, inviting viewers to contemplate the rich interplay between art, nature, and generations of community.

Allison Peters Quinn in collaboration with Aimée Beaubien.



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About the artist:



Photo: Marzena Abrahamik

Aimée Beaubien reshapes the photographic encounter through immersive installation, collage, sculpture and artist books. A photographed plant, interlaced vine, and woven topography merge into fields of color and pattern and back again. Her process expands the nuanced experience of interpreting photographs and connecting with nature through intertwining layers of meaning and sensation. Beaubien’s work has been included in national and international exhibitions including Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago, IL), Newport Art Museum (Newport, RI), Museum of Contemporary Photography (Chicago, IL), UCR Museum of Photography (Riverside, CA), ABC No Rio (New York, NY), Demo Projects (Springfield, IL), Gallery UNO Projektraum (Berlin, Germany), Houston Center for Photography (Houston, TX), Laney Contemporary Fine Art (Savannah, GA), Lubeznik Center for the Arts (Michigan City, IN), Marvelli Gallery (New York, NY), Monaco (St. Louis, MO), oqbo galerie (Berlin, Germany), The Pitch Project (Milwaukee, WI), Randolph Street Gallery (Chicago, IL), SF Camerawork (San Francisco, CA), Temple Contemporary (Philadelphia, PA), TWIN KITTENS (Atlanta, GA), Virus Art Gallery (Rome, Italy). Beaubien is an Associate Professor of Photography at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she has taught since 1997.