

Related Programs

Center Days

July 27, 1-4pm

Celebrate the receptions of our summer exhibitions *Where a knot begins and ends* and *Pit Stop*. There will be intergenerational art making activities, Creative Wing open studios, performances, and community collaborations.

Where a material begins and ends

September 26, 6-8pm

Exhibiting artists, Teresita Carson Valdez, Molly Roth Scranton, Malika Jackson, and Kara Cobb Johnson explore the ways that material experimentation inspires their practice across various media. The conversation will be moderated by Christine Tarkowski, Professor in the Fiber and Material Studies Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

This exhibition is generously supported in part by the Joyce Foundation and the Kanter Family Foundation.

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.

Where a knot begins and ends

July 13 - October 6
Kanter Family Foundation Gallery



Installation view of *Where a knot begins and ends*

Participating Artists

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Alexandra Antoine | Tanya Gill |
| Dawn Brennan | Malika Jackson |
| Teresita Carson | Molly Roth Scranton |
| Kittisak (Wa) Chontong | Caitlin Ryan |
| Kara Cobb Johnson | |





Knots disrupt the linear continuity of the material they entwine. They can be difficult to disentangle, and we have all experienced the struggle of trying to undo a knotted cord. When thinking about how we perceive time, a knot can symbolize a disruption in our linear thinking about the past, present, and future. *Where a knot begins and ends* considers the ways artists engage our complicated relationship to time, history, and archival processes.

The exhibition title is also an apt phrase to convey the challenges faced by the exhibiting artists who represent the 2024 cohort of New Edition, a two-part class and exhibition

developed by the Art Center for artists to learn and make work in a medium that is new to their practice. Just as a knot introduces a complication to a thread, learning a new medium presents a challenge to an artist’s established approach to making. At the same time, new material processes offer alternative ways to explore familiar content. These ten artists have enmeshed themselves in new material explorations, and the works on view are informed by those efforts.

Teresita Carson has made extensive use of fiber materials in the past and for this exhibition has integrated clay, a new exploration. Carson uses clay to create a series of earthen ceramic forms tangled into columns of woven strands that she sees as representing a “woven sky.” Her material selections, technical processes, and object references collectively establish a Mesoamerican and feminist cosmology that expresses her view of time as “something that folds” and thereby draws upon the historical past to disrupt prevailing legacies.

Malika Jackson’s recent explorations in weaving allowed the artist to meditate on and connect with her unknown ancestors who came through the Middle Passage. Jackson created a woven boat resting upon a high table with prison bar legs, as well as a tapestry of woven portraits of Jackson’s known relatives. For Jackson, the process of weaving offered a meditative and cathartic journey to connect her story to those that came before her, the difficult and cruel lives they were forced into, and her presence as a beautiful product of their passage.

Like Carson, **Molly Roth Scranton** is familiar with fiber and new to clay. Her mixed-media, woven textile assemblages and installations often integrate kept objects of personal significance. Whether it be her daughter’s tutu wrapped in a glazed ceramic body or the actual and recreated feathers of a passed pet parakeet, the items Roth Scranton memorializes have “become and un-become themselves in order to achieve altered states of being.” Her use of clay introduces a human quality to the works and instills otherwise commonplace objects with the eternal value of human connection.

Kittisak (Wa) Chontong’s piece *Volksgeist (The Spirit of The Nation)* presents the viewer with the first of four pillars as part of a larger project titled *Land of the Slime*. The project title is a play on the marketed image of Thailand as “the land of smiles,” which Chontong sees as a self-contradiction. The idea of four pillars stems from a Thai belief and ritual titled “In Chan Man Kong.” Chontong’s recreation of these pillars is an attempt to connect himself to the past and to reinterpret these historical narratives for the present. Chontong combines his telltale rigorous drawing technique with a newly established practice in clay modeling to create *Volksgeist (The Spirit of The Nation)*.

There is a shared tenderness felt in the storied items Roth Scranton memorializes and the mended objects that **Tanya Gill** preserves. The objects in Gill’s ongoing project *Broken Yet Whole* are owned, found, gifted or loaned; all are damaged and in need of repair. Gill mends these forms through various processes but allows their brokenness to remain in their renewed form. These gentle gestures are

placed on a table with a vast, screen-printed cosmos as backdrop. Through gestures of repair, Gill prompts us to consider our agency no matter how small we feel amidst the endless expanse.

In her installation, *Silence*, **Dawn Brennan** presents a life-size oil painting of her daughter. The painting pushes into the third dimension, leaning off the wall, as Brennan’s painted daughter reaches for a rack of garment-shaped, cut fabrics on which she applied newly learned mono- and block-printing techniques to add images from nature onto the clothing forms. The installation is a chronicle of the artist’s daughter: her love of nature, her love of fashion, and her ineffable depth and distance. The work points to the ways we connect across generational and spatial distance.

Kara Cobb Johnson shares Brennan’s focus on family and generational differences in her pursuit of an activist visual language. Her installation incorporates recent studies in screen printing to create an “abstract yet activist” space that, for the artist, prompts an urgent “call to arms” for women to continue fighting for their rights amid recent challenges to women’s reproductive choice. Nestled amidst a vivid and jolting field of color and form, the text “Third Wave Feminist” is contrasted by a photograph of Cobb Johnson’s children in a wild landscape that points to the next generation’s role in advancing the feminist movement.



In *At Our Table*, **Alexandra Antoine** sets a table with culinary tools, significant food items, a living archival library, and video installation that represents her journey in life through her familial cultural history with food. As a child, Antoine remembers watching her grandparents cultivate the land as farmers, as well as her mother who tended to herbal plants and Caribbean crops in her own backyard. Using newly acquired techniques in documentary filmmaking, Antoine’s records her own harvest through moments from her gardens, learning food traditions from her elders, and the appreciation of culinary traditions of the African diaspora.

Caitlin Ryan’s studio practice is assertively playful and humorous. *Untitled (fountain)* is a testament to this. Ryan’s influences for making the ceramic sculpture were equal parts her love of the artist Bruce Nauman, Hieronymus Bosch’s *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, and the thought that, as the artist put it, “sometimes I think I’d prefer to pee outside rather than in a toilet.” Her fountain sculpture squats and bubbles at the entrance to a screening room playing a series of animated quips. The artist often employs an autobiographical approach to her work, as seen in *MOMWOW*, in which the word “mom” rematerializes into “wow” before becoming a group of flowers.

-Jeff Robinson, Exhibition Curator

All images: installation view of *Where a knot begins and ends*