

GALLERY 400

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UIC SCHOOL OF ART & ART HISTORY

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Tues–Fri 10–6, Sat 12–6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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After Today

May 8–August 8, 2015



Jan Tichy, *Changing Chicago (26th Street)*, 2011, 8mins. Courtesy the artist and Richard Gray Gallery.

Artists: Marianne Fairbanks, Fultonia, 96 Acres, Jason Lazarus, Cauleen Smith, Jan Tichy and Amanda Williams.

Curated by Lorelei Stewart

A Speculation: Humans are estranged from our origins. We left the commonwealth of Animals and declared ourselves the custodians of that dominion. And now We are Man; and all else is Other. Our knowledge of ourselves is a fog that consumes us. We cannot see past it, because we do not want to look into it. There are more than two points of view, but the fog makes it difficult to see. — Cauleen Smith, on her video *Crow Requiem*

April 23, 2015—Chicago, IL — *After Today* includes seven artists' projects that respond to the city of Chicago's social, political, and economic conditions. At this moment of rapid change and political debate—with increasing income inequality, in the long wake of the 2008 recession, as neighborhoods across the city continue to transform, with the rise of labor movements, as the tech sector expands in Chicago, with the transformations of Chicago's public sector, as wider attention is paid to police violence, and given the long story of race in the city—the artists in *After Today* address the city's changes and its possible future. The seven artists, all Chicago-based, use a variety of organizational and material strategies and focus on topics that range across economic effects, collective action, and how the past and present condition desires for the future—with a number of projects highlighting aspects of the city's criminal justice system.

From sculptures incorporating fabrics dyed with the plants surrounding foreclosed homes, to audio stories of families affected by the Cook County Jail, to a sculptural and photographic portraiture project that is designed as a tool to achieve collective goals, the artists' works mark a specific moment in the city—the time we live in—but also address a time that is informed by both the past and future. From where we are now standing (and looking) these seem to be the fateful, decisive moments defining Chicago and how we can live here together.

Several artists in *After Today* focus on homes and the effects of real estate economies.

Marianne Fairbanks' sculpture *Patchwork Pall* focuses on the material remains left in the wake of her Humboldt Park neighbors' foreclosures. From the overgrown plants in abandoned yards, Fairbanks made fabric dyes to color textiles that she quilted into a pall for the damage wrought in the metaphorical fabric of the community. **Amanda Williams** uses color to mark absences within a neighborhood. Focusing on the familiarity and memory of iconic colors in the Englewood community, Williams paints abandoned houses there with a single evocative color. Drawing upon the ripple effects of economic and spatial shifts in the city, these works are grounded in their reflections on the impact of rapid and gradual change on memory and space.

Thinking through the possibilities of representing communities, **Jason Lazarus** is developing *Image Monuments*, an extended workshop, sculpture, photography, and media campaign project that documents temporary, collaboratively made pop-up sculptures. These sculptures will feature text, images, and signs made by a specific community that visualize the participants' individual histories, shared struggles, political ambitions, and visions for the future. On view in Gallery 400 is a scale model of the 32-foot sculptural armature and information on the project's process. Lazarus and his collaborators will develop their material in June and erect the sculpture in a public event in early July. The participants and Lazarus plan to use photographic images of the sculpture as a campaign tool to lobby politicians, community authorities and allies.

Jan Tichy's two videos *Changing Chicago (26th Street)* and *Changing Chicago (Northerly Island)* use another approach to documenting the city, its history, and its inhabitants. Using one long shoot from a static camera, Tichy captures the moments after the end of the "26th Street Mexican Independence Day Parade" in Little Village and an enigmatic empty space on Northerly Island. The videos not only reference the city as it is today but refer back to large scale documentary projects launched in Chicago in 2001, 1999, and 1987, the latter of which, titled *Changing Chicago*, was one of the largest documentary photography projects ever organized in an American city. Also exhibited in *After Today* is Tichy's sculpture *Chicago Nature*, neon work that responds to the pulse of the city via its connection to a police scanner

in Englewood, turning on and off as the dispatch opens and closes the radio transmissions to the officers on the street.

96 Acres examines the social and political implications of incarceration on communities of color, focusing on the Cook County Jail on Chicago's West Side. 96 Acres is a series of community-engaged projects led by artist Maria Gaspar with Enlace Chicago, and CPAG. For this exhibition, 96 Acres employs multi-disciplinary practices to create a learning room to exchange ideas and discuss issues of incarceration. With a sound installation and printed materials inside and outside the gallery, 96 Acres aims to generate alternative narratives reflecting on power and responsibility. Similarly, **Cauleen Smith's** drawings on view represent covers of books included in a reading list that the artist considers to have changed her life and helped her survive. Smith proposes study and conversation to create an exchange, because "Black people are at war without the proper armor" and these sources, as well as others suggested by viewers, can act as forms of resistance. These drawings are reproduced on 10 double-sided postcards that are distributed this summer in community gathering places throughout the city.

Founded in the 1960s, Fultonia was established by Dr. Alvenia Fulton as the first space in Chicago with an emphasis on holistic healing through diet, fasting, and proper nutrition. The current version of **Fultonia** is an interdisciplinary and iterative project led by Eboni Senai Hawkins with contributions from a host of collaborators examining the physical and spiritual impacts of healing work across real and perceived boundaries. *FULTONIA: Mycelia* positions Dr. Fulton's rise and decline alongside the concept of the Mycelium, the interconnected and regenerative branches of fungi, as it represents the relationships between the individuals, institutions, and socio-political networks that formulate a unified whole. The mycelium finds its architectural parallel in plans for a geodesic dome—which in three-dimensional form is designed to distribute stress evenly across smaller and interdependent forms. The spatial boundaries of the dome serve as a stage for durational performances arising from the physical and spiritual impacts on those who have been called to healing work.

After Today is part of an ongoing series of exhibitions and events, *Standard of Living*, that explore shifts in economies and in work. Topics covered in the series include how and where economic exchange takes place, new models for sustainable economies, employment-driven migration, and relationships between place, work, and economic viability, among others. A key component of this series is community involvement. Partnerships, relationships, and dialogues with community organizations, labor unions, and artists help guide the development of exhibitions and events.

Related Programs:

Friday, May 8, 5:00pm-8:00pm – **Opening Reception: *After Today***

Dates TBD for the following events:

- A performance by Kirsten Leenars will bracket recent events such as Ferguson and Charlie Hebdo, among others.
- Marianne Fairbanks will lead a workshop on fabric dyeing.

- Jason Lazarus' *Image Monuments* workshop will unveil a collaboratively designed sculpture in a public event.
- Jan Tichy will lead a documentary filming workshop with youth.
- Fultonia and 96 Acres will host events throughout the exhibition run.
- Additional programs will be announced.

Tours:

Gallery 400 will offer free, guided tours of *After Today* to the public on the following dates:

- Tours available on Tuesdays at 12:00pm and Saturdays at 2:00pm beginning May 26th.
- Tour schedule is subject to change, so please check <http://gallery400.uic.edu/visit/tours> for cancellations or schedule changes.

To schedule a tour that meets the specific needs and interests of your group contact us at 312-996-6114 or gallery400@uic.edu.

After Today is supported by the Institute for Museum and Library Services; the School of Art & Art History, the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts, University of Illinois at Chicago; and a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. The Daryl Gerber Stokols and Jeff Stokols Voices Series Fund provides general support to Gallery 400.

Founded in 1983, Gallery 400 is one of the nation's most vibrant university galleries, showcasing work at the leading edge of contemporary art, architecture, and design. The Gallery's program of exhibitions, lectures, film and video screenings, and performances features interdisciplinary and experimental practices. Operating within the School of Art and Art History in the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Gallery 400 endeavors to make the arts and its practitioners accessible to a broad spectrum of the public and to cultivate a variety of cultural and intellectual perspectives. Gallery 400 is recognized for its support of the creation of new work, the diversity of its programs and participants, and the development of experimental models for multidisciplinary exhibition.