



400 South Peoria Street (MC 034)
Chicago, IL 60607
312-996-6114
gallery400.uic.edu

Gallery hours:
Tuesday-Friday 10:00a.m.–5:00p.m.
Saturday 12:00-5:00p.m.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Gravity Pleasure Switchback

A solo exhibition by Derrick Woods-Morrow

May 19–August 5, 2023



Derrick Woods Morrow, *Invitation to Access*, 2023, video still, courtesy the artist.

Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois Chicago is pleased to announce *Gravity Pleasure Switchback*, the first major solo exhibition of Derrick Woods-Morrow. The exhibition manifests itself as a euphoric dream state containing the phases and spaces inhabited by Black American Southerners. Wavering between life and death, rest, and the *hustle* of everyday life, the exhibition is grounded in the exploration of the body as a place of boundless possibility.

Gravity Pleasure Switchback locates and entangles the exchanges of sexuality, desire, and the casual consumption of these energies. Inspired by Christina Sharpe’s influential book *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, this exhibition performs “wake work,” embodies the ruptures, and unearths the complex relationship of private and public pleasure. Woods-Morrow interprets wake work as bearing witness to Black self-discovery amid destruction. As he puts it, “It is sitting with that feeling, activating and deactivating it for the sake of survival or lack thereof.”

In his sculptures, installations, films, and assemblages, Woods-Morrow converts elements from his domestic life—mattresses, memories from his childhood, waste products from his body and the bodies of others, a Peloton stationary bike—into units that unveil his interior motivations for desiring both isolation and community. Artworks juxtaposing bliss and anguish address living in the wake of creating space to celebrate, mourn, and interrogate Black lived experiences. His home in the South is explored as ever-present and everlasting in its expanse and its nuance. The pleasures of home and their familiarity are reflected over surfaces cast against a southern sunset, where cowboys jostle up and down as the background comes into focus. Demanding visitors pay close attention, *Gravity Pleasure Switchback* unravels the remnants of rest and ruin.

Originally from Greensboro, North Carolina, Derrick Woods Morrow’s work reflects on his experience growing up in the Black American South and centers on the exploration of Black sexuality and the complex journey through this discovery. Woods-Morrow’s practice spans photography, film, installation, performance, and sculpture to capture and illustrate the queering of Blackness and the spaces in which this takes place. His work has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; the Museum of Modern Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Schwules Museum in Berlin; the Contemporary Art Center in New Orleans; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; and UIC Gallery 400, among many other institutions across the world. He has completed residencies at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2022), The Bemis Center for Contemporary Art (2021), Antenna Works (2020/21), Chicago Artists Coalition (2018), the Fire Island Artist Residency (2016) and ACRE (2015).

He is the recipient of the 3Arts Camargo Foundation Fellowship (2023), the Rhode Island MacColl Johnson Fellowship (2023), the Uprise Grant from the Sundance Film Institute (2021), the 3Arts Gary and Denise Gardner Fund Award (2021), and the Artadia Award–Chicago (2018). Woods-Morrow holds a Schiller Family Assistant Professorship in Race in Art and Design and teaches sculpture, painting, and textiles at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Related Programs:

***Gravity Pleasure Switchback* Opening Reception**

Friday, May 19
5-8:00p.m.
UIC Gallery 400 gallery

Rest and Labor: A Gravity Pleasure Switchback Tour with Jaira Harrington

Thursday, June 1, 2023
4-5:00p.m.
UIC Gallery 400 gallery

Fissures of Displeasure: Lecture by K Anderson

Thursday, June 29, 2023
5-6:30p.m.
Virtual via Zoom

Currents: Performance by Gozié Ojini

Friday, July 20, 2023
5-6:30p.m.
UIC Gallery 400 gallery

Gravity Pleasure Switchback Curatorial Talk

with Rachel Dukes, Kristin Korolowicz, Derrick Woods-Morrow, and Gozié Ojini
Thursday, July 27, 2023
5-6:30p.m.
Virtual via Zoom

Visit [UIC Gallery 400](#) for full details.

Tours:

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

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Founded in 1983, UIC 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 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.

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