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HYDE PARK ART CENTER
75 YEARS
OF MAKING CHICAGO'S
ART HAPPEN

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**HYDE PARK ART CENTER PRESENTS
"FRONT & CENTER," SEPTEMBER 13, 2014 – JANUARY 4, 2015**

Guest Curated by Tricia Van Eck, Exhibition Showcases Work
by Artists in Professional Development Program



CHICAGO – **Hyde Park Art Center** is proud to present the third annual exhibition of work from participants in their flagship artist professional development initiative, The Center Program. Curated by **Tricia Van Eck**, Director of 6018North, an experimental non-profit art space in Chicago, 23 students from the unique program will exhibit work in all media in "**Front & Center**," September 13, 2014 – January 4, 2015.

Developed by the Art Center, The Center Program is dedicated to building critical dialogue for professional artists seeking to advance their practice. Over the course of six months, established guest artists, gallerists, and critics push Center Program artists to dig deep and answer tough questions that will result in each artist producing a strong, new body of work that is presented in the Art Center exhibition, "Front & Center."

Through this process participants gain a strong peer and professional network of support in thinking critically about how they approach their art, and the opportunity to introduce their new work to a broad audience.

"As one of the many Center Program's mentors, I have watched, guided, and encouraged these artists to push their aesthetic and conceptual ideas into new and ambitious territory." said Van Eck. "In working closely with artists, curators, advisors and each other, this program has given the artists wings. Now it's exciting to further encourage them to extend their ideas into the gallery and the real world to ambitiously connect with audiences and each other through this exhibition, which for many, will be their first major exhibition."

The 2014 class of Center Program artists includes: **Kevin Blake, Juarez Hawkins, Karen Hirsch, Carolyn Hughes, James Jankowiak, Lisa Jenschke, Steve Juras, Beth Kamhi, Christine La Rue, Victor Lopez, Alyssa Miserendino, Christian Ortiz, Margaret Park, Janet Krehbiel Pieracci, Gonzalo Reyes, Sheri Rush, Caitlin Ryan, Christopher Saclolo, Carla Fisher Schwartz, Casey Smallwood, Dorian Sylvain, Sadie Woods, and Rodrigo Lara Zendejas.**

A reception celebrating "Front & Center" will take place during Hyde Park Art Center's 75th Anniversary Block Party BBQ Bash, **Saturday, September 13, 5 pm – 8 pm**. The free, all day event runs from 12

pm–9 pm, and represents a moment for Chicagoans to come together and celebrate our city’s artists, the community that embraces them, and the Art Center’s legacy of supporting both.

A natural outgrowth of the Art Center’s progressive and scaffolded arts education programs, The Center Program was first piloted in 2012 as a response to the existence of critical gaps in accessible professional development offerings for artists. Traditional MFA programs are frequently cost-prohibitive, artists of color are underrepresented, and, many artists who have obtained an MFA find that they simply want more: more time and space to deepen their practice, more critical feedback and guidance, and more exposure. Proven by the growing demand for the program, through The Center Program the Art Center is addressing these needs by offering working artists a unique combination of access to materials and space to develop a rigorous studio practice — outside of a university setting.

To further its impact, The Center Program also aligns with a new year-long [Visual Arts Certificate Program](#) (VACP). In partnership with **The University of Chicago Graham School of Continuing Liberal and Professional Studies**, the VACP is designed to help artists further their studio practice while developing strengths in critiquing, teaching, presenting and writing about art. Curating exhibitions, negotiating contracts, conducting studio visits, and writing press releases are just some of the professional practices that artists can master, yet instruction in these skills is largely absent from BFA and MFA curricula. The VACP aims to fill this experiential divide that exists in degree programs, with The Center Program providing the studio component of the certificate. Each year, artists may apply for The Center Program as a stand-alone opportunity, or as a part of the VACP.

The Center Program’s 2014 roster of guest professionals includes critic **Susan Snodgrass**, museum educator **Annie Morse** from the Art Institute of Chicago, photographer and educator **Dawoud Bey**, artist **Juan Angel Chavez**, gallerist **Jim Dempsey** of Corbett vs. Dempsey; Stockyard Institute founder and chair of Arts Education at DePaul University **Jim Duignan** and gallerist **Dan Devening** of Devening Projects, as well as 6018North curator Tricia Van Eck.

About Tricia Van Eck

After 13 years of working at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, where she was Associate Curator, Tricia Van Eck left to focus on 6018North. Her last project at the MCA was the Chicago presentation of Mark Bradford's Retrospective and his community residency exhibition. At the MCA she presented more than 70 exhibitions much of which were audience engaged, interactive, or extended the MCA's reach into the community such as “Interactions: A Four month series of artist and audience activations” as a companion to “Without You I Am Nothing: Art and Its Audience,” Jan Tichy's “Project Cabrini Green,” “Theaster Gates: Temple Exercises,” “Tino Sehgal’s Kiss, Here/Not There,” and “Hide and Seek: An Out of Gallery Experience.” She curated the MCA Chicago presentations of various traveling exhibitions such as “Buckminster Fuller: Starting with the Universe,” “Italics: Tradition and Revolution, Italian Art from 1968-2008” and “Andy Warhol: Supernova.” She coordinated numerous exhibitions including the Jeff Koons retrospective and curated numerous exhibitions of Chicago artists including “Mapping the Self” and “Kerry James Marshall: One True Thing Meditations on Black Aesthetics” as well as many artists’ book shows and “UBS 12 x 12: New Artists/New Work” exhibitions, which showcased the work of emerging Chicago artists.

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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. As an open forum for exploring the artistic process, the Art Center fosters creativity through making, learning about, seeing, and discussing art—all under one roof. The Art Center is funded in part by: 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; Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts; Harper Court Arts Council; Harpo Foundation; Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; Illinois Humanities Council; Irving Harris Foundation; Joyce Foundation; Lloyd A. Fry Foundation; MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince; National Endowment for the Arts; National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Illinois General Assembly; Polk Bros. Foundation; David C and Sarajejan Ruttenberg Arts Foundation; Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust; and the generosity of its members and people like you.