

GALLERY | 400

400 SOUTH PEORIA STREET (MC 034)

CHICAGO, IL 60607

UIC College of Architecture & the Arts

312 996 6114

gallery400.aa.uic.edu

Tues–Fri 10–6, Sat 12–6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Encounters at the Edge of the Forest

May 2–June 14, 2014

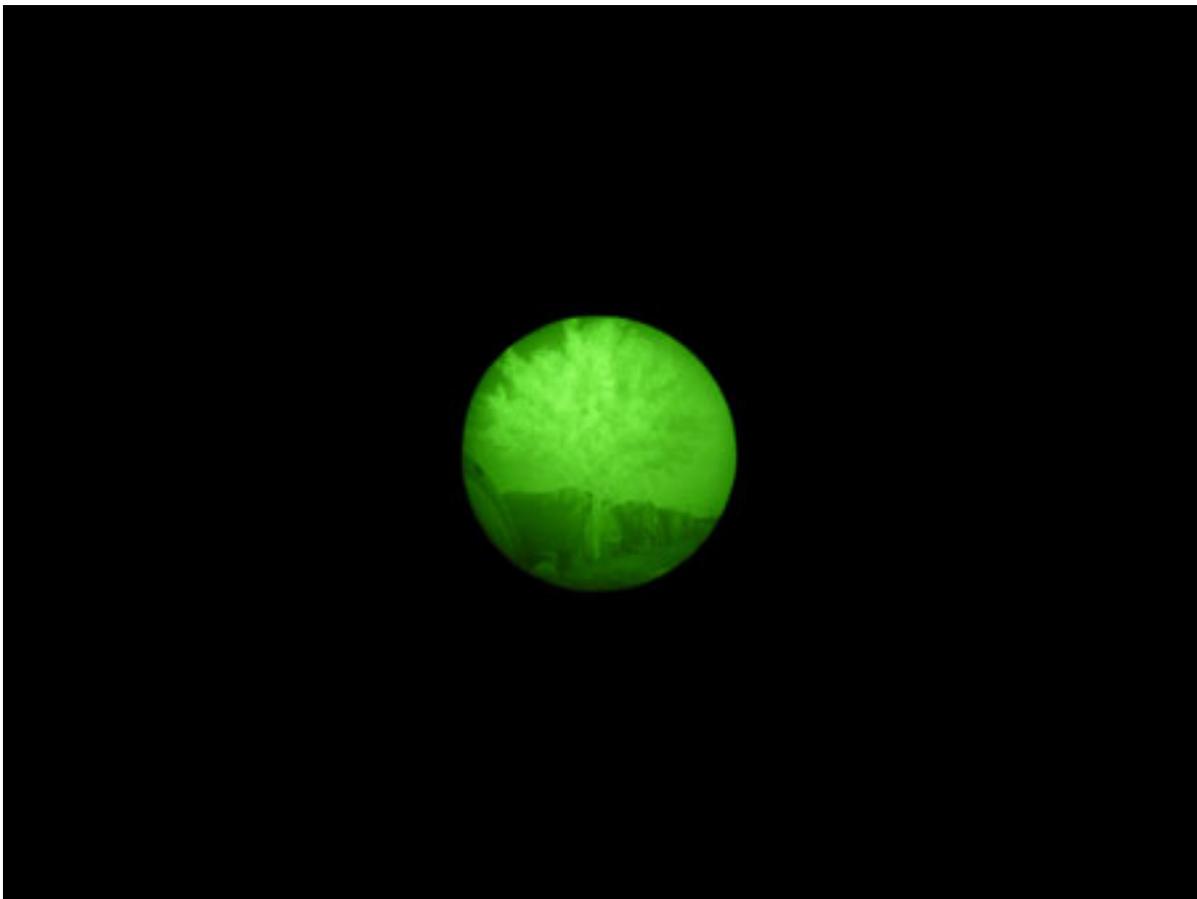


Image: Tim Knowles, *Fraxinus xanthoxyloides* – HMNVS, 2009, inkjet print, 15 3/4 x 15 3/4 in.

Curated by the 2014 Exhibitions Practices class of the Museum and Exhibition Studies program of the UIC School of Art and Art History.

Artists: **Vaughn Bell, Ori Gersht, David Goldblatt, Ken Gonzales-Day, Tim Knowles, Philippa Lawrence, Ariane Littman, Steve Rowell, Andreas Rutkauskas,** and

Jennifer Scott. Curators: **Alejandro Acierito, Lenny Cicero, Jillian Green, Nancy Harmon, Miok Lee, Jamie Luensman, Brigid Maniates, Taryn Mason, Sherwin Ovid, Rachel Shrock,** and **Meghan Wingert.** Faculty Advisor: **Rhoda Rosen**

Encounters at the Edge of the Forest is an exhibition, a refiguring of the classroom experience, and an enactment of the desire to bring into the world socially engaged and intellectually vivid art and conversation. The dynamic nature of the course as a discursive platform is reflected on the exhibition in which the discussion about the politics of representation, cultural memory, and public space is in constant flux.

The exhibition takes as its motif a particular kind of tree: Forests - dense, crowded, tangled, thick, and dark – have served as metaphors variously for the depths of the imagination, of dreams, and of desire - places in which unfathomable danger and seduction lurk. By contrast, though no less romanticized, the manicured, pastoral, bucolic forest stands in as the scene of groomed civility, of picnicking, of retreat from the city (in its turn, described as a concrete jungle).

None of these sorts of groves feature in this exhibition.

The trees and foliage in this exhibition are a lesser-known variety: the standard-bearers of nationalism. They mark borders, defend territory, and survey dominions. Burdened with soldiering on behalf of the nation state, they lay claim to land in its name, all the while concealing signs of the mechanized violence that brought the state into existence and continues to sustain it. Within the nation, the onus falls on these trees to determine whose lives will count and whose will not. The art and artifacts on exhibition evoke those trees that have battled on behalf of or been sacrificed to the nation-state's cartographic conceit and the artists featured are among those who expose the mercenary tactics of national geography, refuse its delimiting function, and seek to imagine different ways of being.

Vaughn Bell invites the audience to participate in a project of caring for nature, beyond the limitations of borders; **Ori Gersht** offers an uncanny and mysterious meditation on history in an achingly beautiful short video, located in a Polish forest; **David Goldblatt** explores the trees that, long before apartheid laws, divided and marked the boundaries of white property; **Ken Gonzalez-Day** investigates the troubled memories of lynching trees; **Tim Knowles**, embedded with the Royal Marines in Afghanistan in 2009, pictures nature literally through a military lens; **Philippa Lawrence** explores the forests grown on state lands, in forest preserves, for corporate profit; **Ariane Littman** attempts to heal an ailing Olive tree at the Hizma Checkpoint, Jerusalem, and holds out the hope for a repair of the scarred landscape of conflict; **Steve Rowell** visits the Brandenburg forest and uncovers a landscape both beautiful and toxic, dangerous and benign, in which the forest hides multiple layers of history; **Andreas Rutkauskus**, using GPS technology, explores the heightened security of the border between Canada and the U.S since 9/11 and the alteration of forests to police that border - all these are breathtaking reminders that modern forests, far from being elements of nature, are culturally and scientifically managed artifacts of power. **Jennifer Scott** takes historical lynching postcards as her

source material, and, in a powerful reversal, draws attention to the spectators rather than the victims of the lynchings.

This exhibition is supported by the School of the Art and Art History at the University of Illinois at Chicago with additional support from the International Studies Program and the History Department at UIC.

Related Programs:

Pre-Reception Artist Talk: Tim Knowles, Friday, May 2, 4:45-5:30pm

Opening Reception, Friday, May 2, 5:30-8pm

From the Lynching Tree to Mass Incarceration: A Conversation with Harvey Young, Flint Taylor, and Darrell Cannon, Saturday, May 3, 3-5pm

Tours:

Gallery 400 offers guided tours for groups of all ages. Tours are free of charge but require reservation. Please complete our online form (accessible at gallery400.uic.edu/visit/tours) to schedule a tour of *Encounters at the Edge of the Forest*. For more information, or to discuss the specific needs and interests of your group, please contact us at 312 996 6114 or gallery400@uic.edu.

Gallery 400 is supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; 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. Howard and Donna Stone and Jeff Stokols and Daryl Gerber Stokols provide general support to Gallery 400 programs.

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.