

# GALLERY | 400

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UIC COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE & THE ARTS

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Tues–Fri 10–6, Sat 12–6

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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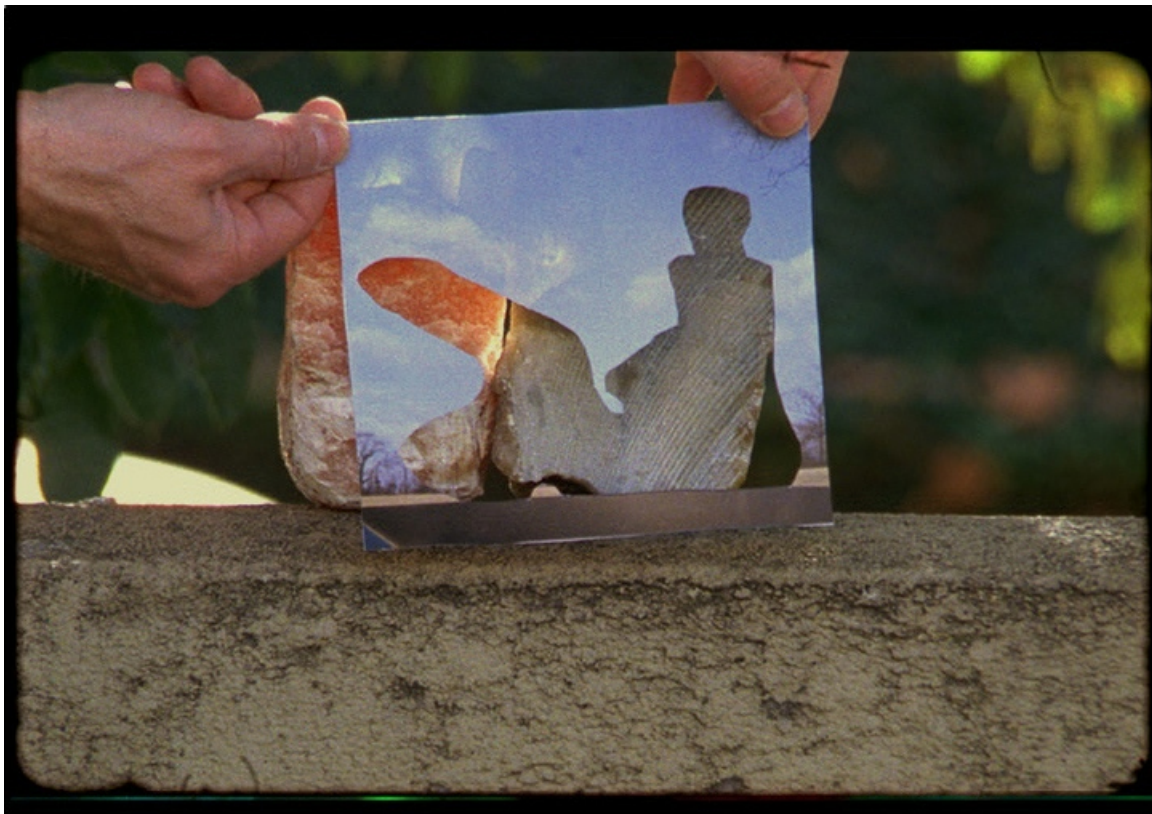
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### Observer Effect

January 18–March 9, 2013



January 8, 2013—Chicago, IL—Featuring artists **Jessica Hyatt, Steffani Jemison, Jochen Lempert, John O'Connor, Steve Roden, and Jorinde Voigt, *Observer Effect*** examines how artworks incorporate processes akin to the scientific method as a means to examine and understand specific phenomena that exist in the world. Each artist's idiosyncratic approach of observing and understanding his/her distinct subject

matter reveals the artist's own subjectivity through this process, and discloses how each artist, the observer, is part of what is being observed.

Phenomenon is defined as that which is observable: things, events, or experiences, including that which is observed through technology. Today, in an information age, our conceptions of phenomena are greatly expanded. Beyond the natural world, history, discourse, images, texts, interactions, and so much more become phenomena ripe for examination. Information as object and landscape creates new observable experiences and sets of phenomena.

Rather than a rigid scientific approach, **John O'Connor's** methodology involves invented systems that produce drawings that are more reactive to data than they are to concrete representations. His process is haphazard but not aimless—relying on chance and reassessment. With a highly interdisciplinary approach to art-making, **Steve Roden** investigates source material through self-invented restrictions, though always leaving room to make intuitive and reactionary decisions. The series *Stone's Throw* began when Roden found several half-carved stones that his grandmother had left in her sculpture studio after she had passed away. He investigated the stones through a new mode of observation that challenged his previous artistic processes, culminating in activities that he claims seem to reference a history of ritual as opposed to contemporary art. Through these investigations, the stones were used as visual references for his decision-making while he created work that materialized into a series of paintings, drawings, a video, and a sound work. **Steffani Jemison** investigates the identity of 16-year-old Derrion Albert, who was tragically murdered in 2009 in Chicago. Jemison uses excerpts from the inspirational poem "If I Could," a copy of which was found by Albert's bedside. The artist manipulates the text, creates an inkjet print, scans it, and re-prints it on acetate. The new acetate print is layered with pieces of brown paper that function as contrivance and intervention, creating an image that is never entirely stable or complete. **Jochen Lempert's** photography is a combination of scientific research, documentation, and conceptualism. Lempert studied biology before he began exploring photography in the 1990s. Since then, his work has captured occurrences in the natural world that are rarely noticed by the average person. The photographs transcend mere documentation through recontextualizing the subject or occurrence into near abstraction. **Jessica Hyatt** explores the lives of other unrelated Jessica Hyatts, and in doing so, she creates a dialogue between the individual Jessica Hyatt and the singular Jessica Hyatt name. Through this investigation, the artist repeatedly produces forms that are distinct to each Jessica Hyatt that she investigates. Who is Jessica Hyatt? Jessica Hyatt is a dessert chef at a restaurant called Farm 255 in Athens, Georgia. Jessica Hyatt owns a horse named Conquer the Magic in upstate New York. Jessica Hyatt is everyone whose picture profile comes up on a search on Facebook. The large-scale drawings of **Jorinde Voigt** exhibit a particularly human perception of the natural world through subjective algorithms and diagrams that create a visualization of data that suggests temporality through spiraling and crossing lines—more reminiscent of documenting esoteric experience than rigid schematics. To this end, Voigt's visual dialogue transcends the source; whether it is electrical currents, wind patterns, kisses, or the flight of eagles.

As we encounter these proliferating phenomena and relationships among them, how we understand them becomes ever more important. A step further is the reconsideration of

how knowledge is built. The basics of the scientific method—asking a question, conducting background research, offering a hypothesis, testing the hypothesis in an experiment, analyzing the data, and drawing a conclusion—offer a pathway both to understand our changing world and to reflect on the new forms of thought necessitated by it.

In *Observer Effect*, curators **Carrie Gundersdorf** and **Lorelei Stewart** reveal how keen observation and investigation are parts of artistic practice and how that practice is often imbued with the subjective. That subjective element is an effective artistic tool. *Observer Effect* proposes to reveal just how useful that tool is, and the dynamic relationship between artist, process, and artwork.

**Related Programs:**

**Opening Reception**

**Friday, January 18, 5–8pm**

**Sound Performance by Steve Roden**

**Tuesday, February 26, 9pm**

**The Burlington, 3425 West Fullerton Avenue**

**Artists' Discussion**

**With Julia Fish, Jessica Hyatt, Steffani Jemison, and Steve Roden**

**Wednesday, February 27, 6pm**

**Things and Their Various Natures**

**Film and video screening curated by Deborah Stratman**

**Wednesday, March 6, 7pm**

**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 on our website at [gallery400.uic.edu/visit/tours](http://gallery400.uic.edu/visit/tours)) to schedule a tour of *Observer Effect*. 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](mailto:gallery400@uic.edu).

Image: Steve Roden, *Striations*, 2010–11, two 16mm films with ink transferred to video, 6:00 min. (still).

*Observer Effect* is supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; the College of Architecture and the Arts, University of Illinois at Chicago; and a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

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 College of Architecture 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.