

SITE Seeing

organized by Caleb Taylor

featuring **Corey Antis** (Kansas City), **Avantika Bawa** (Portland), **Dan Devening** (Chicago), **Marcie Miller Gross** (Kansas City), **Mie Kongo** (Chicago), **Cybele Lyle** (Los Angeles), **Armin Mühsam** (Kansas City), **Erin O’Keefe** (New York), **Christopher Spaw** (Alma, KS), and **Caleb Taylor** (Kansas City)

SITE Seeing is a multidisciplinary exhibition connecting artists from Kansas City, Chicago, Portland, New York, and Los Angeles who are working at the intersections of architecture, site-specificity, abstraction, and perception. The ten artists and architects bridge geographies, philosophies, and material conditions to expand the meanings of space and address how identity and content is formed through this research.

The selected artists use modularity to construct new forms and invigorate spaces with an awareness to the architecture. Windows, doors, stacked geometry, floor plans, and scaffolding become instruments to explore positions between function, form and symbol; as entries into larger contexts depending on the vantage point. The group includes practicing architects and studio artists to examine how their experiences influence the sensibilities compared and contrasted in this exhibition - as singular works and commissioned installations that co-exist and overlap.

The exhibition layout listens to the defining characteristics of the room - intersecting planes and edges, sight lines, passages, and proportions - to understand the correlation of space and image. In the gallery and across the facade of the Charlotte Street Foundation, viewers encounter structural, queer, architectural, emotional, and interactive understandings of site - at times the scale of a book page and others monumental. The overall installation broadens dialogues beyond the practice and appropriation of architectural aesthetics, arriving at outcomes with conceptual cross-over. The presentation is both structurally unified and unfolding, underlining the idea that all manners of art-making are an act of construction.

How each artist defines a site, responds to space, and engages materials connects and distinguishes their practices.

The handmade book has held **Corey Antis’** attention for nearly a decade, as a sculptural form used to archive the painterly gesture. For *SITE Seeing*, Antis presents two new works; a large book of frottages collecting surfaces of Kansas City’s West Bottoms neighborhood near his studio, and a commissioned video projection that leads audiences through this book of rubbings. The materials and processes he uses have associations to **Marcie Miller Gross’** work that incorporates a large, vertical impression of her studio radiator as a geometric stack imposed over a block of industrial felt. Made in response to the architectural opening directly above her installation, Gross balances the solids and voids in the space as a complete composition that connects the building’s features to the planes and passages she assembles. Together, Antis and Miller Gross empower fragile materials through scale and translate architectural surfaces with an eye for subtle beauty.

Erin O’Keefe, Caleb Taylor and Christopher Spaw use photography and collage to create deceptive images made from painted wood and folded paper. With an awareness of how aligned edges, shapes and colors create perceptual phenomena, their use of shifting perspectives give dimension to chromatic abstractions that continually collapse to flatness. Spaw and O’Keefe are architects investigating illusionistic spaces from opposing scales. Spaw’s photograph of a construction site in the Kansas prairie is installed across the north facade of the Charlotte Street Foundation to redefine the building’s silhouette, and O’Keefe’s work remains connected to tabletop-scaled modeling. Taylor’s wallpaper installation covers a fraction of the gallery to change the room’s profile and becomes background to his collages and the work of other artists. For all three, the resulting shifts in light, architectural form, and shadow create fractured geometries mediating site-specificity, abstraction, representation, fact, and fiction.

If Taylor’s installation examines the illusion of layered images and wall coverings, **Cybele Lyle’s *Some of All Parts*** similarly speaks to the collection and disassembly of numerous works as a site-specific investigation. Made from painted panels with overlapping canvas and fabrics, this project transforms with time as pieces are removed and repositioned. The abstraction changes proportions, has shifting densities, and opens up throughout the exhibition – existing somewhere in between built structures, painting, textiles, and nature.

Portland-based sculptor **Avantika Bawa** uses scaffolding to bring the construction site into the gallery to mediate the proportions of the room. Bawa’s installation takes function away from the scaffolding, transforming them into dimensional drawing machines and shadow casters removed from their intended use. Like Antis and Miller Gross, Bawa brings a tactile sensibility to her installation where the cast shadows of the scaffolding interact with the vertical prints depicting similar profiles. She sees the white gallery as a venue for action, a connection between secondary sites, and a meditation on place merging exterior and interior investigations.

The 2d and 3d assemblages of **Dan Devening, Mie Kongo, and Armin Mühsam** are invested in the choices of abstraction and arrangement. The three artists rely *on* the dualities of surface, material, and representation to inform compositional choices - remaining freshly unpredictable yet concrete with each work. Devening’s painterly and flat surfaces in the Pennant Series strike stable and provisional chords in pursuit of the ‘right’ balance. He incorporates sewn layers and collaged fragments to explore the flag as a political symbol and abstract structure, asking if the color blocks can be seen as symbols and emotional triggers. Kongo’s sculptures carefully position wood, ceramics, felt, and 3d printed elements into arrangements that hold body and building qualities. Materially we see similar preoccupations in the works of Kongo and Miller Gross who are using felt to soften geometry and push reductive aesthetics forward. Mühsam, in comparison, pursues greater rigidity in his Cubist-influenced compositions that are monument-like with reference to the history of civilization, industrial change, and formalism. Because his work pulls from abstract and representation traditions with an eye on histories current and past, he is the bridge between the artists and works in *SITE Seeing*.