



CONTEMPORARY IMAGES IN PRINT SINCE 1915

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## ***Matt Neff: Second Sight***

April 4 – June 7, 2014

Thursday, April 3: Gallery Talk 5:30pm; Opening Reception 6:00-8:00pm

**PHILADELPHIA:** *Second Sight* will be the first solo exhibition dedicated to the exceptional body of work Philadelphia artist **Matt Neff** has created since 2007, curated by The Print Center's Executive Director Elizabeth Spungen. The show includes the debut of a number of sculptural works created specifically for this show; in addition, for the first time at The Print Center, the exhibiting artist will be in residence during the exhibition.

*Second Sight* will reveal Neff's innovative and experimental approach to printmaking, which while critically embedded in the work, is not always easily perceptible. Both 2-D and 3-D works result from Neff's deeply considered approaches to process and medium including letterpress on paper, screenprints flocked with sugar, etched mirrors, layered graphite and wax on panel and photographic prints. The earlier works show Neff's initial unusual approach to media, incorporating materials such as sugar and toner, in pieces that utilize traditional printmaking techniques. In later works, he obscures the image on the surface, embedding it within layers of densely deposited materials, whose sensual and reflective textures in turn replace the image. In one work, several screenprints are layered in sugar onto a wooden panel, until they become unreadable. Subsequent layers of sugar are applied, melted, wet and further layered, until the surface becomes a sparkling, craggy topographic wonder marked by a fragile impermanence.

Neff's unfettered and unconventional approach to media is integrally linked to his intellectual, emotional and philosophical concerns regarding power and privilege in regard to race, gender and class. These tensions are reflected in the exhibition title, *Second Sight*, which quotes American author and activist W.E.B. Du Bois' metaphor of veiled sight, characterized as a blessing and a curse. These ideas reverberate throughout all Neff's work, which touch on ideas of spiritual potency, Wu-Tang Clan's hip hop lyrics as prophecy and the veil as a visual metaphor. These layered thought processes are mirrored in the physical aspect of his artmaking.

Within *Second Sight* is the project space **Second SITE**, where Neff will be in residence. It will serve as an evolving studio, exhibition, meeting, performance and research venue for interaction with artists, curators, writers and community members. Second SITE will change weekly. Go to [www.printcenter.org](http://www.printcenter.org) for information.

Neff holds an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania, and a BFA and BA in Art History from Indiana University. He teaches at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is also the Director of The Common Press. In 2008 he was awarded a PennDesign

Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award. He has worked on projects with the University of Pennsylvania, the Wharton Esherick Museum and Philagrafika. He is included in The Drawing Center's *Open Sessions* program, and has an upcoming residency at Philadelphia's RAIR. In 2013 he was awarded a prestigious residency at Yaddo artists' community. Selected exhibitions include: *There is still time*, Gallery MC, New York, NY; *Page 179*, *Artforum*, September 2013, Brennan and Griffin Gallery, New York, NY; *Broad Spectrum*, Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, Wilmington, DE; *In Front of Strangers, I Sing*, Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA; *Sugarcraft*, Kasia Kay Gallery, Chicago, IL; *Natural Selection, Philadelphia Selections*, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh, PA; and, *Live With It, Emerging to Established: 25 Years of the Center for Emerging Visual Arts*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA. His work is included in many public and private collections including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Yale University Library.

**Elizabeth Spungen**, The Print Center's Executive Director, is the curator of the exhibition. She received both a BA and MA in the History of Art from the University of Pennsylvania and previously worked at the Institute of Contemporary Art and The Fabric Workshop & Museum. At The Print Center she has overseen the curating and mounting of scores of exhibitions, and curated three major exhibitions: *Black Pulse 2000-2007: Doug + Mike Starn*, 2007; *Masao Yamamoto: space between sky and earth*, 2008; and *Robert Asman: Silver Mine*, 2011. Spungen has made numerous contributions to a wide variety of publications produced by the organizations with which she has been associated, including the recently published *The Picture that Remains*, photographs by Will Brown and poems by Thomas Devaney, 2014.

The exhibition will be on view at The Print Center from April 4 – June 7, 2014, from 11:00am-6:00pm Tuesdays-Saturdays, and is free and open to the public. The opening reception is Thursday, April 3 from 6:00-8:00pm with a gallery talk by Matt Neff and Elizabeth Spungen at 5:30pm.

*The Print Center supports printmaking and photography as vital contemporary arts and encourages the appreciation of the printed image in all its forms. The Print Center presents a variety of programs for the public including exhibitions; The Print Center Gallery Store, which offers the largest and most diverse selection of contemporary prints in Philadelphia; the longest running annual international competition for prints and photographs in the country; and an extensive series of education programs and special events.*