

March 5, 2014

Final weeks to see the Dog Star Exhibit! Demetrius Oliver: *Canicular* on view through March 22, 2014



PHILADELPHIA, PA.- For nearly 100 years, The Print Center has supported printmaking and photography as vital contemporary arts and encouraged the appreciation of the printed image in all its forms. Since January, ideas of form, function and appreciation have been challenged by *Canicular*, a major new exhibition by New York artist Demetrius Oliver. Hailed by The Philadelphia Inquirer as “an art speakeasy,” and by WHYY-FM as “an immersive installation that playfully blends the astronomical and the canine,” the exhibit is in its final weeks and will be on view nightly – weather permitting – through Saturday, March 22.

Curated by John Caperton, The Print Center’s Jensen Bryan Curator, the exhibition is a direct response to Caperton’s request for Oliver to think as expansively as possible about what constitutes a print, and reflects the artist’s longtime desire to create an installation requiring a radical shift in the typical functions of an organization and its gallery spaces. “This poetic and whimsical exhibition raises provocative questions about audience expectations of the gallery experience,” notes Paula Marincola, Executive Director of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. “We are pleased that we could support this new commission; it is yet more evidence of the richness and vibrancy of Philadelphia’s cultural offerings.”

Canicular includes a video installation that consists of a projected, live-feed from a high-power telescope focused on Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky. The video is projected in a round structure, built within one of The Print Center’s galleries, to resemble a small observatory. The live-feed comes from a telescope mounted on the

roof of The Franklin Institute, one of the oldest centers of science education and development in the United States. The exhibition also includes a related, multipart video installation and a sculptural telescope crafted from five-gallon paint buckets. The Print Center is working closely with Derrick Pitts, Chief Astronomer at The Franklin Institute, to make sure the stars will align for this exhibition – literally!

The term canicular is used to describe things pertaining to dogs, and is often used in reference to Sirius, the Dog Star. The converted galleries are only open for one hour each night to coincide with the rising of Sirius in the night sky. The Print Center's gallery spaces are not be open during regular hours but are only open from 7:00-8:00 p.m. (7:30-8:30 p.m. March 11 – 22 due to Daylight Savings). Tuesdays-Saturdays, weather permitting (clear skies are required for viewing). A sign featuring a photographic image of dog fur created by Oliver, visible from the street, is illuminated to announce when the exhibition is on view. An audio component, composed and performed by the artist on a dog whistle (and therefore inaudible to human ears), is also broadcast from the front of the building during viewing times.

Oliver has become known for creating elegant, improvisatory, site-specific installations using photography, sculpture and video. Many of his works have included celestial imagery, metaphorically linking the moon (which is associated with the metal silver) and the silver process of traditional photography. For each exhibition opportunity presented to him, the artist has created a new piece, moving gracefully between media; he is gradually building an increasingly complex and resonant body of work.

An accompanying publication includes essays by Michelle White, Curator, The Menil Collection, Houston, TX, and Caperton, and will be designed by Chad Kloepfer and Jeff Ramsey of Kloepfer-Ramsey in close collaboration with the artist. This will be the first book-length publication dedicated solely to Oliver. A number of related programs will also be presented by The Print Center, including an evening of readings by experimental writers interested in the links between science and culture curated by Temple University's Jena Osman; and a lecture by Derrick Pitts, Chief Astronomer of The Franklin Institute, on the lore and meaning of Sirius and other aspects of the night sky. The exhibition is on view at The Print Center from January 10 – March 22, 2014, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. (7:30-8:30 p.m. March 11 - 22) Tuesdays-Saturdays, and is free and open to the public.