

# SCIART IN AMERICA

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## Nocturnal Art: Demetrius Oliver's *Canicular*

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New York artist Demetrius Oliver is known for his elegant, site-specific installations using photography, sculpture and video. Often he explores celestial imagery, and his latest show at The Print Center in Philadelphia is no exception. *Canicular* is a unique installation that transforms the gallery space into a temporary observatory.

*Canicular* examines Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky. Sirius is also known as the “dog star” due to its inclusion in the Canis Major, or Greater Dog, constellation. Oliver cleverly references canines throughout his exhibition, adding playful humor to this celestial show.

What once was an art gallery is now a temporary observatory. The show is a direct response to curator John Caperton's request for Oliver to think as expansively as possible about what constitutes a print. The result also 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.

The center of the exhibition is a video installation that consists of a projected live-feed from a high-power telescope focused on the Sirius star. The telescope is mounted on the roof of the Franklin Institute, one of the oldest centers of science education and development in the United States. A round structure that resembles a small observatory is built within one of The Print Center's galleries and houses the projection. One can only enter the structure on hands and knees via a low, human-sized dog door.



During this exhibition, The Print Center's gallery spaces are only open from 7:00-8:00 pm Tuesdays-Saturdays to coincide with the rising of Sirius in the night sky, weather permitting (clear skies are required for viewing). A sign, visible from the street, is illuminated to announce when the exhibition is on view. In addition, a sound installation composed and performed by the artist on a dog whistle inaudibly beckons us to The Print Center's doors.

A related multipart video installation (*Diurnal* (2014)) and a sculptural telescope crafted from 5-gallon paint buckets (*Heliometric* (2014)) are also on view.

You can catch *Canicular* until March 22, 2014 at The Print Center on 1614 Latimer Street, Philadelphia, PA. Check their website for a listing of lectures, performances and readings happening alongside the exhibition.

