

The Print Center Announces Two Fall Exhibitions

Raque Ford: Where do I start?

and

Kat Richards: Shapes of Change

September 8 – November 11, 2023



(left to right) Raque Ford, *Restless words exist*, 2022, drypoint & watercolor monoprint, 46 ¾" x 30 ¾". Courtesy of the Artist and Greene Naftali, New York. Photo: Zeshan Ahmed; Kat Richards, *Close Ground*, 2018, monoprint, 46" x 34". Courtesy of the Artist

PHILADELPHIA, PA – The Print Center is pleased to announce two new exhibitions, ***Raque Ford: Where do I start?*** and ***Kat Richards: Shapes of Change***, on view September 8 – November 11, 2023, organized by guest curator Lauren Rosenblum. Both artists use the language of abstraction to explore issues of identity, personal experience and the human body. A Gallery Talk and Opening Reception will take place on Thursday, September 7, from 5:30 – 7:30pm.

In *Raque Ford: Where do I start?*, prints and sculptures featuring geometric forms, text and symbols reveal how identity is crafted from scraps of popular culture. The exhibition presents the full range of Ford's work, showing her capacity to think in an innovative way about print in multiple dimensions. *Kat Richards: Shapes of Change* includes six large-scale, abstract prints comprised of fragmented shapes that serve as metaphors for an ever-changing human body and the solace we find in ritual. The work

represents a fundamental aspect of the former Philadelphia-based artist's ongoing exploration into the boundlessness of gender and queerness.



(left to right) Raque Ford and master printer Justin Sanz at the EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop; Kat Richards at the Women's Studio Workshop. Photo: Eliza Clifford

Ford and Richards both work primarily with monoprinting, in which a variety of surfaces are printed upon to make unique artworks (as opposed to most printmaking processes that can produce multiple, identical works). Ford prints on colorful pieces of acrylic sheeting that remain after the sheets are cut to create her sculptures. These include small symbols and passages of text which she rearranges on the printing press and layers with additional sheets of paper. The resulting artworks are collage-like images of contemporary life. Richards' monoprints are derived from an index of shapes, used and reused to create a dense field of colorful forms that refer to the human body as well as everyday objects.

Raque Ford and Kat Richards are exemplary in their use of the monoprint process, which is otherwise uncommon among printmakers. Not only do they make technically exploratory prints, but their visual dynamism and social relevance is equally impactful.

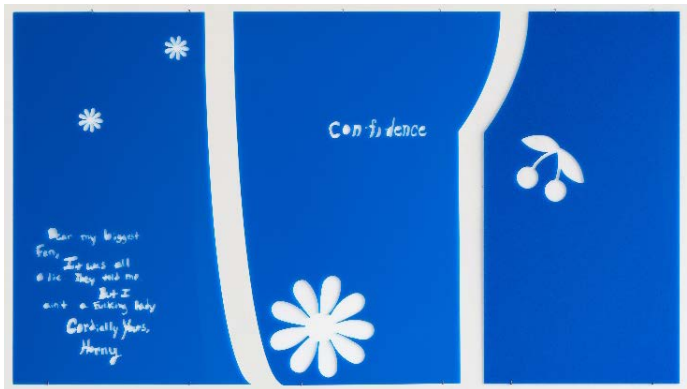
– Lauren Rosenblum, guest curator

Raque Ford: Where do I start?

Opening on September 8th in The Print Center's second floor galleries, *Where do I start?* is a comprehensive exhibition of monoprints and sculpture by Brooklyn-based **Raque Ford** (she/her). This is her first institutional solo show and the first to highlight the artist's innovative print works.

Ford juxtaposes icons of pop feminism, including peace signs, flowers, cherries and references to Beyoncé, with expressionistic gestures. She recalls the Minimalist pursuit of politicized abstraction, such

as Melvin Edwards's steel metal sculptures of the 1970s that evoke the racial politics of the civil rights movement, as well as Felix Gonzalez-Torres' go-go dancer platform from 1991, a work about collective expression during the AIDS crisis. Ford's exploration of language is evident in the lines of text physically cut into the sculptures and layered in the prints. These snippets, culled from her own poetry and diaries, along with found texts, make reference to her experiences as a Black woman.



Raque Ford, *Lady Confidence*, 2017, acrylic, 48" x 86". Courtesy of the Artist and Greene Naftali, New York. Photo: Zeshan Ahmed



Raque Ford, *Birthday shout out to some you hate*, 2022, drypoint & watercolor monoprint, 46 3/4" x 30 3/4". Courtesy of the artist and Greene Naftali, New York. Photo: Zeshan Ahmed

All of Ford's monoprints were made at the EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop in New York, the oldest and longest-running community print shop in the US. In 2018, Ford enjoyed a fellowship there, designed to immerse artists in the world of printmaking which led to an ongoing collaboration with the studio's master printer Justin Sanz. Ford's growing interest in exploring the potential of printmaking is revealed in her creation of increasingly layered images and the use of more complex techniques, such as the addition of the drypoint etching process, which requires hand-incising and selective inking.

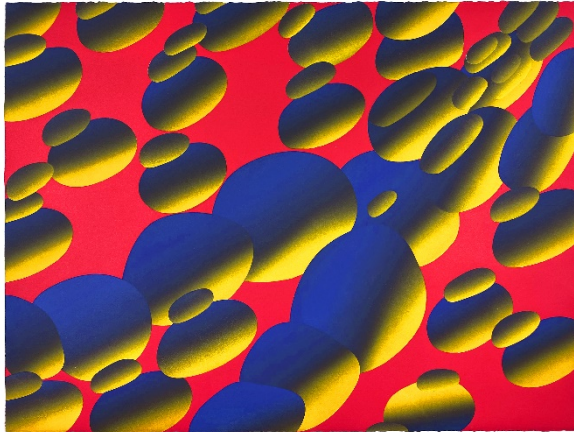
The exhibition includes four sculptures – three mounted on the wall and one suspended from the ceiling, made from various colors of Plexiglas. Ford is drawn to the visual dynamism of the colorful acrylic to which she applies non-traditional marks such as the scuff of shoes made by dancing on it, or which she manipulates by cutting with a jigsaw to clear away space for lines of poetry or decorative elements. The sheets of Plexiglas are continually repurposed:

moving from the floor to the wall, and from being the substrate (or matrix) from which to pull a print, into the actual artwork itself.

Kat Richards: Shapes of Change

On view in The Print Center's first floor gallery, **Kat Richards'** (they/them) *Shapes of Change* presents large-scale, flamboyant monoprints of uncanny forms saturated with color, including three new prints made for this exhibition.

Some of Richards' monoprints employ shape as metaphor for an ever-changing corporeal figure. The artist reconfigures the same shape to multiple ends; a form that suggests a leg or mouth can also represent a finger, nipple or foliage. In others, the abstract forms reference Richards' experiences as a self-described Trans-Queer person, commemorating moments of celebration and recognizing these moments as inextricable from those of solemnity.



(left to right) Kat Richards, *Flock*, 2020 and *Pull Through*, 2019, both monoprints, 22" x 30". Courtesy of the Artist

Richards utilizes a variety of techniques and tools from Photoshop, stenciling, rainbow rolls and handcutting to superimpose a digital visual language onto analog images. Their showcasing of distinctive color gradients retains the slight imperfections inevitable in handwork. Richards sees their use of print processes as an extension of their queerness, gender and body, analogizing the printing press as a theoretical, genderless prosthetic for reproduction, replacing the anatomical with its mechanical means.

My work is about queering the body, investigating new possibilities and different realities. Through a monoprint stencil technique, I reimagine the body by conceptualizing it in parts, using an index of abstract, fragmented shapes.

– Kat Richards

These two exhibitions will serve as the basis for The Print Center's fall 2023 [Artists-in-Schools Program](#) (AISP) curriculum and will be visited by more than 300 Philadelphia high school students on field trips. AISP is The Print Center's visual arts youth education program which provides semester-long classes, teaching-artists-in-residence, all course materials and field trips to 600 students annually, completely free of charge.

About the Artists + Curator

Raque Ford (Brooklyn, NY) received a BFA from Pratt Institute, New York and an MFA from Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts, New Brunswick, NJ. Recent solo exhibitions include 321 Gallery, Brooklyn; Good Weather, Chicago, IL; Greene Naftali and Shoot the Lobster, both New York, NY; and

CAPITAL, San Francisco, CA. Significant group shows include Albright Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY; MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY; and SculptureCenter, Queens, NY; as well as Morán Morán, Mexico City, Mexico; Division Gallery, Montreal, Canada; and Roberta Pelan, Toronto, Canada. Ford's work is in the collections of the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA and The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY. Ford is represented by Greene Naftali Gallery.



Raque Ford. Courtesy of the Artist and Greene Naftali, New York. Photo: Curtis Wallen

Kat Richards (Portland, OR) received a BFA from University Of Kansas, Lawrence and an MFA from Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA. They have been included in recent exhibitions



Kat Richards. Courtesy of the Artist. Photo: Alec Logan Smith

at The Momentary, Bentonville, AK; Charlotte Street Foundation, Kansas City, MO; Ladies Room Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; 550 Gallery, New York, NY; and Mount Analogue Gallery, Seattle, WA. Richards has been a visiting artist and taught at institutions including the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; University of Kansas, Lawrence; University of Nebraska-Lincoln; University of the Arts, Philadelphia; and Women's Studio Workshop, Rosendale, NY. Richards was a Semifinalist in The Print Center's 94th ANNUAL International Competition and is Assistant Professor of Art Practice in Printmaking at Portland State University School of Art and Design, Oregon. Richards is represented in The Print Center's Gallery Store.



Lauren Rosenblum

Lauren Rosenblum is an independent curator and doctoral candidate in art history at The Graduate Center, CUNY, with a specialization in modern and contemporary printmaking. She has held curatorial positions at the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; and Print Center New York, among other arts organizations and galleries.

The Print Center thanks EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, Good Weather Gallery, Chicago and Greene Naftali Gallery, NY for their support and loans to *Raque Ford: Where do I start?*

Programs

Gallery Talk & Opening Reception

Thursday, September 7, 2023

5:30pm Gallery Talk with Ford and Rosenblum

6 – 7:30pm Reception

Conversation with Raque Ford

Thursday, October 5, 6pm

In-person and on Zoom

Ford will be joined by Rosenblum and Justin Sanz, master printer, EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop

Artist Talk with Kat Richards

Thursday, November 9, 6pm

On Zoom

For more information and to register for Zoom, visit printcenter.org. All of The Print Center's exhibitions and programs are free and open to the public.

About the EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop

The Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, a program of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA RBPMW), is the oldest and longest-running community print shop in the United States. A cooperative printmaking workspace that provides professional-quality printmaking facilities to artists and printmakers of every skill level, EFA RBPMW is committed to inspiring and fostering its diverse artistic community. It is with this spirit of openness and inclusion that the vision of Robert Blackburn—the influential teacher, celebrated collaborator, and pioneering artist—is sustained in a welcoming, creative environment that continues to serve as the backbone of the workshop today.

About The Print Center

Mission

For more than a century, The Print Center has encouraged the growth and understanding of photography and printmaking as vital contemporary arts through exhibitions, publications and educational programs. The Print Center has an international voice and a strong sense of local purpose. Free and open to the public, it presents changing exhibitions, which highlight established and emerging, local, national and international contemporary artists. It mounts one of the oldest annual art competitions in the country, now in its 98th year, provides the Artists-in-Schools Program to Philadelphia public high school students and its Gallery Store offers a carefully selected array of contemporary prints and photographs onsite and online.

Funders

Support for The Print Center is offered by: Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation; Forman Family Fund; Sheila Fortune Foundation; Freeman's; Fund for Children; Harpo Foundation; Allen Hilles Fund; Phillip and Edith Leonian Foundation; Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation; Christopher Ludwick Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; William Penn Foundation; Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage; Philadelphia Cultural Fund; The Philadelphia Foundation; Rosenlund Family Foundation; University of the Arts; Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial; and our Board of Governors, Luminaries, members and friends.

