

Heather Hart - *She Cuts Through Worlds*

November 3 – December 22, 2022

Opening Reception | Thursday, November 3 | 5:30 – 7:30 pm



Davidson Gallery is proud to announce the opening of *She Cuts Through Worlds*, a solo exhibition by Heather Hart. Hart's work exists at the junction of art, architecture, performance, and theory. Hart addresses and challenges current and on-going socio-political, racial, and economic climates using space as her medium. The use of space and spaces is both a constructive, additive process, as well as a reclamation or a carving-out of area – convexity as a declaration of being. Hart's work implies the possible through architecture, using territories and thresholds as means to challenge our presumptions about our relationships with them.

Those relationships are the starting points for *She Cuts Through Worlds*. Hart looks at how we as people inhabit space, but also feel entitled to it, and how that contributes to identity and a sense of self. The first part of the exhibition concerns Spaces and, specifically, Black Spaces. Hart “quotes” shards of objects or built environments that are part of Black narratives, cultural touchstones and icons, creating a visual lexicon whose vocabulary includes Oprah's couch, Uhura's workstation, Carrie Mae Weems's kitchen, and the balcony of the Lorraine Motel among others. They are moments in time, but exist perpetually in collective consciousness and identity. The Spaces themselves juxtapose a collection of the 3D-printed “phrases”, resting them in and upon wooden structures, each tailored to the dialogue of Black Spaces they contain.

Additionally, Hart has included Fragments, sculptures that resemble shingled rooftops – reminiscent of her large-scale installations – that refer to liminality in all its manifold definitions. They are the space between the elements and the indoors, the transition from architecture to art, and a reconsideration of scale. Taking their titles from crystals, they connote growth and change, transformation, topography, and transmutation.

Upstairs in the gallery's top floor space, viewers arrive upon a larger rooftop pyramid outside on the terrace, visible through a large picture window. However, a handmade wall cuts the gallery space in two, directing us away from the sculpture to an opening that allows access to the outside. It is there that viewers are confronted by the wall once again, dividing the terrace itself. Light permeates the slats, but the sculpture is unreachable. On closer inspection the rooftop is an eight-sided star, a pattern from 19th-century quilting that represents the North Star – illumination, direction, freedom. That unattainable liberty in the form of a rooftop too small to live under creates an un-enterable shrine offering unusable asylum.

Heather Hart (b. Seattle, WA, lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) is an interdisciplinary artist exploring the power in thresholds, questioning dominant narratives, and creating alternatives to them. Hart's work has been exhibited at the Queens Museum, Storm King Art Center, Albright-Knox Museum, The Kohler Art Center, NCMA, Eastern Illinois University, Seattle Art Museum, Brooklyn Museum, University of Buffalo, and University of Toronto, Scarborough among others. She was awarded grants from Anonymous Was A Woman, the Graham Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, and the Jerome Foundation, NYFA, and Harpo Foundation. Hart co-founded Black Lunch Table in 2005 and has won a Creative Capital award, Wikimedia Foundation grants, an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant and an Andy Warhol Foundation of Art grant with that project. Hart is an Assistant Professor at Mason Gross School for Art + Design, a member of the Black Trustee Alliance for Art Museums, an external advisor for AUC Art Collective, and a trustee at Storm King Art Center. She studied at Skowhegan, Whitney ISP, Cornish College of the Arts, Princeton University and received her MFA from Rutgers University. Hart was a 2021-2022 Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. This is her first exhibition with Davidson Gallery.