

Kira Lynn Harris
Curated by Senga Nengudi

April 16 – May 23, 2009

(Opening reception Thursday, April 16, 6:00 – 8:00pm)

“Kira is able to capture the spatial, temporal aspects of light, directing its rhythm as it shimmers and gyrates onto walls and architectural surfaces, faces, bodies and objects. Even her drawings echo this shimmering use of light and reflective surfaces as meditations, intentionally disorienting the viewer to the point of needing a re-orientation to a new reality — disengaging from the known.”

—Senga Nengudi

Untitled (Pyramid) [detail], 2007
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, TX
Silver Mylar, plywood, light, gels
15' x 35' x 5'



New York-based artist Kira Lynn Harris masterfully manipulates the perception of space and place through her ethereal light installations and meditative drawings. Re-orienting the viewer’s observational equilibrium, the negotiation of the temporal qualities of light, atmosphere and perspective effectively de-stabilizes their pre-conceived approach to architectural structures. Each of her projects begins with an acute examination of the space and its location. Calling them “architectural and environmental interventions,” Harris often chooses to concentrate on transitional or overlooked areas, shifting the viewer’s focus from traditional points of view. Simple materials such as lighting gels, plywood and silver Mylar are employed sparingly to evoke a sense of mystery and otherness. Like the Science Fiction writers Harris admires, her fantastic environments transport the viewer to another realm, bringing into question their understanding of reality and in effect transforming their relationship with the world around them. Culling together interests in the

sublime, the infinite and speculative fiction, her installations and drawings all come together to present an awe-inspiring and self-reflective experience, always unique to the location and viewer.

Untitled (Pyramid) (above) was installed at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. Referencing the pyramidal shapes she found throughout the space and throughout the city, most prominently in the Museum’s façade and Barnett Newman’s nearby *Broken Obelisk*, a plywood pyramid was covered with Mylar and the room set aglow with fiery light, evoking a sunrise – the dawn of something spectacular. Much like a sunrise over calm water, it is difficult to distinguish where the wall ends and the floor begins. However, the work’s true form only arises through the viewer’s experience – as they become part of the installation themselves, disoriented and bathed in light. *Waterfall* (right) was installed in a basement stairwell at the P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center. Using only Mylar and controlled light, the stairs were transformed into a glowing, celestial entity. Harris’s installations and drawings alike enlist structural and geometric shapes to form abstracted, organic environments, culminating in novel and probing studies of traditional aesthetics.

On view at CUE Art Foundation, Harris’s first solo show in Manhattan, are visual manifestations of her various musings and interests. Included is a site-specific light installation centered on three of the gallery’s back walls, a selection of her drawings, video documentation of *Waterfall* and a perspective drawing that will run the entire length of one gallery wall.



Waterfall [detail], 2007
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, TX
Silver Mylar, plywood, light, gels
15' x 35' x 5'

(More, over)

For additional information, please contact Ryan Thomas, Programs Coordinator, CUE Art Foundation, 212-206-3583, or email ryan.thomas@cueartfoundation.org

This exhibition is supported in part by Materials for the Arts, NYC.

ARTIST'S BIO:

Kira Lynn Harris is a New York based artist whose minimalist work often posits an intersection of the formal concerns of space, light and the phenomenological with issues of individual subjectivity. Harris works in installation, drawing, photography and video and has had solo exhibitions at Bruno Marina Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, Wilmington, DE; and a site specific project on extended view at P.S. 1 / the MoMA, New York, NY. She was an artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; the Center for Photography, Woodstock, NY; Omi International Art Center, Columbia County, NY; and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, New York, NY. Harris has won several awards including a 2003 artist-in-residence (video production grant) from Harvestworks, New York, NY; *California Arts Council Artist in Residence* grants, Sacramento, CA; and the *1998 Lorser Feitelson Emerging Artist* award. Harris has been exhibiting her art widely in the past several years; her work has been shown in galleries and museums in California, New York, Miami, Texas, Washington, D.C. and Italy. Her work has been favorably reviewed in *The New York Times*, *Flash Art*, *Time Out New York*, *zingmagazine*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Artweek* and *LA Weekly*. She is a graduate of the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA and completed the Whitney Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum, New York, NY in 1999. This exhibition at CUE marks Harris' first solo show in New York City.

About CUE:

CUE Art Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit forum for contemporary art and cultural exchange that provides opportunities and resources for under-recognized artists. We value the astonishing diversity of creativity that artists provide and the importance of their activity in the social context of the city.

CUE provides artists, students, scholars and art professionals resources at many stages of their careers and creative lives. Our programs include exhibitions, studio residencies, publications, professional development seminars, educational outreach, symposia, readings, concerts and performances. Since 2002, we have operated from our 4,500 square foot storefront venue in the heart of New York's Chelsea Arts District.

CUE exhibiting artists are chosen by their peers and a rotating group of advisors and curators from across the country. This pluralistic process ensures that CUE consistently offers diverse viewpoints from multiple disciplines of artistic practice.

Simply put, we give artists their CUE to take center stage in the challenging world of art.

Major program support is provided by The Accademia Charitable Foundation, Ltd., The Viking Foundation, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, The Greenwall Foundation, The Foundation for Contemporary Arts, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., The Joan Mitchell Foundation, Holland & Knight Charitable Foundation, Inc., Milton & Sally Avery Arts Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts (a State Agency).

