

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 1, 2019



University Galleries of Illinois State University is pleased to present *Katie Bell: Standing Arrangement* from May 31 through August 4, 2019.

- May 27 through May 31: Katie Bell's Instagram takeover
- Friday, May 31, from 5 to 7pm: Opening reception
- May 31 through August 4: *Katie Bell: Informal Unbalanced Arrangements* at Milner Library
- June 3 through August 2: curator-led tours and workshops available by appointment

Standing Arrangement is an expansive site-specific installation by Brooklyn-based artist Katie Bell. The work explores our natural and fabricated visual landscape and deconstructs the tradition and language of painting. Bell collects objects and ready-made materials from the place in which she is producing the work, in this case, Bloomington-Normal and the surrounding vicinity. Her careful selection of discarded (and occasionally purchased) materials—wood, paint, foam board, rope, cabinets, drywall, and even forgotten hot tubs—become marks in Bell's dynamic compositions. KT Hawbaker of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote that "Bell's sculptural paintings are the product of creative recycling...inventing new uses for the detritus she scavenges and then deftly mixing in subdued deliberate colors." Some objects jut out from the wall, shattering the picture plane, while other three-dimensional elements are scattered on the floor, interrupting the regular flow of the space. Bell acknowledges that "these objects/materials become the language and the vocabulary for the standing arrangement," the quote from which the exhibition's title was derived. While the act of painting is used predominantly to visually connect the objects, Bell's background in painting plays a significant role in the aesthetics and conversation surrounding her work.

Tearing down and building anew is a familiar process to the artist. Born and raised in Rockford, Illinois—home to many factories that produce screws, bolts, and fasteners—Bell's 1876 family home was constantly under construction. Her parents, an interior designer and a historical home preservationist, have been working on the home since they purchased it three decades ago. Although Victorian-era aesthetics do not appear in Bell's work, her upbringing has, without a doubt, guided her artistic practice. Like the home, her practice is in continuous flux, oscillating between sculpting, painting, building, collecting, adding, removing, mending, and breaking. The arrangement of segmented materials in her installations, while familiar, become quite unrecognizable when removed from their original context. Often, the materials Bell chooses have been designed to create a sense of wealth; faux marble countertops, shimmering pebbled hot tub liners, and pristine white foam Ionic columns all challenge the purpose, and hopeful grandiosity, of the materials. The artificial richness of her work is theatrical as it explodes from the walls, floor, and windows of the gallery, unified by a muted color palette that is often associated with a calm and collected domestic space.

Bell will take over University Galleries' Instagram account during the week she will be installing her exhibition. She will document her process of collecting materials in Bloomington-Normal, paying particular attention to inspirations for colors and materials along the way. Follow along on Instagram at @universitygalleriesisu and watch for her hashtag #KatieBellTakeover.

University Galleries is collaborating with Illinois State University's Milner Library to present *Informal Unbalanced Arrangements*, a concurrent exhibition comprised of three paintings by Katie Bell and a selection of related art publications. The exhibition will be on view on the sixth floor.

All events are free and open to the public. Contact gallery@ilstu.edu or 309.438.5487 to schedule exhibition tours.

Bell's work has been exhibited at: Smack Mellon, Brooklyn; Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, New Hampshire; Penn State University; Locust Projects, Miami; Harper College, Chicago;

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Mixed Greens, New York; and Terrault Contemporary, Baltimore, among others. Bell was awarded the Saint-Gaudens Memorial Fellowship in 2016 at the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire, and was a 2015 recipient of a Painting Fellowship by the New York Foundation for the Arts. She has been a visiting artist and critic at: University of North Texas, Denton; Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; Penn State University; and University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury, UK, among others. Her work has been published in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Artnet*, *Two Coats of Paint*, *Maake Magazine*, and *Art F City*. She received her MFA at Rhode Island School of Design and her BA at Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois. Bell currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Katie Bell: Standing Arrangement is organized by University Galleries' Curator Jessica Bingham. The exhibition and programming are sponsored in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Events

- **May 27 through May 31**
Katie Bell's Instagram takeover. Follow University Galleries' Instagram account at @universitygalleriesisu.
- **Friday, May 31, from 5 to 7pm**
Public reception with the artist
- **May 31 through August 4**
Exhibition of paintings at Milner Library titled *Katie Bell: Informal Unbalanced Arrangements*, and a selection of publications from Milner's Collection about found-object artwork and sculptural paintings.
- **June 3 through August 2**
Free curator-led tours and workshops are available by appointment throughout the exhibition. Contact gallery@ilstu.edu or 309.438.5487.

University Galleries is located at Uptown Station at the corner of Beaufort and Broadway streets. Parking is available directly above in the Uptown Station parking deck, and the first hour is free, as well as any time after 5:01pm. If you need special accommodations to participate in any event, please contact University Galleries at 309.438.5487 or gallery@IllinoisState.edu. All events at University Galleries are free and open to the public.

For more information, visit galleries.IllinoisState.edu or call 309.438.5487. Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Sign up to receive emails by clicking the Newsletter link on our website.