

Institute of Contemporary University Art of Pennsylvania

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NEWS RELEASE

ARTIST KARA SPRINGER MOUNTS NEW INSTALLATION IN ICA'S RAMP SPACE

FEBRUARY 8, 2017

PHILADELPHIA, PA

The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania is pleased to announce a new temporary installation, *A Small Matter of Engineering, Part II* by the artist Kara Springer in the museum's ramp space.

A previous iteration of the sculpture was first installed in September 2016 in a public courtyard at Temple University as part of Springer's second-year MFA coursework. The piece, initially rendered in handpainted fabric on woodframe, reads "white people. do something." The phrase arose during a performance by the collective Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter—of which Springer is a member—at the New Museum in New York City in September 2016.

Springer has shifted the material makeup of *A Small Matter of Engineering, Part II* in its presentation in ICA's ramp space to white marble dust lettering on black paint. In this move toward more fragile materials, Springer envisions the piece changing or deteriorating throughout its time at ICA. Its street-facing installation at ICA is less immediately visible or confrontational than its presentation at Tyler, but engenders an interaction with a public audience in similar ways.

"Inviting Kara to install *A Small Matter of Engineering* here at ICA is in some ways a response to our rapidly changing sociopolitical climate," says Maori Karmael Holmes, Director of Public Engagement and the organizer of the project. "In September, the piece felt like a response to police brutality and then after the presidential election took on a whole new meaning. Kara is deeply invested in the tradition and aesthetics of text in public space—as are many of the artists in *The Freedom Principle*. Her work provides a wonderful complement to the exhibition and stands on its own."



Kara Springer installing *A Small Matter of Engineering, Part II* on ICA's ramp space.
Photo: David McDowell.

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The piece was installed at ICA in late January alongside ICA's presentation of *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now*, an exhibition that highlights the vibrant legacy of avant-garde jazz and experimental music of the late 1960s (particularly within the African American arts scene on the South Side of Chicago) and its continuing influence on contemporary art and culture today. Both *The Freedom Principle* and *A Small Matter of Engineering, Part II* will be on view at ICA through March 19, 2017.

Kara Springer is a visual artist and industrial designer. Of Jamaican and Bajan heritage, she was born in Barbados and grew up in Southern Ontario, Canada. Her interdisciplinary practice explores precarity and brokenness in systems of structural support through engagement with architecture, urban infrastructure, and systems of institutional and political power. Her work has been exhibited at the Frankfurt Museum of Applied Arts in Germany, the Politecnico di Torino in Italy, the Cultural Center of Belem in Portugal, and in the 2014 Jamaica Biennial.

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania believes in the power of art and artists to inform and inspire. The ICA is free for all to engage and connect with the art of our time.

For fifty years, ICA has served as a laboratory for the new, introducing and supporting the production of urgent and important contemporary art. ICA's inaugural show of paintings by Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still in 1963, followed by the first museum show of works by Andy Warhol in 1965, established the museum's reputation for organizing exhibitions of important but under-recognized artists. ICA has been instrumental in identifying and developing many promising artists before they attained prominence within the international art world, some of whom include—in addition to Warhol—Laurie Anderson, Richard Artschwager, Vija Celmins, Karen Kilimnik, Barry Le Va, Glenn Ligon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Agnes Martin, Pepón Osorio, Tavares Strachan, and Cy Twombly.

ICA is a place to encounter art that urgently needs to be seen. Our curators seek work that illuminates our contemporary moment; that challenges us to think in new ways. New ideas and free exchange flourish, as they should, at this university art museum. Come to ICA with high expectations—for us and the work we present, but also for yourself. Engage with what is difficult and daring! A work of art has the power to transform people and, through people, the world. We do our work with this goal: that the art you experience at ICA will change the way you see and think about the world.