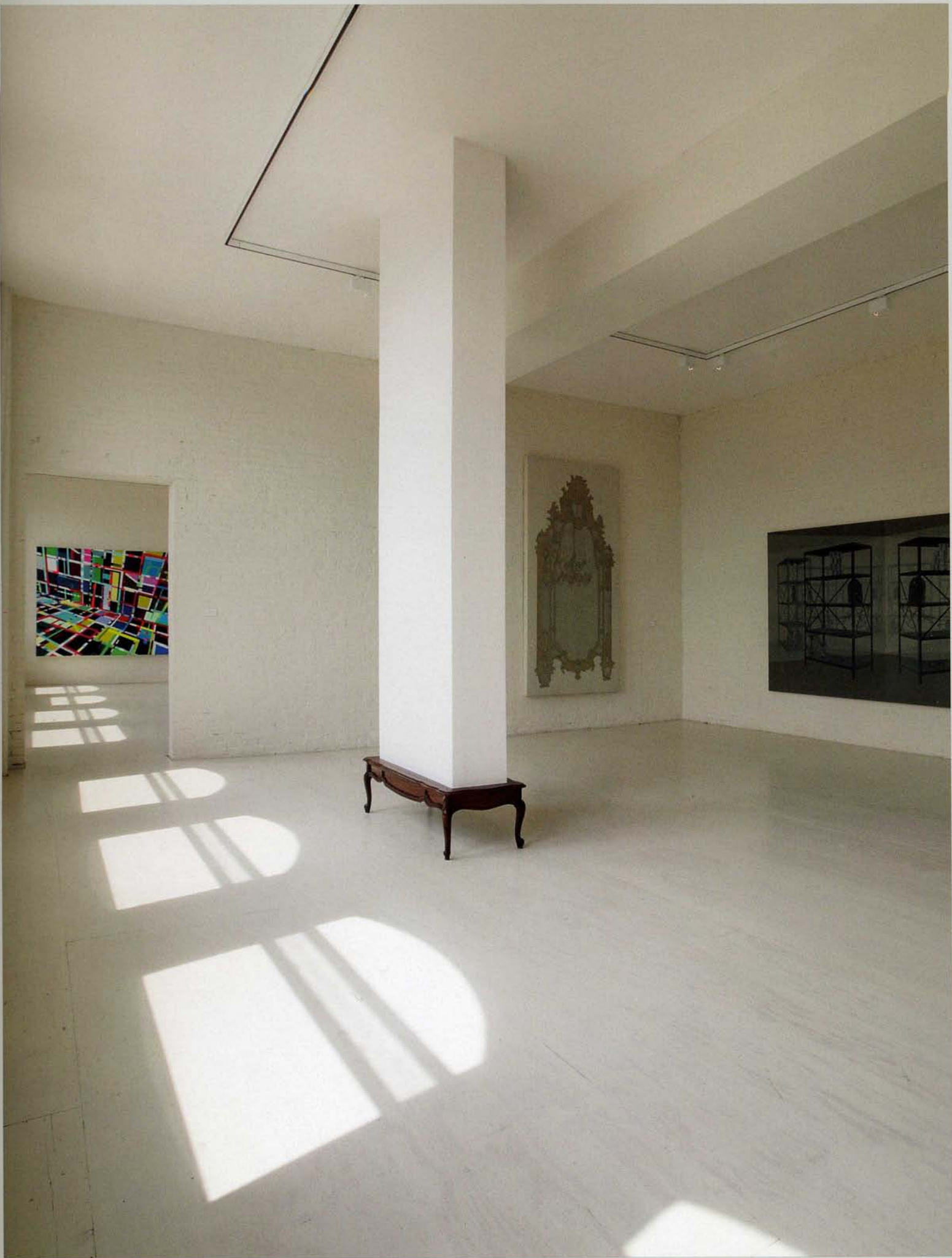


GREATER

NEW

YORK



Karyn Olivier

Born in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 1968. Lives in Brooklyn and works in New York.

Karyn Olivier's site-specific sculptures challenge viewers' powers of perception, testing the limitations of what individuals are able to absorb from their surroundings through casual observation of and informal interaction with their environment. The artist is also adept at interchanging architectural forms with more traditional objects to create intimate, interactive spaces within traditionally public settings. These spaces often function as temporary respites from reality and the stresses of daily life.

The dichotomy between interior and exterior spaces, prevalent in Olivier's work, reflects the artist's desire to offer her audience temporary access to a private space for self-reflection and contemplation. In addition, nostalgia and memory are prevalent themes throughout her work. Olivier wittily incorporates the particular attributes of a given setting into her sculptures and installations, conflating notions of the public and the private, the utilitarian and the superfluous.

Untitled (Coffee Table) (2005) confronts these issues on many levels. In this piece, instead of using a specific site as her subject, the artist incorporates a found object into the surrounding space, situating a coffee table in the center of the room and anchoring it in position by placing a column on its surface that stretches to the ceiling. Traditionally, coffee tables are indispensable living room accessories, common fixtures in the most public of one's personal quarters. Additionally, coffee tables are usually the site of social interaction. Olivier's table—in which a large column sprouts out of the tabletop, connecting with the ceiling—provokes a kind of anxiety in the viewer, as this alteration removes any semblance of accessibility or traditional utility. Subsequently, any form of communication across this table is rendered impossible and its primary function is negated. Only a slim ledge remains accessible around the outer perimeter of the table surface, too narrow for anything to be safely rested upon it. These changes redefine the object as a structural element of the room, emphasizing its relationship to the surrounding architecture and, in the process, evoking the connection of the body to its environment.

Michelle Yun

Selected Exhibitions:

- 2005 *Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art since 1970*. Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas.
- 2004 *Billboard Project*. Project Row Houses, Houston, Texas (solo).
In Practice Series. SculptureCenter, Long Island City, New York.
Emerging Artists Fellowship Exhibition. Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, New York.
- 2003 *Bench (seating for one)*, Feldman Gallery, Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, Oregon (solo).

Selected Publications:

- 2004 *Houston Area Exhibition*. Houston, Texas: Blaffer Gallery, The Art Museum of the University of Houston.
- 2003 *Core 2003*. Houston, Texas: The Glassell School of Art of the Museum of Fine Arts.
- 2002 *Core Yearbook*. Houston, Texas: The Glassell School of Art of the Museum of Fine Arts.



