

## **New Hood Downtown Exhibition Space Opens with Work of Contemporary French Photographer**



Hanover, N.H.—August 17, 2016—The Hood Downtown exhibition space, the latest initiative of the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth, is bringing the world to Hanover. The program for this new addition to Main Street will feature artists working in the field of “global contemporary art,” which grows more exciting every day as curators, institutions, and the arts media embrace the brilliant artists and art centers all over the world. These artists themselves are increasingly working on a global stage, showing on different continents in widely divergent venues such as exhibition spaces, commercial galleries, art fairs, various biennials and triennials, contemporary art centers, and art museums. Hood Downtown will make Hanover a stop on this international circuit.

This marks a new chapter in the Hood Museum of Art’s history. Over the course of the museum’s closure for expansion and renovation, Hood Downtown will host ten exhibitions. Current plans start with a series of one-person shows, featuring one artist for one term each, to be followed by more thematic exhibitions, including an exploration of current sound art; artists and protest; artists working in new media; and art addressing the concept of the “Anthropocene.” Finally, as Hood staff prepares to reopen the main museum in early 2019, the Hood Downtown exhibitions will set the stage for the thinking behind the reinstallation of the museum’s new galleries.

The inaugural exhibition at the Hood Downtown exhibition space will feature the work of a remarkable contemporary French photographer. *Laetitia Soulier: The Fractal Architectures* will run from September 16 through December 11, 2016, with a series of opening events for members, Dartmouth students, and the public on September 15–17, as well as related adult and family workshops over the course of the exhibition. A full-color illustrated booklet accompanies each Hood Downtown exhibition and will be available free of charge.

Hood Museum of Art director John Stomberg curated the exhibition and remarks, “Soulier’s photographs evoke a world rich in narrative possibility of the marvelous sort. Each work is an incomplete story—an open book with one page showing. Viewers are given the setting and a glimpse of the action, and the rest is up to the imagination.”

Laetitia Soulier bases her images and sculptures on the idea of fractal geometry, where each area has a direct scale relationship to the other—understanding a fraction of the

world she creates implies comprehension of the whole. Of course, she enjoys simultaneously breaking these rules in her images with the addition of people, whose presence defies logical scale relations. In this way, her work mixes logic and magic seamlessly, in a manner consistent with a certain stage in childhood development.

Soulier observes, “My work plays with the idea that photographic images are constructs. These multi-scale architectural models are visual mazes or visual paradoxes. They are kaleidoscopic environments that disrupt our perspective and question our perception of reality. I want viewers to look at my photographs and wonder what they are looking at and how it was made. Through the combination of two- and three-dimensional media and the multiple shifts in scale and perspective, I seek to challenge and expand our subjective experience of reality.”

To achieve her effects, Soulier builds carefully handcrafted models that are stages for the single lens of a camera. For each photograph she creates an entire universe. For each series of photographs—*The Matryoshka Dolls* and *The Square Roots*—the visual themes are constant, and many of the furniture pieces are reused, but the set is remade for each individual image. Despite laboring over the models for months, she still applies post-production to her work as well, to merge the various elements we see, and especially to get the lighting the way she wants it. Soulier moves effortlessly, and without prejudice, between the tools of the hand and those offered by the computer—between pliers and Photoshop.

More recently, she has created sculptures that replicate the worlds of each series. These are not the exact models used to make the photographs (those were open sets that lent themselves to the frontality of photography). These are fresh constructions that evoke the same wonder as the photographs but in a three-dimensional realm. Together, her photographs and sculptures present a world where science and mystery coexist, where the ordinary and extraordinary are equally revelatory.

*This exhibition was organized by the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth, and generously supported by the Charles Gilman Family Endowment.*

#### **About Hood Downtown**

During the interval of the Hood Museum of Art’s construction and reinstallation, Hood Downtown, located at 53 Main Street, Hanover, NH, will present an ambitious series of exhibitions featuring contemporary artists from around the world. Many of these works by a diverse group of artists will be on view in Hanover for the first time. Like the museum, Hood Downtown will be free and open to the public.

## *Laetitia Soulier: The Fractal Architectures*



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### **About the Hood Museum of Art**

The mission of the Hood Museum of Art, as a teaching museum, is to create an ideal learning environment that fosters transformative encounters with works of art. This dynamic educational and cultural facility houses one of the oldest and largest college collections in the country, with more than 70,000 objects acquired since 1772. Among its most important works are six Assyrian stone reliefs that date from around 900 BCE. The collection also presents art from other ancient cultures, the Americas, Europe, Africa, Papua New Guinea, and many more regions of the world. The Hood seeks to inspire and educate through direct engagement with original works of art and offers access to the rich diversity of its collections through ongoing highlights displays, special exhibitions, an online collections database, and a wide array of programs and events. The museum is presently closed for expansion and renovation work that is anticipated to end in early 2019.

### **About Dartmouth**

Founded in 1769, Dartmouth is a member of the Ivy League and consistently ranks among the world's greatest colleges and universities. Dartmouth has forged a singular identity for combining its deep commitment to outstanding undergraduate liberal arts and graduate and professional education with distinguished research and scholarship in the arts and sciences and its three leading professional schools—the Geisel School of Medicine, Thayer School of Engineering, and the Tuck School of Business.

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**Image caption:** Laetitia Soulier, *The Matryoshka Dolls 2*, from the series titled *The Fractal Architectures*, 2011, C-print. Courtesy of Claire Oliver Gallery and the artist.  
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