

MCA CHICAGO PLAZA PROJECT

Amanda Ross-Ho (American, b. 1975) *THE CHARACTER AND SHAPE OF ILLUMINATED THINGS*, 2013

Fiberglass, steel, foam, resin, paint, and mixed media
Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Commission

How we see and experience the world is reflected through the use of cameras. Amanda Ross-Ho’s first outdoor public art project, *THE CHARACTER AND SHAPE OF ILLUMINATED THINGS*, considers this relationship between photography and the act of looking—whether at artworks or other spectacles. The exhibition is titled after a chapter in an instructional handbook published in 1980 called *How to Control and Use Photographic Lighting*, which includes several images of a still life composed of three objects—a cube, a sphere, and a mannequin’s head. The manual demonstrates how light affects the appearance of objects in a photograph. For her MCA Chicago Plaza Project, Ross-Ho faithfully re-creates this still life at a monolithic scale, alongside a large-scale sculpture of a calibration card, the guide that is used to adjust color during the final printing process. By including this card—which is usually cropped out of finished photographs—Ross-Ho presents an image that is self-consciously “contaminated.”

Amanda Ross-Ho was born in Chicago in 1975 and lives and works in Los Angeles. The child of two photographers, she spent her formative years in a photo studio, and this personal history informs much of her artwork. Public art today is often experienced through the lens of a camera, and Ross-Ho deliberately considers her sculptures as photographic subjects, actively seeking to make viewers aware of their role as photographers. In her hands, the plaza is transformed into an enormous studio, with objects on display for the purpose of being photographed. The sun provides a shifting source of light, affecting both how the objects appear to the naked eye as well as how they appear in photographs.

The sculptures are temporary and the final result of this project will be photographs, thus returning to the original source image. We encourage you to post your images of the sculptures on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, or Twitter (#ILLUMINATEDTHINGS) and to e-mail them to the artist at illuminatedthings.mca@gmail.com.

THE CHARACTER AND SHAPE OF ILLUMINATED THINGS is the third iteration of the MCA Chicago Plaza Project, which has previously featured work by Mark Handforth (2011) and Martin Creed (2012). This exhibition is organized by Julie Rodrigues Widholm, Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

To see the original source images, visit www.mcachicago.org/plazaproject.

Lead support for Amanda Ross-Ho: *THE CHARACTER AND SHAPE OF ILLUMINATED THINGS* is provided by Anne Kaplan.

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 To hear the artist’s perspective and see the work being installed, scan the QR code here.

 To hear about the inspirations and origins of Amanda Ross-Ho’s project, call 312.635.2274 #101

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