Imagine Salim Green’s artworks as a collection of nodes scattered across the United States quietly pinging each other. One lights up in New York; another responds in Los Angeles or Iowa. They signal affinities and connect at frequencies that don’t get picked up, or can’t totally be read, by those who might be listening in. One can imagine Green’s array of materials and locations plotted on a map or in a list, but it may be better to think of the project as a spread-out repository of interconnected information, always accessed incompletely and discreetly, but indicative of a larger consciousness or discourse in development below the radar.

Central to Green’s work is an engagement with “Dark Forest Theory,” a speculative idea that interplanetary civilizations hide from each other for self-preservation in order to prevent open conflict for resources. The theory assumes that extraterrestrials are out there, and tries to explain why they haven’t revealed themselves to Earth yet. Using this concept as a model for relational politics and for Black experience, Green’s work assumes the metaphorical position of hiding—from surveillance, from the anxieties of others, from attempted domination, from the state, from overreaching publicity and visibility. His art is a meta-commentary on working methods, but also takes those conditions and circumstances as its content, asking what artistic media, forms, images, and interventions should be used to talk about hiding out, or about partial disclosure.

Green’s project starts from the model of a book (a form that can compile, contain, sequence, and collage disparate elements) and expands to include sites, people, sculpture, painting, video, audio, business cards, banners, and websites, all linked. In collaboration with many other semi-anonymous contributors, he has primarily produced a wealth of literary and artistic material to consider in Dark Forest Theory, an artist book in an edition of 10, each encased in an aluminum box, that synthesizes imagery and texts. It includes emails with other artists about the implications of Dark Forest Theory, an essay entitled “The Loophole of Critique: Provisional Notes on Black Evasion,” among many other entries, photo collages, and writings. At SculptureCenter, the book is paired with a video work addressing family and violence, an outdoor installation of white pennant banners that serve both as a canopy and a means of visual interference within SculptureCenter’s courtyard, vinyl signage, and a soundscape composed with Teo Halm and in collaboration with a host of participants including friends, family, and the Newark Boys Chorus School.

The project also exists elsewhere, in combinations of works that sometimes include a copy of the publication and sometimes do not. Green’s selected locations necessitate different means of access, some by interfacing formally with higher education institutions (places of instruction feature somewhat prominently on Green’s map), others by
visiting a laundromat or a rooftop farm, or incidentally finding a poster in a deli in Los Angeles. Moving across media and formats, Green makes artworks that find their homes in different contexts: in May, he installed and donated two of his paintings to a church in Waterloo, Iowa, and earlier in June he started advertising a *Dark Forest Theory* call-in number (718 717 2417) with business cards on car windows.

Green’s work operates on an assumption that an exhibition or a display of art cannot be read as a complete statement for a general audience. Instead, his project offers varied, hyper-contextual points of communication, asking viewers within and outside of art spaces to connect language to image, medium, and place, and to experience how “both hiding and evangelizing” (in the words of one anonymous contributor to the book) can produce public discourse. To pluck out or name fragments of the work is to give undue attention to single aspects of a big project—but the inevitability of a shifting focus, and what possibilities open up when focus shifts away, is part of the point.

WWW.DARKFORESTTHEORY.COM
Works in the Exhibition

Entrance

Courtyard

In Practice: Salim Green

Edgar Calel: B’alab’aj (Jaguar Stone)

Ground Floor Plan
Dark Forest Theory, 2023
Softcover, exposed smyth sewn binding, hole, aluminum case
266 pages; 8.5 x 10.5 inches
#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10

SculptureCenter

1 DFT #1
2 DFT #8
3 DFT #9
4 Initiation #1, 2023
Pennant banners
Dimensions variable

Performance by Kevin Holliday, Jun 29, 2023

5 Start/End #1, 2023
Audio installation
20:22 minutes
In collaboration with Teo Halm

6 Nax Steel’s Halloween, 2022
Super 8 film (digitized)
12:55 minutes

7 Suit Jacket #4, 2022
Tar and my father’s suit jacket
39 x 28.5 inches
(99.06 x 72.39 cm)

8 718 717 2417, SculptureCenter, 2023
Vinyl banner, synchronized removal
84 x 60 inches
(213.4 x 152.4 cm)
In collaboration with FREEWAY

Eagle Street Rooftop Farm
44 Eagle St, Brooklyn, NY 11222
Jun 30 and Jul 21, 2023,
9am–12pm, or by appointment.
Contact: growingchefs@gmail.com

DFT #2

Stuy Wash N Dry
411 Tompkins Avenue, Brooklyn,
New York 11216
7am–8pm daily

DFT #3

Easter in Waterloo, 2022
Super 8 film (digitized)
14:30 minutes

DFT #4

Temple University Libraries
Special Collections Research Center
1900 N 13th St, Philadelphia, PA 19122
By appointment, 8:30am–5:30pm daily
Register: https://temple.aeon.atlas-sys.com/
Wesleyan University  
Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery  
283 Washington Terrace,  
Middletown, CT, 06459
Enter the first floor lobby. Open the door on the left and take the stairs down one flight into the tunnels. Follow the sounds.
By appointment, 9:30am–5pm, Mon–Thurs
Contact: bchaffee@wesleyan.edu

Start/End #1, 2023
Audio installation
In collaboration with Teo Halm

Payne Memorial AME Church  
1044 Mobile Street, Waterloo,  
Iowa, 50703
11am–5pm Daily

For Payne AME #1, 2023
Oil on burlap
53.5 x 78 inches
(135.9 x 198.1 cm)

For Payne AME #2, 2023
Oil on burlap
55 x 77 inches
(139.7 x 195.6 cm)

Jerry’s Market  
3969 Higuera Street, Culver City,  
CA, 90232
8am–8pm, Mon–Sat

Attached to Salim’s Bike
DFT #7

Los Angeles
718 717 2417, Undisclosed Location, 2023
Vinyl banner, synchronized removal
84 x 60 inches
(213.4 x 152.4 cm)
In collaboration with FREEWAY

Unassigned
DFT #10

Poster by Jay Curry
46.5 x 30.5 inches
(118.1 x 77.5 cm)
CALL HOME: (718) 717 2417
WWW.DARKFORESTTHEORY.COM
On View Concurrently

Édgar Calel: B’alab’äj (Jaguar Stone)
May 11–Aug 7, 2023

CFGNY in Residence
Jun 3–Aug 7, 2023

In Practice: Salim Green
Jun 29–Aug 7, 2023

About In Practice

In Practice 2023 marks the twentieth anniversary of SculptureCenter’s signature open call program for artists, and the first year of a new format for the program. Our new format generates a yearlong series of solo presentations and provides more substantial financial and production support to artists who have not yet had an institutional exhibition in New York City.

SculptureCenter is a not-for-profit arts institution that takes the history and legacy of sculpture as a framework from which to consider the diverse activity taking place in the field of contemporary art. SculptureCenter’s program encourages artists and audiences to explore the possibilities of sculpture and the multifarious ways in which sculpture is developing and connecting to other forms of expression, including installation, video, performance, architecture, and other media.

Since 2003, SculptureCenter’s In Practice open call program has supported the production of new work by 250 artists.
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<tr>
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In Practice 2023 is organized by the SculptureCenter curatorial team.

*In Practice: Salim Green* is curated by Kyle Dancewicz, Deputy Director, and Christopher Aque, Exhibition and Program Manager.

**Sponsors**

In Practice 2023 is made possible by the generosity of the Elaine Graham Weitzen Foundation for Fine Arts. The Foundation’s support for SculptureCenter’s annual open call exhibition reflects Elaine Graham Weitzen’s (1920-2017) lifelong commitment to emerging artists and her exuberant support of new ideas in art. Weitzen served as a devoted Trustee of SculptureCenter from 1987 to 2017.

Major support for the In Practice program is provided by the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. In Practice is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.