**PRESS RELEASE**

**CATHIE BLECK :: “Avance” :: Firecat Projects :: ARTIST RECEPTION : Fri Aug 28th 7-9p Artist in Attendance ARTIST TALK : Fri Sept 18th at 7p** :: Firecat Projects : 2124 N. Damen Ave. Chicago, IL 60647 Contact : Stan Klein 773-342-5381, info@firecatprojects.org Exhibition Run : Aug 28 through Sept 19 Hours : M-Sat 10a – 4p and by appointment, <http://www.firecatprojects.org>

Cleveland artist Cathie Bleck returns to Chicago for her third solo exhibition presenting a new collection of over thirty paintings, journals and stone lithographs as part of an ongoing series exploring the vulnerable nature of the human spirit and its immense resilience in the face of adversity. Bleck investigates those moments when we ask, “Now what? What will be? What will I do?  When will it happen?"  In her largest work, 48” x 90”, mythic characters emerge within dimensional white snow mound patterns. In contrast, the majority of Bleck’s works in “Avance” are dark. Bleck explains, “The light in these compositions is always moving the viewer in some direction. I think of the shadows as a kind of poetry that reaches into our subconscious, providing a transitory space between the dark and light areas. Darkness heightens our sense of awareness because you have to strain "to see-to touch-to hear-to feel" darkness.  Light, however, is our greatest source in seeking a direction.  Yet we cannot have one without the other, because the symbiotic duality between light and darkness is how we encounter our fears and continue to move forward.”

As a young girl Cathie Bleck grew up on her grandfathers tree nursery, now a forest preserve in northern Illinois where she became rooted in nature. Bleck is best known for her distinctive works in scratchboard and kaolin clay board. In a process similar in concept to woodblock printing, her stylized forms are carved into intricate detail, using razor sharp tools, employing wiping techniques, and removing the lacquered inks that reveal the white of the clay beneath.

Bleck’s work was featured in two solo museum exhibitions in 2008—The New Britain Museum of American Art in Connecticut and The Butler Museum in Ohio—following the Chicago release of her artist monograph “Open Spaces”, launching her studio artwork into the gallery and museum world after a successful career as an illustrator. She began her career in 1978 as the first woman illustrator for the Chicago Tribune and created the Earth Day and World Ocean Day images for the U.S. State Dept. Recent commissions include a large-scale permanent installation on permanent view at Chapter 24 Vineyards in Oregon and the release of her fourth U.S. Postage Stamp. Her artwork was chosen for the Poetry Foundation’s 100th Anniversary celebration and featured in Juxtapoz and Hi Fructose magazines.

 [**www.cathiebleck.com**](http://www.cathiebleck.com)