Kenya (Robinson) is a community-taught artist from Gainesville, FL. A past resident of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council’s WorkSpace Program, the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art and the Triangle Arts Foundation, she begins her residency at Pioneer Works in May 2017.

You can class up your night this Sunday by heading to Pioneer Works, the multidisciplinary center for thoughtful works in the arts and sciences. As part of the center’s free Second Sundays Series, you can see captivating salt sculptures by Mollie McKinley, watch live silkscreen demos, or rock out to a metal band of preternaturally talented adolescents.

Founded by artist Dustin Yellin in 2010, Pioneer Works is the rare institution that shows art in the making. This is most obvious in the open studio portion of Second Sundays. For free, people are welcome to waltz into artist’s alcoves on the second and third floor as residents in visual arts, technology, and music hang out and make work.
Current residents include Evelyn Donnelly whose humorous and biting pieces encroach on and reinterpret daily routines through sculpture, performance, and painting (think PowerPoint presentations, yoga mats, and pile of rags). Jes Fan’s incisive creations—selfie sticks bound to look at one another, hairbrushes locked together with manes of black hair—coherently explore identity and otherness. Kenya (Robinson), whose last names appears in parenthesis, looks at privilege and stereotypes through synthetic blonde wigs, Goody combs, and most recently “fifis,” or “fleshlights,” cobbled-together sex toys made in prison.

The filmmaker Pascual Sisto offers percipient ulterior galaxies to question our relationship with nature and surveillance. Multidisciplinary collaborators Angel Nevarez and Valerie Tevere reinvigorate norms of musical engagement (e.g. protest karaoke, a stationary bike that controls the speed of a record player).

Also on exhibit is Jean Shin’s wondrous work “MetaCloud,” which strings on the ceiling hundreds of 35 mm cards once used by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to record artworks. In the digital age, these photographic records are now obsolete. Shin amassed them here to explore institutional memory. In her hands the pictures get a second life and viewers experience the disjuncture of recently fossilized objects placed in the digital “cloud.” Shin has used disregarded collections in the past—sports trophies, sweaters, and prescription bottles—to assess the malleability and necessity of community.

Using remnants bequeathed by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Jean Shin’s MetaCloud explores the fragility of institutional memory when faced with the transition from analog to digital imagery. As of only one or two generations ago, the art world predominately used 35mm slides to document artwork and exhibitions.

Second Sundays has something for each of your senses. Kids (or your inner middle schooler) will appreciate Unlocking the Truth, a trio of talented teenagers playing metal at 8 pm. While still in middle school, their performances in Times Square went viral, leading to 1.8 million dollar record deal with Sony, opening performances for Guns N’Roses and the Nets, and touring at Coachella and Bonnaroo.
The series has several interactive exhibits from 4 to 7:30 pm. Jill Pangallo and Alex P White, known as Skote, offer a costume give-away style sessions, and photo booth. How To Change The System showcases new videos from Pioneer Works artists on the effect of police surveillance on Red Hook’s youth, followed by a discussion. Topping everything off, from 7 to 10 pm, Amateur Astronomers Association leads a stargazing session in Pioneer Work’s garden.

At 27,000 square feet, Pioneer Works was formerly an iron works factory churning out railroad tracks and sugar plant machinery. Remodeled with over 100 windows to light up its 40 foot tall ceiling, Pioneer Works is a teeming paradise for the mind and body that will make you want to come back for more.