



## The Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati and Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art Co-Organize the First Major Multi-Museum Survey Dedicated to Contemporary Artists Working Throughout the Midwest

Featuring New and Recent Work by Artists Working Across Disciplines, *The Regional* Explores the Cultural Complexities of America's Heartland

### Exhibition Premieres at CAC in December 2021, Then Travels to Kemper Museum

Cincinnati, OH and Kansas City, MO—August 11, 2021—This winter, the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) in Cincinnati and Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art (Kemper Museum) in Kansas City, MO will premiere a major exhibition dedicated to artists living and working throughout Midwestern America. *The Regional* is the first major multi-museum survey dedicated to contemporary artists based in the Midwest and will feature new and recent work, including several site-responsive commissions, by more than 20 artists working across painting, photography, installation, and performance. Showcasing artists that represent a wide variety of backgrounds, concerns, and approaches—including **Conrad Egyir, Matthew Angelo Harrison, Gisela McDaniel, Devan Shimoyama, Alice Tippit, and Jordan Weber**—*The Regional* celebrates the artistic and cultural complexity of the Midwest, offering audiences a more comprehensive understanding of this moment in America's heartland.

*The Regional* is co-curated by **Amara Antilla, Senior Curator at the CAC** and **Jade Powers, Assistant Curator at Kemper Museum**. The exhibition premieres at the CAC December 10, 2021, through March 20, 2022, before traveling to Kemper Museum from June 2, 2022 through September 11, 2022. A parallel program of conversations and performances is being organized at each venue.

"*The Regional* is a testament to the range of creative practices and rich cultural heritage alive in the Midwest and is an important opportunity to support and celebrate local artists," commented **Amara Antilla, Senior Curator at the CAC**. "The exhibition offers audiences a long glance into the heart of America, which is as complex, varied, and evolving as the artists and works on view in this show. At a time when the concerns of the middle of the country are ever more visible and urgent, this exhibition is a chance to spark dialogue and connection, providing audiences a deeper understanding of the historical foundation and contemporary concerns that ultimately unite us."

"The intersections that emerge between artists working all across the Midwest in this exhibition are truly exciting," said **Jade Powers, Assistant Curator at Kemper Museum**. "Working with artists based in the region and understanding the cultural landscape of America's heartland brings ideas of self, community, and purpose to the forefront. It has been energizing to see how the artists respond to these themes in their practices. I look forward to the unique experiences of the work that each venue will present and the dialogue that they will surely inspire related to both shared and individual experiences within the Midwest."

Loosely defined as the area that stretches from the Dakotas in the west along the Great Lakes to Michigan and Ohio in the east and from the north in Minnesota adjacent to the Mississippi River through Illinois, Iowa and Missouri, the Midwest is a construct bounded by geography as well as shared social and cultural legacies. Partially encompassing the “Rust Belt,” a site of 20th century industrial growth marked by subsequent declines and more recent resurgences, the Midwest is linked by histories that include the early abolition of slavery and the underground railroad network, as well as immigration, namely by Germans, Irish, and Scandinavians in the mid-19th century, and more recently by asylum seekers from countries as varied as Vietnam, Iraq, and Somalia.

Reflecting and responding to this range of social and historical contexts, *The Regional* scans the diverse cultural landscape of the region and provides a snapshot of the creative ecology blooming within it. The exhibition brings together new and recent work by artists from a variety of backgrounds who are currently based in Detroit, Cincinnati, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Kansas City, Madison, Minneapolis, and St. Louis, among other locales throughout the Midwest. *The Regional* celebrates the range of cultural origins and creative approaches in the middle section of America by uniting artists working across creative disciplines to explore some of the most pressing issues of our time.

As an initiative dedicated to showcasing and engaging with local cultural communities, *The Regional* will evolve as it tours to each location by inviting additional local artists to participate in related programming and installations at each venue. The exhibition will also be accompanied by a digital catalogue highlighting featured works and exploring a range of historic and contemporary themes informing the show. Together, the exhibition, publication, and related programs will invite audiences to participate in a dynamic discourse about the past and future of the Midwest and the artists working within it.

Graphic design for the exhibition and catalogue will be led by Columbus, Ohio–based artist and designer Ryland Wharton, who has designed publications, website, and software for a variety of institutions and individuals in the cultural sector, including The Columbus Museum of Art, The Knowlton School of Architecture, and artist Daniel Gordon.

**Participating artists include:**

- Hellen Ascoli (b. 1984, Guatemala City, Guatemala; lives and works in Madison, WI)
- Lyndon Barrois Jr. (b. 1983, New Orleans, LA; lives and works in Pittsburgh, PA)
- Jonathan Christensen Caballero (b. 1988, Salt Lake City, UT; lives and works in Lawrence, KS)
- Rachel Cox (b. 1984, Irving, TX; lives and works in Iowa City, IA)
- Mara Duvra (b. 1989, Silver Spring, MD; lives and works in Minneapolis, MN)
- Conrad Egyir (b.1989, Accra, Ghana; lives and works in Detroit, MI)
- Isa Gagarin (b. 1986, Guam; lives and works in Minneapolis, MN)

- Rashawn Griffin (b. 1980, Los Angeles; lives and works in Kansas City, MO).
- Dan Gunn (b. 1980, Prairie Village, KS; lives and works in Chicago, IL)
- Matthew Angelo Harrison (b.1989, Detroit, MI; lives and works in Detroit, MI)
- Pao Houa Her (b. 1982, Laos; lives and works in Blaine, MN)
- Anissa Lewis (b. 1974, Covington, KY; lives and works in Cincinnati, OH)
- Dakota Mace (Diné) (b. 1991, Albuquerque, NM; lives and works in Madison, WI)
- Gisela McDaniel (b. 1995, Guam; lives and works in Detroit, MI)
- Lorena Molina (b. 1985, San Salvador, El Salvador; lives and works in Cincinnati, OH)
- Huong Ngo (b. 1979, Hong Kong; lives and works in Chicago, IL)
- Yvonne Osei (b. 1990, Hamburg, Germany; lives and works in St. Louis, MO)
- Natalie Petrosky (b. 1989, Akron, OH; lives and works in Cleveland, OH)
- Devan Shimoyama (b. 1989, Philadelphia, PA; lives and works in Pittsburgh, PA)
- Alice Tippit (b. 1975, Independence, KS; lives and works in Chicago, IL)
- Jordan Weber (b. 1984, Des Moines, IA; lives and works in Des Moines, IA)
- Margo Wolowiec (b. 1985, Detroit, MI; lives and works in Detroit, MI)
- Nikki Woods (b. 1990, Rock Hill, MO; lives and works in Cleveland, OH)

### **Exhibition Organization**

*The Regional* is curated by Amara Antilla and Jade Powers, and was conceived in collaboration with Courtenay Finn. The exhibition is co-organized by Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati and Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO.

### **Tour Dates**

- Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (December 10, 2021 – March 20, 2022)
- Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City (June 2 – September 11, 2022)

Additional details, including on-site and virtual programming will be announced by the exhibition venues at a later date.

### **Digital Catalogue**

In conjunction with the exhibition, the CAC and Kemper Museum are developing a robust digital catalogue, which will be made available as a free downloadable PDF on each of the institutions' websites. The catalogue will revisit older histories of the region while also inviting speculation about its

future, highlighting certain works in the exhibition, and engaging a range of subjects including gentrification, propaganda, Jazz, joy, failure, and freedom. The catalogue will include new essays by the exhibition's curators as well as contributions from scholars, artists, and thought leaders.

### **About the Curators**

**Amara Antilla** is Senior Curator at the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) in Cincinnati, where she is responsible for shaping the CAC's robust exhibitions and new commissions program. Previously, Antilla worked at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, where she contributed to various monographic exhibitions including *V.S. Gaitonde: Painting as Process, Painting as Life* (2014), *Monir Farmanfarmaian: Infinite Possibility, Mirror Works and Drawings, 1974–2014* (2015), and *Simone Leigh: Loophole of Retreat* (2019). Antilla was also involved with the acquisition, research, and exhibition program of the MAP Global Art Initiative (2012-2018). Independently, Antilla has served as curatorial advisor for the Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh), where she co-curated *Rewind* (2016), and subsequently co-organized *Displays of Internationalism* (2018), and MAHASSA (Modern Art Histories across Africa, South and Southeast Asia, 2020)—a symposium and seminar series respectively that examined the development of transnational 20th century modernisms. Antilla studied art history at Tufts University, the Museum School, and Hunter College, City University of New York (CUNY).

**Jade Powers** is Assistant Curator at Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri where she organizes exhibitions including *Dyani White Hawk: Speaking to Relatives* (2021), *Dawoud Bey: Selections from Night Coming Tenderly, Black* (2020), *Joiri Minaya: Divergences* (2020), *Child's Play: An Exploration of Adolescence* (2019), *Color Application* (2019), *Abstracted Wonders: The Power of Lines* (2018), and *Deconstructing Marcus Jansen* (2018). Before joining Kemper Museum, Powers was the 2017–2018 Romare Bearden Graduate Museum Fellow at Saint Louis Art Museum. There, Powers created the first museum-wide gallery guide to comprehensively highlight works by artists of African descent. Powers has also been a Visiting Critic at Kansas City Art Institute, University of Kansas, and Washington University St. Louis as well as a juror for several artist awards. Powers is currently the visiting lecturer for the MFA graduate seminar in the Department of Visual Art for the 2020–2021 Academic Year at the University of Kansas. She studied art history, religious studies, and post-colonial theory at DePauw University and Indiana University-Bloomington.

### **About the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC)**

Through exhibitions, performances, educational and hands-on community programs, the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) provides opportunities for all people to engage with the art, artists, and ideas of our time. Working with its community of visitors, patrons, and partners, the CAC explores the unfolding landscape of art and celebrates creative expression in everyone.

Since its founding in 1939, the CAC has been a champion of emerging ideas in contemporary art, hosting one of the first Midwest exhibitions of Picasso's *Guernica* in 1939; mounting an early exhibition of Pop Art in 1963; representing the United States at the São Paulo Biennial in 1975; and presenting— and successfully defending—the 1990 Mapplethorpe retrospective that became a lightning rod in the era's culture wars and propelled the CAC into the national spotlight.

In 2003, the CAC moved into the Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art, the first museum designed by architect Zaha Hadid and the first museum in the US to be designed by a woman. Recent programming highlights include landmark exhibitions of work by Ugo Rondinone, Do Ho Suh, Titus Kaphar, Saya Woolfalk, Swoon, and Akram Zaatari, and the first solo museum presentations of artists such as Maria Lassnig, Shilpa Gupta, JR, Anri Sala, Michael Sailstorfer, Pia Camil, Albano Afonso, and Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrom. The CAC also launched an ongoing performance program in 2011, which is now accompanied by the *This Time Tomorrow* annual performance festival. Artists presented include Okwui Okpokwasili, Taylor Mac, Kaneza Schaal, and Tanya Tagaq, with North American premieres from international artists such as Kate McIntosh, Ingri Fiksdal, Mithkal Alzghair, and Raquel Andre.

### **About Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art (Kemper Museum)**

Located in Kansas City, MO, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art exhibits, collects, and educates in a free and welcoming environment for all. The museum's growing Permanent Collection aims to reflect the vitality, complexity, and unfolding patterns within modern and contemporary art and culture. Special exhibitions, installations, lectures, and workshops, as well as youth, teen, and intergenerational programs provide resources for communities to engage with the issues of our time, derive inspiration, discover outlets for self-expression and dialogue, learn directly from living artists, and bring deeper meaning to their lives through modern and contemporary art. Admission, programs, and parking are always free. Find out more at [www.kemperart.org](http://www.kemperart.org) | [@kempermuseum](https://www.instagram.com/kempermuseum).

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