

# Nomad Studio: Green Varnish

Gallery Guide  
Contemporary Art  
Museum St. Louis

May 23–  
September 13, 2015



Nomad Studio: *Green Varnish*, installation view, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, May 23–September 13, 2015. Photo: Alex Elmestad.

We live in denial within vanishing landscapes.  
—Nomad Studio

Designed by New York-based Nomad Studio, *Green Varnish* is the first major, transformational installation in CAM's courtyard. This undulating yet modulated field of thousands of tiny succulents fills the 45-by-50-foot space, re-imagining the interior courtyard as a lush, growing sculpture. As a response to the quote above, *Green Varnish* re-inserts nature into our man-made urban spaces.

Headed by William E. Roberts and Laura Santín, Nomad Studio is known for their innovative approach to combining contemporary art and design with natural elements. In their award-winning work, seen around the world, the group has focused on the social and environmental impact of landscape design.

With *Green Varnish*, Nomad references the act of painting over something in order to beautify it.

Rather than wishing to merely cover a surface however, the designers call attention to the need to completely re-envision the parts of our built environment that are bare, imperfect, brute, or unwelcoming.

In this case, a petro-floral green carpet elegantly takes over CAM's gravel courtyard. Due to its sheer size, the installation cannot be ignored. Yet, like a blanket being unfurled, the structure appears to float at the edges, hovering slightly above the ground. It remakes the courtyard floor as viewers take in the plants from all sides. A truly collaborative installation, *Green Varnish* would not be possible without the involvement of local



## Audio Tour

Download the CAM app at [camstl.org/app](http://camstl.org/app) or ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from the designers on the audio tour.



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companies Collab, who built the structure, and Green Roof Blocks, who installed the “vegetated blanket” of many varieties of sedum. CAM invites visitors to sit next to *Green Varnish*, walk around it, and enjoy the feeling of being in a living field.

**Nomad Studio** was founded in 2009 by William E. Roberts and Laura Santín and is located in Brooklyn, New York. Committed to innovative landscape architecture, planning, art, and urban design, Nomad coordinates an international network of professionals who work together to create unique and memorable experiences that foster a connection between the user and the landscape. Nomad fosters a dialogue with the landscape from all angles and scales, with the objective of creating inspirational and experiential backdrops for people to engage with natural systems through beauty, outdoor recreation, or community interaction.

*Green Varnish* is made up of Sedum spurium ‘Fuldaglut,’ Sedum spurium ‘John Creech,’ Sedum spurium ‘Red Carpet,’ Sedum kantschaticum, Sedum takesimensis ‘Golden Carpet,’ Sedum acre ‘Gold Moss,’ Sedum album ‘Coral Carpet,’ Sedum album ‘Murale,’ Sedum floriferum ‘Weihenstephaner Gold,’ Sedum reflexum ‘Blue Spruce,’ Sedum rupestre ‘Angelina,’ Sedum sexangulare, and Sedum x Immergrunchen.

This exhibition is generously supported by an Innovation Fund grant from the Regional Arts Commission St. Louis.



*Green Varnish* is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Lisa Melandri, Executive Director.

## Related Events

In celebration of the installation, CAM’s cafe serves local draft beers, wine, and cocktails every Thursday and Friday evening, 5:00–8:00 pm. Complimentary fresh lemonade will be served all day every Saturday.

### Going Green

CAM presents a series of workshops with local horticultural experts and landscape architects.

#### Urban Greenscapes

May 31, 11:00 am

Mara Higdon, assistant director of Gateway Greening

#### Pre-fab Planting

June 7, 11:00 am

Laurel Harrington, associate principal and director of landscape architecture, Christner Inc.

#### Green Roofs

July 19, 11:00 am

Kelly Lockett, president of Green Roof Blocks

## Opening & Artist Panel: Green Varnish

Sunday, June 28, 2:00 pm

William Roberts and Laura Santín, co-founders of Nomad Studio; Glenn Kopp, Missouri Botanical Garden horticulturist; Kelly Lockett, president of Green Roof Blocks; Albie Mitchell, founder of Collab design studio.



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**Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis**

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