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Contemporary Art  
Museum St. Louis

3750 Washington Blvd  
St. Louis, MO 63108  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Urban Planning: Art and the City 1967–2017* explores the transformation of American cities through the perspectives of 23 major international artists  
On view May 5–August 13, 2017**



Agnes Denes, *Wheatfield—A Confrontation: Battery Park Landfill, Downtown Manhattan*, 1982. Courtesy the artist and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects, New York. Photo: John McGrall.

**March 21, 2017 (St. Louis, MO)** – The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents *Urban Planning: Art and the City 1967–2017*, an exhibition of artists' responses to the transformational social, political, economic, and environmental effects of urban development in the United States through a variety of media, including sculpture, drawing, photography, moving image, and installation. *Urban Planning* is on view May 5 through August 13, 2017, and features twenty-four major international artists: Robert Adams, Edgar Arcenaux, Mark Bradford, Juan William Chavez, Agnes Denes, Kevin Jerome Everson, Cyprien Gaillard, Theaster Gates, Dan Graham, David Hartt, Zoe Leonard, Glenn Ligon, Josiah McElheny, Catherine Opie, Robert Overby, Michael Rakowitz, Martha Rosler, Ed Ruscha, Gary Simmons, Robert Smithson, Maya Stovall, Oscar Tuazon, and Sara VanDerBeek. As part of the exhibition, Abigail DeVille will explore St. Louis and gather from the city's detritus—collecting random, found, and historical materials— from which she will create a monumental new site-specific installation for the Museum.

*Urban Planning* explores momentous sociopolitical and economic upheavals—the Civil Rights movement, white flight, gentrification, post-industrialization, the emptying of American urban centers, and the expansion of the suburbs, among others—and presents a polyphony of artists' reactions. Rather than pose a definitive historical trajectory however, the exhibition embraces a ruminative and introspective approach, winding through time, place, and perspective.

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**Hours**  
10–5 Wed  
10–8 Thu & Fri  
10–5 Sat & Sun

CAM is free. Visit often!

As seen throughout much of the exhibition, artists use photography as a tool to document a rapidly changing nation. Ed Ruscha's black-and-white aerial photographs of Los Angeles parking lots (1967) as well as images from Catherine Opie's *Freeway* series (1994), coolly reflect the unrestricted violence imposed on the natural landscape through the rise of American automobile culture. In contrast, Sara VanDerBeek and Edgar Arcenaux both transform images of Detroit—the American symbol for urban decline—recasting them in large-scale compositions (in photography and drawing, respectively) that unburden the city of its pariah status and offer fresh, even fantastical perspectives on its evolving social fabric.



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Sculpture brings the themes of the exhibition into three-dimensional form. Many of these hard-edged critiques exhibit material playfulness, as with Josiah McElheny's colored-glass revision of cold, modernist architecture, and Michael Rakowitz's reimagining of the infamous Pruitt-Igoe housing project as a giant inflatable, interactive toy. Oscar Tuazon's structure, created specifically for the exhibition, provides a temporary dwelling within the galleries, offering viewers a space for both contemplation and encounter.



David Hartt, *The Republic*, 2014. HD video, duration 16:08, score by Sam Prekop. Courtesy David Nolan Gallery, New York and Corbett vs Dempsey, Chicago.

*Urban Planning* further unravels its various narrative threads through several moving image works. The implosion of Glasgow public housing is seen and heard in Cyprien Gaillard's video *Pruitt Igoe Falls* (2009), whereas Kevin Jerome Everson's film *Emergency Needs* (2007) reenacts a press conference held by Cleveland's first African American mayor following the breakout of riots in 1968. *The Republic* (2014), by David Hartt, seamlessly weaves together images of urban life in Detroit and Athens, Greece, to explore their connection in the true story of Constantinos Doxiadis, who designed unrealized master plans for both cities.

Many of the works in the exhibition provide commentary on where and how people live in the United States. Among the earliest are Dan Graham's photographic typology of suburban dwellings in his 1971 lithograph *Homes for America* and several photographs by Robert Adams that consider the psychological implications of Colorado sprawl in the 1960s and 70s. Glenn Ligon's wall-based silkscreen *Housing in New York* (2007) exposes gentrification as an assault on African-American neighborhoods, and Mark Bradford creates ghostly etchings, a palimpsest of

merchant posters sourced around Los Angeles that refract the area's crucial informal economies.

Abigail DeVille's new site-specific commission resides in its own gallery space, an improvised urban plan of the artist's invention. Her act of scavenging, recycling, and redefining serves as a distinctive metaphor for the exhibition as a whole—a memorial constructed from that which has been lost, left behind, or thrown away. She offers instead a creative act of will and imagination, a restorative, hopeful force.



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Michael Rakowitz, *Dull Roar*, 2005. Drawings on paper and vellum, inflatables, motors, wooden platform, mixed media. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Jane Lombard Gallery, New York.

St. Louis provides a thematic through line for *Urban Planning*. The birthplace of the national highway system, the home of the Gateway Arch, a city that continues to experience its own social and environmental disruption, racial violence, and economic strife—St. Louis connects with analogous urban centers across the country, thereby demonstrating the universality of such issues explored by the works in the exhibition. To encourage reflection on these themes and how they resonate on a local level, CAM will host discussions and guided tours of the city and region.

*Urban Planning* is both meditation and dreamscape, analysis and argument, a space for outrage and contemplation, and a simultaneously distressing and enlivening view of the past, present, and future of America's cities.

This exhibition is generously supported by a grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

Abigail DeVille's commission is generously supported by the Harpo Foundation.

*Urban Planning: Art and the City 1967–2017* is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by guest curator Kelly Shindler.



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## Related Events

### Press & Patron Preview

#### Summer Exhibitions

Friday, May 5, 10:00 am

Join exhibiting artists and curators for an exclusive introduction to the exhibitions. RSVP to Eddie Silva at 314.535.0770 x311 or [esilva@camstl.org](mailto:esilva@camstl.org).

### Opening Night:

#### Summer Exhibitions

Friday, May 5

Member Preview: 6:00 pm

Public Reception: 7:00–9:00 pm

### Artists Talk:

#### Abigail Deville & others

Saturday, May 6, 11:00 am

### Contemporary Class:

#### Art in the Streets

Thursday, June 15, 6:00 pm

### Sunday Studio:

#### Juan William Chavez's Northside

#### Workshop

Sunday, June 25, 1:00 pm

### Re: In the Shadow of the Arch

Saturday, July 8, 1:00 pm

### Perspective: Artist on Artist

#### Jesse Vogler on *Urban Planning*

Saturday, July 15, 1:00 pm

### Book Club: *Invisible Cities*

Thursday, July 27, 6:00 pm

### ***CAM & Renegade STL give guided tours of 4 distinct St. Louis neighborhoods***

#### Tour No. 1:

#### St. Louis City–North & South

Saturday, May 20, 11:00 am–1:00 pm

#### Tour No. 2: Downtown St. Louis

Saturday, June 10, 11:00 am–1:00 pm

#### Tour No. 3:

#### New Town, St. Charles

Saturday, July 29, 11:00 am–1:00 pm

#### Tour No. 4: Old North

Saturday, August 12, 11:00 am–1:00 pm

### ***Film Screenings: Dates TBD***

#### *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth*

#### ***Brick by Chance and Fortune & Chavez Ravine:***

#### ***A Los Angeles Story***

#### *The Social Life*

#### ***of Small Urban Spaces***

#### ***Escape from New York***

## About the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents, supports, and celebrates the art of our time. It is the premier museum in St. Louis dedicated to contemporary art. Focused on a dynamic array of changing exhibitions, CAM provides a thought-provoking program that reflects and contributes to the global cultural landscape. Through the diverse perspectives offered in its exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives, CAM actively engages a range of audiences to challenge their perceptions. It is a site for discovery, a gathering place in which to experience and enjoy contemporary visual culture. CAM is located in Grand Center, a world-class arts and entertainment district in the heart of St. Louis.