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Contemporary Art  
Museum St. Louis

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CAM breaks attendance records for 2017–18**



Photo: Isaiah Johnson

**September 6, 2018 (St. Louis, MO)** - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) today announced record-breaking attendance numbers for the 2017–18 exhibition year. On the eve of the opening of its fall exhibitions, CAM reported 41,487 visitors last year, an 85 percent increase in attendance since 2012, the year Lisa Melandri came on as executive director. CAM also broke attendance records for a single season during the recent 2018 summer exhibitions season with a total of 16,011 visitors.

“We’re very proud that we are connecting with so many people,” says Melandri. “And not only more people but people from all walks of life, many of whom have never been to a contemporary art museum before. A lot of this has to do with the exhibitions we choose, as well as how much we make it a priority that CAM is a welcoming space, free and open to all.” Exhibition highlights for 2017–18 included Mickalene Thomas’s multimedia tribute to African American women she honors as “mentors, muses, and celebrities”; *Salvatore Scarpitta: Racing Cars*, the first museum exhibition to focus on the late American artist’s racing-themed artwork; the Great Rivers Biennial, which featured talented local artists Addoley Dzegede, Sarah Paulsen, and Jacob Stanley; and the first solo museum exhibition of Amy Sherald, the acclaimed official portraitist of former First Lady Michelle Obama.

CAM expects another season of increased attendance with the highly anticipated *Basquiat Before Basquiat: East 12th Street: 1979–1980*, which includes the entire cache of work the teenage Jean-Michel Basquiat created in his small apartment on Manhattan’s Lower East Side just prior to achieving international recognition. “It’s amazing the response we’ve had since the moment we announced this show,” says Melandri, who organized the exhibition for CAM. “Social media just blew up, so we think there are a lot of people excited at the rare opportunity to see work by Basquiat in St. Louis.”

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

CAM is free. Visit often!

CAM's fall exhibitions season opens Friday, September 7. The public reception is 7:00–9:00 pm.

**Fall 2018 Exhibitions, on view September 7–December 30, 2018**

*Basquiat Before Basquiat: East 12th Street, 1979–1980*

*Sanford Biggers*

*SUPERFLEX: European Union Mayotte*

*William Downs: Sometimes it hurts*

*Jennifer West: Emoji Piss Film*

*Lizzy Martinez: Seeing Red presented by Teen Museum Studies*

*ArtReach: Northwest Academy of Law*



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**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 the Grand Center Arts District.

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