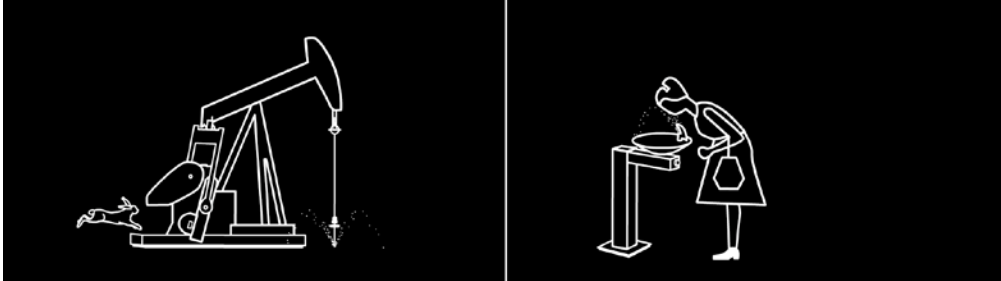


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Marina Zurkow's video *The Thirsty Bird* appears on CAM's facade for Street Views



Marina Zurkow, *The Thirsty Bird*, (still), 2012. Video animation (black and white, silent), 5:12 minutes. Animation assistance by Lindsay Nordell. Courtesy the artist and bitforms gallery, New York.

October 16, 2019 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) projects Marina Zurkow's *The Thirsty Bird* as part of Street Views, the ongoing large-scale video series that presents thought-provoking art on the building's facade, bringing the art of our time into the public realm. *Marina Zurkow: The Thirsty Bird* appears each evening from dusk to midnight as part of CAM's spring exhibitions, January 17 through April 19, 2020. The video is also on view on CAM's second floor during museum hours throughout the season.

Zurkow is a media artist focused on the intersection of nature and culture, her work offering wry and pointed critiques of this perilously dysfunctional relationship. She has spent extensive amounts of time researching what she refers to as "wicked problems" involving invasive species, superfund sites, and a worldwide dependence on petrochemicals. The work for Street Views comes from her 2012 exhibition, *Necrocracy*, a dynamic meditation on geology, time, and oil production. During a two-week residency supported by the Houston-based art center DiverseWorks, Zurkow traveled to Texas's Permian Basin, from Marfa to Midland, meeting with geologists, naturalists, cattlemen, oilmen, and activists. Most everyone who lives on the U.S. power grid relies on petrochemicals for food, shelter, clothing, and mobility; yet few realize that the oil-based products that fuel so much of our lives emerge from this expansive plateau known as "The Big Empty."

Oil excavation relies on vast amounts of water taken from a semi-arid plain. *The Thirsty Bird* offers parallel narratives on two essential, yet incompatible elements: oil and water. On one side of a split screen, viewers witness the seemingly eternal motion of an oil pump jack, known colloquially as a "thirsty bird," with an occasional bird or rabbit passing by the machinery. On the other side of the screen a range of archetypal figures enter the scene to drink from a water fountain: a cowboy, a father and son, a sheriff, a cow, a soldier, a girl and her dog. These drawn characters are pictograms based on ISOTYPE figures (International System of Typographic Picture Education), which were developed by a German socialist illustrator and a Viennese social scientist/philosopher in 1930. They created these designs to better educate—or in their view, emancipate—the illiterate masses on the virtues of socialism. Zurkow appropriates anti-capitalist signs in a work based on the ubiquitous nature of the oil industry—inverting the meaning of an early-20th-century visual language.

Marina Zurkow (b. 1962, New York City) produces work that spans gallery installations and unconventional public participatory projects. Recent solo exhibitions of her work include bitforms gallery, New York; Chronus Art Center, Shanghai; and Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey. Her work has also been featured at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Smithsonian

-more-



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Museum St. Louis

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CAM is free. Visit often!

American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; Borusan Collection, Istanbul; Brooklyn Academy of Music; Museum of the Moving Image, New York; Sundance Film Festival, Utah; Rotterdam Film Festival, Netherlands; and the Seoul Media City Biennial, Korea, among others. Zurkow is a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellow. She has also been granted awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts, New York State Council for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Creative Capital. She is a faculty member of the Bennington College Public Action MFA program and the ITP / Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, and is represented by bitforms gallery, New York.



Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

The exhibition is generously supported by the Whitaker Foundation.

Marina Zurkow: The Thirsty Bird is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Misa Jeffereis, Assistant Curator.

Related Event

Press & Patron Preview

Friday, January 17, 10:00–11:00 am
Join artists and curators for an exclusive introduction to the exhibitions. RSVP to Eddie Silva at 314.535.0770 x313 or esilva@camstl.org

Opening Night

Friday, January 17
Member Preview 6:00–7:00 pm
Public Reception 7:00–9:00 pm

All programs, dates, and times are subject to change.

About the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis 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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