CAM marks its third year of ArtReach programming in partnership with Vashon High School with two exhibitions. On the mezzanine, *Encounter with the Mask* features work made under the guidance of local painter Luisa Otero Prada. Mask-making served as an introduction to visual culture around the world, as well as a means toward self-expression. Students learned how masks contain both ritualistic and protective elements that have evolved through many cultures, with recurring themes that have remained in folk art traditions, art made for galleries and museums, and in popular culture. Students navigated a survey of masks from cultures all over the world and learned about the variety of media, materials, and methods used to create them. Equipped with the information presented, the students designed and fabricated their own masks from cardboard, papier-mâché, and other found materials, drawing upon their explorations of ritual, function, and costume.

Audio Tour
Visit camstl.org/audio on a mobile device to hear an interview with the teaching artists.
Our Own Gaze, in the Education Gallery, presents examples of the accumulated practical techniques students gained in sewing, patterning, embroidery, appliqué, and design. Under the direction of interdisciplinary artist Esther Neff, the students explored fabric art, fashion as "high art," domestic textiles, folk art, and consumer goods. Through a series of projects—including the hats and tapestries on display—students investigated personal and cultural meanings behind symbols and motifs, drawing significance from their own interests and aesthetics, both as individual artists and as members of historic, geographic, and cultural communities. Students learned how to translate drawings into scaled patterns and then into fabric, applying their preferred learned techniques throughout the quarter to designed individual panels. Our Own Gaze culminates with a collaborative tapestry composed and assembled by the class, combining geometric panels with more representational and abstract panels.

Local painter Luisa Otero Prada draws inspiration from her native Colombia, describing her work as finding influence in the literary and artistic genre of magic realism. She attended La Salle University, in Colombia, where she majored in architecture, moving to the United States in 2001. Otero Prada has shown her work at Third Floor Gallery, Regional Arts Commission, St. Louis Artist Guild, Old Orchard Gallery, St. Louis Community College, Chesterfield City Hall, Old North Community Art Gallery, Manchester Arts, Northern Arts Council, 14th Street Gallery, and the Missouri History Museum.

Esther Neff is a civic practitioner and performance maker who often uses fabric arts, sculpture, and installation to deal with modes of production and forms of collaboration. Neff has recently moved to St. Louis to help establish MARSH (Materializing and Activating Radical Social Habitus), a food and labor cooperative, diner, artspace, and foodhub in Carondelet. Neff is also the founder of PPL (Panoply Performance Laboratory), a think tank, organizational entity, and performance collective that makes "operas of operations." Her work has been shown, performed, realized, and published Internationally across theater, dance, visual art, and experimental philosophy contexts.

2019–20 ArtReach Students

DeAndre Aron
DeMarea Ball-Brown
Niko Blount
Tylega Bruce
Davon Bush
Dalonte Chatman
Tajun Curry
Jerryonte Davis
Jayla DeLancy
Dania Downer
Rondell Edwards
Christopher Frye-Pleasant
Malia Graham
Dwon Haughton
Angelia Henderson
Trey Jackson
Alyssa Jacobs
Kaliyah James
Jeremiah Martin
Courtney McKinley
Davion Mitchell
Renada Mitchell
Tajhah Moore
Jerius Redmond
Tiona Robinson
Anthony Rodgers
Shamar Rowe
Shareif Rowe
Rickey Smith
Ethan Sparkman
Dekorion Taylor
Unique Tucker
Treyvion Walker
Jalen White
Sequoia Whitfield
Deshawn Williams
Jo'Neise Williams
Kevin Williams
Markalyann Williams
Daron Wilson
Dwayne Worthen

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ArtReach: Vashon High School is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Miriam Ruiz, School and Community Programs Manager.