

Press contact: Eddie Silva
314.387.0405
esilva@camstl.org



Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

3750 Washington Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63108
314.535.4660 camstl.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Farah Al Qasimi installs a site-specific photo-based installation on CAM's Project Wall, her largest museum installation to date



Farah Al Qasimi, *Arrival*, Installation view, The Third Line, Dubai, September 18–November 23, 2019. Courtesy the artist and The Third Line, Dubai.

August 18, 2021 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents *Everywhere there is splendor*, a site-specific photo-based installation by Farah Al Qasimi. Through the media of photography, video, and performance, Al Qasimi explores notions of culture, domesticity, escapism, and labor. The artist has long explored notions of style and taste as they relate to interior domestic spaces; *Everywhere there is splendor* focuses on the artist's personal family history through a lens of intimacy and interiority. This will be Al Qasimi's largest museum installation to date, occupying CAM's 60-foot-long Project Wall, on view as part of the Fall/Winter exhibitions, September 3, 2021 through February 13, 2022.

The artist often documents interstitial cultural spaces, whether they are immigrant communities in the United States or remainders of colonial influence in the Arab World. Interested in emblems of cultural exchange, Al Qasimi has photographed a range of places and events, including a fake "Amazon" department store in Dubai, a sparkling chandelier at a Yemeni-owned bodega in Queens, and a Muslim beauty pageant in Iowa. Central to her practice is an attention to artifice and surface. Through the act of photographing a subject, reality is warped and exaggerated, hinting at the humor of a world that constantly strives to transcend itself.

In her Project Wall installation, commissioned by CAM, Al Qasimi looks to her family's archive of photographs for inspiration, exploring their emigration from Lebanon into the US and expanding on notions of cultural hybridity—of assimilation, preservation, and the splintering of family. During her time in quarantine after traveling to the United Arab Emirates in early 2021, she photographed in and around her family home. She re-examined the significance of a personal archive, using the ubiquitous floral tablecloths, garments, wallpaper, and interior decor of her childhood and what they represent. Several new works in the exhibition picture family photographs, remakes of furniture textile patterns, and various food items—symbols

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that point to social customs, notions of labor, and means of production in relation to her family history. Reflecting on the past year and the uncertainty of the future, Al Qasimi found it ever more urgent to deepen her connection with her family's past. In the new work at CAM, she locates intersections between personal chronology and the collective moment.

The exhibition is generously supported by Alexis Cossé and Erik Karanik, and The Strive Fund. Special thanks to Helena Anrather.



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Farah Al Qasimi: Everywhere there is splendor is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Chief Curator.

Farah Al Qasimi (b. 1991, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; lives and works in Brooklyn and Dubai) works in photography, video, and performance. Her recent commission with Public Art Fund, *Back and Forth Disco*, was on view at 100 bus shelters in New York City in 2019–20, and was named one of the best artworks of the year by *The New Yorker*. Her work has been featured in exhibitions at Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai; San Francisco Arts Commission; CCS Bard Galleries at the Hessel Museum of Art, New York; Helena Anrather, New York; The Third Line, Dubai; The List Visual Arts Center at MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto; and the Houston Center for Photography. She has participated in residencies at the Delfina Foundation, London; Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine; and is a recipient of the New York NADA Artadia Prize; Aaron Siskind Individual Photographer's Fellowship; and this year's Capricious Photo Award. Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; Tate Modern, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge; and Huis Marseille, Museum for Photography, Amsterdam. Al Qasimi received her MFA from the Yale School of Art.

Related Events

Friday, September 3

Patron Preview 10:00–11:30 am

Member Preview 5:00–6:00 pm

Public Opening 6:00–9:00 pm

For press access on Opening Day

RSVP to Eddie Silva at 314.387.0405

or esilva@camstl.org

Wednesday, November 10, 6:00 pm

Artist Talk

About the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis works to enrich lives and inspire curiosity, creativity, and learning through experiences with contemporary art. Focused on a dynamic array of changing exhibitions, the Museum reflects and contributes to the global cultural landscape while engaging thousands of visitors through a wide array of public programs. CAM nurtures the creative minds of our city's youth through free, in-depth art education, making a long-lasting impact on the community. We are a site for discovery, a welcoming space, free and open to all.

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