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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Martine Gutierrez subverts pop culture narratives to explore identity through photography, installation, and large-scale video at CAM



Martine Gutierrez, *Body En Thrall*, p122–123 from *Indigenous Woman*, 2018.
© Martine Gutierrez. Courtesy the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

November 8, 2021 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis announces a site-specific interactive experience for visitors, combining a Project Wall installation with a Street Views video projection created by artist, performer, and musician Martine Gutierrez. The video will be produced by and at CAM—a commercial for *BLONDE*, a fictional soda-pop brand featuring Gutierrez as spokesperson, artistic director, and visionnaire at large. The set combines party supplies, found objects, and one-of-a-kind handmade props, which culminate in an escape from reality. A teaser of the “commercial” will appear on CAM’s facade for Street Views, projected on the museum exterior from dusk to midnight each evening. The set will remain intact as a Project Wall installation, where visitors will be invited to participate in the spectacle. Photo taking, image sharing, and selfies are highly encouraged. With Gutierrez’s practice based in photography, another result of the video campaign is a staged photograph of the set, which will be on view as part of the exhibition. *Martine Gutierrez: BLONDE* will be available for viewing and participation at CAM as part of the spring/summer exhibitions, March 25 through July 24, 2022.

Gutierrez’s art-making involves the construction of elaborate narrative scenes, which are designed to subvert pop cultural tropes in the exploration of identity—personal, collective, and intersectional to race, gender, class, indigeneity, and culture. Her work takes the form of multiple media platforms, including billboards, episodic films, music videos, and a high-end fashion magazine. In 2018 Gutierrez produced *Indigenous Woman*, a 124-page magazine replete with fashion spreads, product advertisements, and a Letter from the Editor, all dedicated, as Gutierrez describes it, to “the celebration of Mayan Indian heritage, the navigation of contemporary indigeneity and the ever-evolving self-image.”

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Another recent work, *ANTI-ICON*, is a photo-installation commissioned by the Public Art Fund and appearing on 300 bus stalls in New York City, Chicago, and Boston, in fall 2021. The work is a series of dramatically staged portraits, in which Gutierrez portrays Aphrodite, Cleopatra, the angel Gabriel, and seven other female figures from history and myth—all figures the artist sees as embodiments of liberation for the LGBTQ+ community, with which she identifies.



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Gutierrez hybridizes the advertising industry's objectification of self with the individual's pursuit of self, satirically undermining the aesthetics of mass marketing. In the process of manufacturing an assembly of celebrity icons, the artist dons multiple personae, executing every role.

The exhibition is generously supported by the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation and Nancy and Kenneth Kranzberg. Street Views is generously supported by the Whitaker Foundation.

Martine Gutierrez: BLONDE is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Chief Curator.

Martine Gutierrez (b. 1989, Berkeley, CA; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) is an artist, performer, and musician, whose earlier bodies of work explore gender, intimacy, and fantasy. Current and recent exhibitions of her work include *Disturbing Innocence*, curated by Eric Fischl at the FLAG Art Foundation; *About Face: Self-Portraiture in Contemporary Art*, at the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, where her work is also included in the permanent collection. Her solo exhibitions include the reinstallation of *Supremacy* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (to be determined); *Half-Breed*, Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco (2021); *Martine Gutierrez 'Body en Thrall'*, Australian Centre for Photography, Darlinghurst, AU (2020); *FOCUS: Martine Gutierrez*, Museum of Modern Art Fort Worth (2019); and the Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh's *WE & THEM & ME* (2016). She is part of the upcoming group exhibition *In Some Form or Fashion* at The Momentary, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR (2021). Other selected group exhibitions include *True Pictures? Contemporary Photography from Canada and the USA*, Sprengel Museum Hannover, DE (2021); *Infinite Identities: Photography in the Age of Sharing*, Huis Marseille, Amsterdam (2020); and *Kiss My Genders*, Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London (2019).

About the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis creates meaningful engagement with the most relevant and innovative art being made today. Founded by civic and cultural leaders in 1980, the Museum transformed from a small gallery into an internationally-recognized arts institution, now permanently housed in a flexible, open, and inviting building designed by renowned American architect Brad Cloepfil. CAM's distinct architecture reflects the organization's values and supports a dynamic range of exhibitions, public programs, educational initiatives, and community collaborations. The only museum in the region solely dedicated to contemporary art, CAM is one of the preeminent non-collecting institutions of its kind in the United States. We are a site for discovery, a welcoming space, free and open to all. For more information, visit camstl.org.

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