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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gala Porras-Kim's exhibition chronicles her investigations into institutions and the cultural artifacts they keep, opening at CAM March 25



Gala Porras-Kim, *A terminal escape from the place that binds us*, 2020. Paper marbling on paper, human bones from Shinchang-Dong, Gwangju, 1 BC; letter. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist. Commissioned by the 13th Gwangju Biennale in collaboration with the Gwangju National Museum.

March 3, 2022 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis presents an exhibition of recent work by Gala Porras-Kim, whose engagements with institutions and the cultural artifacts they collect has produced a profound body of work. Hers is a research-based practice, in which she delves into the ways cultural institutions present, store, interpret, define, legitimize, and preserve objects—whether those be ancient artifacts or modern or contemporary works of art. Through her investigations, Porras-Kim questions the ethical principles of museum conservation and examines how objects can be used and misused to make an official narrative through artifacts. Her art practice is in part an epistemological pursuit: how do institutions know what they know, and how do the narratives they convey affect our understanding of our past, present, and future? Porras-Kim brings alternative forms of logic to bear in her pursuit of understanding, and she invites audiences to arrive at personal interpretations of institutional narratives, making use of their own imaginations, intuitions, experiences, and knowledge. *Gala Porras-Kim: Correspondences towards the living object* features five recent projects, which include drawings, sculpture, and sound, presented at CAM, March 25 through July 24, 2022

Each project is a mediation between an object or collection of objects and the institutions in which they are kept. The discussions often take shape as letters authored by the artist and sent to various institutions. In the galleries, a letter is part of each project, presented alongside works of art in the form of drawings, sculptures, and other materials that expand on these mediations. With some projects, Porras-Kim makes drawings of artifacts to recategorize or represent them through a different point of view. In others, she recreates sculptural replicas of sacred objects to

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**Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis**

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stand in for the originals that have been removed. Some projects include mediations between the artist and the spirits of the dead, resulting in works that offer the deceased agency.

The exhibition's projects prioritize a person's or a people's wishes for their objects to live in perpetuity, rendering the goals of the institutions as secondary. This reorientation exposes many of the tensions within museum administrative processes, conservation practices, and legal policies. The exhibition poses the question: can the multiple functions of these objects—from both the past and present—be made to somehow coexist?

The exhibition is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and sponsored by Ann R. Ruwitch and John Fox Arnold, and the Henry Moore Foundation. The Artist Talk is sponsored by the Robert Lehman Foundation.



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Gala Porras-Kim: Correspondences towards the living object is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Chief Curator, with Misa Jeffereis, Assistant Curator.

Gala Porras-Kim (b. 1984, Bogotá, Colombia; lives and works in Los Angeles) received an MFA from the California Institute of the Arts and an MA in Latin American Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles. Her solo exhibitions include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2019); Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA (2018); and LABOR, Mexico City (2017). Selected group exhibitions include 34th Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2021); Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2020-21); Ural Industrial Biennial, Ekaterinburg, Russia (2019); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2019, 2017); Palazzo Ca'tron, Venice, Italy (2019); PinchukArtCentre, Kiev, Ukraine (2019); and Tina Kim Gallery, New York (2019 and 2018). Porras-Kim is the recipient of the Art Matters Grant (2019), Radcliffe Fellowship for Advanced Study at Harvard University (2019), Artadia Award (2017), Rema Hort Mann Foundation grant (2017), and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award (2016), among others. Porras-Kim's work is in the collections of Brooklyn Museum, New York; FRAC Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Perez Art Museum, Miami; Seoul Museum of Art, South Korea; and Whitney Museum of American Art.

Related Events

Friday, March 25

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

Saturday, March 26, 1:00 pm

Artist Talk

Saturday, June 25, noon–4:00 pm

RE: Artist as Medium (Workshop)

Thursday, July 21, 6:00 pm

RE: Artist as Medium (Roundtable)

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

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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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