



Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAM and CRXLAB Announce Collective Impact 2022 Selection of Artist Juan William Chávez to Lead *Growing Safe Spaces: CBVV Garden Collective*, with Master Gardener Kiersten Torrez

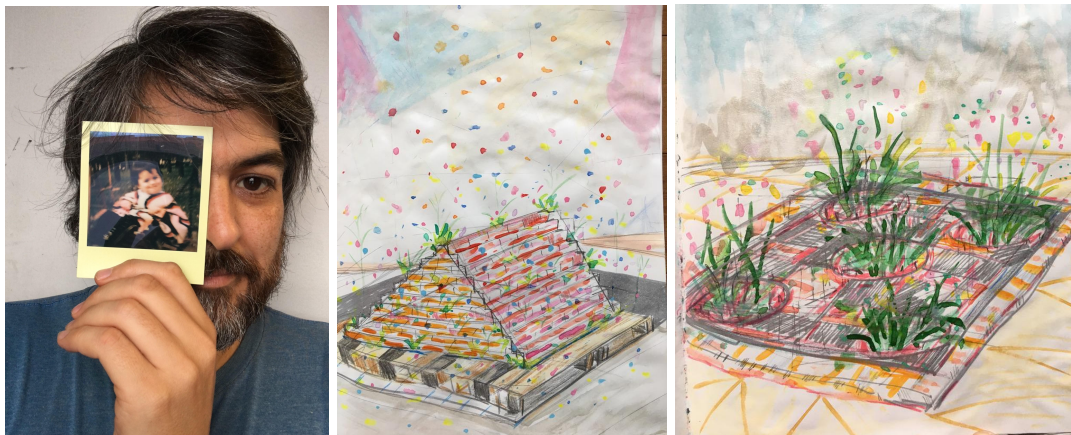


IMAGE LEFT: Juan William Chávez, Courtesy the artist. IMAGE CENTER: Juan William Chávez, *Survival Garden (Native Plants Mesa)*, 2022. Ink, graphite, color pencils, 8 x 11 inches. Courtesy the artist. IMAGE RIGHT: Juan William Chávez, *Survival Garden (Brick Mesa)*, 2022. Ink, graphite, color pencils, 8 x 11 inches. Courtesy the artist.

July 12, 2022 (St. Louis, MO) - A group of ten local residents and stakeholders participating in the program [Collective Impact](#) have selected [Juan William Chávez](#), artist and director of [Northside Workshop](#), to realize a public art project. The decision comes as the culmination of a seven-month process facilitated by the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) and Creative Reaction Lab (CRXLAB). Chávez and collaborators will receive \$10,000 for project supplies, documentation, and honoraria to work with a group of neighboring residents on a multi-part workshop on July 30, 2022.

The process began with using the Creative Reaction Lab framework, [Equity-Centered Community Design™](#) to identify a common agenda across the shared neighborhoods of Covenant Blu/Grand Center, Vandeventer, and The Ville. After the theme of “safety” was identified, participants designed a call for proposals for artistic interventions, and selected Chávez’s social practice art project *Growing Safe Spaces: CBVV Garden Collective* to engage the three neighborhoods that are participating in the project. Chávez and his partner Kiersten Torrez, a master gardener and the director of programming and sustainability at Northside Workshop, will lead select participants on a two-part, single-day workshop that introduces and combines the creative process of art with gardening. It will start with a tour of several North St. Louis gardens as studio research to see and experience lines, shapes,



Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

forms, and materials that one may find in a creative garden. CAM will host the second part of the workshop where Chávez and Torrez will guide participants in four creative exercises focused on preparing, planting, repurposing, and playing (as a process), resulting in a container garden. The CBVV Garden Collective aims to promote art and gardening as healthy tools for self-expression through environmental stewardship and community building. CAM and CRXLAB will maintain relationships with Chávez, Torrez, and the participants over the course of the coming year to continue cultivating the outcomes of the workshop.

Juan William Chávez (b. 1977) is an artist and director of the Northside Workshop. His studio practice focuses on sculpting space within urban ecosystems through partnerships and collaborations to address social and environmental issues. His work includes public sculptures, installations, drawings, curriculums, and unconventional forms of beekeeping and permaculture. Chávez has exhibited at ArtPlace, Van Abbemuseum, McColl Center for Art, and Tube Factory Artspace, and was recently included in El Museo's survey of contemporary Latinx art, ESTAMOS BIEN - LA TRIENAL 20/21. His work has been supported by the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, Creative Capital, Joan Mitchell Foundation, ArtPlace America, and Art Matters Foundation.

About Collective Impact

Collective Impact is a community-centered project facilitated by Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) and Creative Reaction Lab (CRXLAB). It uses Equity-Centered Community Design™ to identify, develop, and share creative artistic interventions to challenges faced in our shared neighborhoods. A "Collective" cohort of ten locally-based artists and community experts based in CAM and CRXLAB's immediate surroundings identify needs and topics of interest to the community and then determine a public art project (sculpture/installation, mural, social sculpture/participatory work, etc.) that can best address those needs. Results are shared with the broader public in the form of an interactive station at CAM.

The project takes place over two one-year cycles. In 2021–22, the neighborhoods focused on include Covenant Blu/Grand Center, Vandeventer, and The Ville. Collective Impact takes its name from an approach that believes collaborative efforts by different agents with a shared agenda can lead to meaningful change.

To schedule an interview with the artist or program organizers, contact CAM's Director of Marketing and Communications, Karol Stewart at kstewart@camstl.org or 314.535.0770 ext. 203.

Collective Impact is presented by PNC Arts Alive. This program is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services [ARPM-250647-OMLS-22] and a Phillips x AAMD Museums and Communities Grant.



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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

About Creative Reaction Lab

Creative Reaction Lab was founded in support of the Uprising in Ferguson with the mission to educate, train, and challenge Black and Latinx youth to become leaders designing healthy and racially equitable communities. The organization challenges the belief that only adults with titles (e.g. mayors, CEOs, etc.) have the power and right to challenge racial and health inequities. CRXLAB acknowledges that youth historically have been undervalued architects of change and culture and equips Black and Latinx youth with training and tools to build consciousness around context, history, and power surrounding race and ethnicity in the United States. It also provides a community for cultural healing, safety, and collective mobilization, and access to traditional power through institutions, funding, and resources. CRXLAB believes that youth will have the capacity to design interventions that will dismantle existing racial and health inequities; thus co-creating a society that embraces the humanity, rights, and power of Black and Latinx people. For more information, visit crxlab.org.

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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