

Press contact: Samantha Lyons
314.492.2988
slyons@camstl.org



Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Great Rivers Biennial 2022 highlights new work by award-winning artists Yowshien Kuo, Yvonne Osei, and Jon Young, opening September 9



Image Left: Yowshien Kuo, *Two Right Feet, Snake Eyes and Cherry Pie*, 2022. Acrylic, bone ash, chalk, synthetic fibers, iridescent pigment, plastic, and glitter on canvas, 46 x 70 inches. Courtesy the artist and Luce Gallery, Torino, Italy. Image Center: Yvonne Osei, *No Child's Play* (detail), 2020. Textile design. Courtesy the artist. Image Right: Jon Young, *Next Exit*, 2021. Iridescent fabric, wood, batting, sand from Historic Route 66 Eureka MO, 59 x 68 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches. Courtesy the artist.

August 16, 2022 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents the tenth Great Rivers Biennial (GRB) featuring new works by St. Louis artists **Yowshien Kuo, Yvonne Osei, and Jon Young**. The GRB exhibition will be on view from September 9, 2022 through February 12, 2023. The Great Rivers Biennial Art Awards Program, a collaborative initiative between CAM and the Gateway Foundation, recognizes talented emerging and mid-career artists working in the greater St. Louis metropolitan area, provides each award recipient with a \$20,000 honorarium, and a major exhibition at CAM.

Three distinguished jurors selected the 2022 winners from among more than 105 submissions: Carmen Hermo, Associate Curator for the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art; Jen Liu, a New York-based visual artist working in video, painting, dance, performance, and biomaterial; and Hamza Walker, Director of LAXART, a nonprofit art space in Los Angeles, and adjunct professor at the School of Art Institute of Chicago.

Great Rivers Biennial 2022 Projects

Yowshien Kuo's paintings feature glimmering candy-colored surfaces to mask haunting themes, alluding to social trauma as a result of historical and contemporary narratives. The figures' reactions to themselves and even the audience's gaze intend to encourage viewers to confront potentially harmful cultural and social norms. The figures are intertwined with an environment that appears as a collage of reality and dreamscape, often including visual artifacts that reveal the mood and intentions of the scene taking place. For his exhibition at CAM, Kuo conveys these themes in new large-scale paintings with subtle installation elements to encourage contemplation and self-reflection.

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Yvonne Osei's multidisciplinary creative practice explores topics of beauty, racism and colorism, the authorship and ownership of history, as well as the residual implications of colonialism in postcolonial West Africa and Western cultures. Through performance art, engaging public spaces, site-specific installations, video, photography, garment construction, and textile designs, Osei's work serves as a mouthpiece for generations that have been marginalized as she pushes against unilateral perspectives. The exhibition at CAM features an immersive video installation that utilizes the language of clothing and textiles, as well as the medium of time, to reckon with past and ongoing racial atrocities in the United States.

Jon Young's wood, sand, and fabric sculptures explore the development of language and signage of the American West. These works, which he refers to as "waymarks," adopt historical symbols from Paleolithic cave paintings, ancient Greek pottery, and imagery found in Hollywood Westerns and Looney Tunes cartoons. Young's work investigates and collapses layers of time and signifiers, particularly relating to the romanticism of the West. The artist characterizes his practice as attempting "to make a map using fluctuating symbols, to get back to a home that hasn't existed for a very long time or for so long that you question if it existed at all."

Great Rivers Biennial 2022 is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Chief Curator.

The exhibition is made possible by the Gateway Foundation.

GATEWAY FOUNDATION

Yowshien Kuo (b. 1985, St. Louis) was educated in both Taiwan and the United States, receiving his MFA from Fontbonne University in St. Louis in 2014. His recent solo exhibitions include James Fuentes online gallery (New York) and the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis as part of an exhibition organized by the Teen Museum Studies program. Other notable exhibitions include Art Taipei 2021 with Artnutri Gallery; Praise Shadows Gallery, Boston; and LVL3 in Chicago. Kuo's work was featured on the cover of *New American Paintings* and has appeared in Artsy, among other publications. He has been a recipient of an award from Critical Mass for the Visual Arts and has received a grant from the Regional Arts Commission in St. Louis.

Yvonne Osei (b. 1990, Hamburg, Germany) is a German-born Ghanaian multidisciplinary artist, art educator, and arts advocate living and working in St. Louis. Osei was the 2016–17 Romare Bearden Graduate Minority Fellow at the Saint Louis Art Museum and the 2017–20 Curator-In-Residence for the Millstone Gallery at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA). She is the recipient of the 2018 Saint Louis Visionary Award for Emerging Artist, the 2018 Creative Stimulus Award by Critical Mass for the Visual Arts, and the 2019 Futures Fund Grant by The Luminary in St. Louis. Osei received her MFA from Washington University in St. Louis, where she was a Chancellor's Graduate Fellow, Mr. and Mrs. Spencer T. Olin Fellow, and Danforth Scholar.

Jon Young (b. 1981, Winston-Salem, North Carolina) is a citizen of the Catawba Indian Nation in Rock Hill, South Carolina. His recent solo exhibitions include Carl Kostyál at Intersect Art Fair, Aspen; J Hammond Projects, London; LCCC, Cheyenne, Wyoming; and No Place Gallery, Columbus, Ohio. Young holds a BFA from the University of Wyoming. He was a Chancellor's Graduate Fellow at Washington University in St. Louis, 2018–19, and was awarded a Lighton International Artist Exchange Program Grant in 2020.

2002-2022 Great Rivers Biennial Artists and Jurors

Over the past twenty years, the ten iterations of this biennial have given amazing opportunities to a diverse array of artists from the St. Louis region. Through this program, the participating artists have also been connected to some of the most important and salient voices of the contemporary art world including:

Artists

Brandon Anschutz
Lyndon Barrois Jr.
Nanette Boileau
Martin Brief
Juan William Chávez
Jill Downen
Addoley Dzegede
Corey Escoto
Tate Foley
Adam Frelin
Sarah Frost
Cameron Fuller
Kim Humphries
Kahlil Robert Irving
David Johnson
Asma Kazmi
Yowshien Kuo
Michelle Oosterbaan
Yvonne Osei
Sarah Paulsen
Tim Portlock
Jacob Stanley
Matthew Strauss
Mel Trad (Maria Helena Trad)
Jason Wallace Triefenbach
Carlie Trosclair
Rachel Youn
Jon Young
Cayce Zavaglia
Moses

Jurors

Cheryl Brutvan
Mel Chin
Lisa Corrin
José Carlos Diaz
Lisa Dorin
Elizabeth Dunbar
Anne Ellegood
Douglas Fogle
Melissa Franklin
Garry Garrels
Jeffrey Grove
Lauren Haynes
Carmen Hermo
Martin Kersels
Christine Y. Kim
Christopher Y. Lew
Jen Liu
Helen Molesworth
Valerie Cassel Oliver
Paul Pfeiffer
Amanda Ross-Ho
Lowery Stokes Sims
Debra Singer
Laura Steward
Lilian Tone
Hamza Walker
Lynne Warren
Lydia Yee
Heidi Zuckerman



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Related Events

Friday, September 9

Patron and Press Preview 10:00–11:30 am

Member Preview 5:00–6:00 pm

Public Opening 6:00–9:00 pm

Saturday, September 10,

11:00 am

Artist and Juror Panel Discussion

For press access on September 9, RSVP to Samantha Lyons at slyons@camstl.org. Artists Yowshien Kuo, Yvonne Osei, and Jon Young, as well as jurors Carmen Hermo, Jen Liu, and Hamza Walker, will be in attendance.

Thursday, January 26,

5:30 pm

Confluence: Celebrating the Tenth Edition of the Great Rivers Biennial

To schedule a Zoom or phone interview with the artists or exhibition organizer Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Chief Curator, throughout the fall/winter exhibition season, please contact slyons@camstl.org.

About the Gateway Foundation

The Gateway Foundation strives to enrich St. Louis life and culture by supporting efforts to acquire, create, and improve tangible and durable art and urban design. The focus of Gateway is to foster and support cultural and artistic activities and, on occasion, related to educational activities devoted to improving the quality of life in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Visit the Gateway Foundation's website at gatewayfoundation.org and Twitter feed [@CitygardenSTL](https://twitter.com/CitygardenSTL).

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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