

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

CAM awarded \$150,545 IMLS Museums for America Grant to support audience engagement research and strategic planning



Photo: Wil Driscoll.

August 17, 2022 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) has been awarded a \$150,545 Museums for America Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to conduct audience engagement research, program evaluation, and strategic planning. This research will provide the museum with insights to boldly experiment with new ways of engaging visitors and the broader St. Louis community—including non-traditional museumgoers and those who may not yet feel that the museum is “for” them.

IMLS has awarded more than \$29 million to museums across the nation to improve services to their communities. Through the agency’s largest competitive grant program, Museums for America, and its special initiatives, Museums Empowered and Inspire! Grants for Small Museums, a total of 199 projects were selected from 587 applications. CAM was one of four institutions selected for a 2022 Museums for America grant in the state of Missouri, including the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Saint Louis Zoo, and the Jewish Federation of St. Louis (St. Louis Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum). “The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis demonstrates the continuous learning efforts of museums,” announced Laura Huerta Migus, Deputy Director, Office of Museum Services.

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"CAM's project reflects the implementation of lessons learned to revitalize museum practice and workforces while continuing to serve its communities."

"We are so grateful to IMLS! This grant couldn't have come at a better time with the changing landscape of audience development in the Covid era," said CAM's Executive Director, Lisa Melandri. "CAM is a responsive institution, with partnerships and programs that respond to what communities have asked for. We are focused on really listening to our community and this grant will allow us to learn more about how to grow our audiences."

Museums for America supports projects that strengthen the ability of individual museums to benefit the public by providing high-quality, inclusive learning experiences, maximizing resources to address community needs through partnerships and collaborations, and by preserving and providing access to the collections entrusted to their care. 120 projects were funded through this year's Museums for America program, including CAM's. For the complete list of funded projects, visit the IMLS searchable database [here](#).

More About the Project

CAM will engage three consultants in a series of interrelated projects connected to audience research, program evaluation, and organizational planning. The partnering consultants will engage internal and external audiences and stakeholders in focus groups and surveys to gather information about the museum's current strengths and weaknesses and gaps in audience engagement and make recommendations for operational and programmatic change at the museum. Research findings will be integrated into an actionable, publicly-available strategic plan, to ensure the museum best serves diverse art audiences of today and the future. The project will serve as a timely national case study for audience-centric museum planning.

The project builds upon recommendations and findings from Culture Track's "[Culture + Community](#)," a national research initiative by LaPlaca Cohen in collaboration with Slover Linett and Yancey Consulting aimed at bridging the cultural sector with the experiences and needs of its communities and audiences during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. In its recently completed second wave, the study evolved to provide cultural institutions with actionable insights toward becoming more equitable, inclusive spaces and more active participants within movements for social and racial justice.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. IMLS envisions a nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov.





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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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