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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Collective Impact launches new collaborative exhibition with artist Mee Jey, opening July 12



Collective Impact program model.
Courtesy Creative Reaction Lab.

April 20, 2023 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) announces the second presentation of art in collaboration with [Creative Reaction Lab](#) (CRXLAB) during CAM's spring/summer 2023 season. In early July, the Museum's Education Galleries will feature **Collective Impact: Building Beautiful Community**. This exhibition will include a community-driven art project developed by members of the [Collective Impact](#) 2022–23 cohort, a group of stakeholders and residents from the neighborhoods in and around CRXLAB and CAM, in collaboration with multidisciplinary artist [Mee Jey](#).

Collective Impact was established in 2020 as a multiyear partnership between CAM and CRXLAB. Collective Impact makes use of an [Equity-Centered Community Design™](#) model to identify, develop, coordinate, and collaborate in artistic interventions that directly relate to the challenges faced in the area's shared neighborhoods of Covenant Blu/Grand Center, Vandeventer, and The Ville.

Beginning in October 2022, the 2022–23 cohort of community stakeholders—known as the Collective—began meeting regularly with CAM and CRXLAB staff to explore different forms of community engagement. After identifying a common agenda, the Collective designed a call for proposals for artistic interventions around the theme of "Building Beautiful Community," and selected Mee Jey's "US: United Sapiens" project for the commission.

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Jey's proposal features a co-created figurative sculpture that uses colorful forms to represent and embody cooperation. "US: United Sapiens' stands for an optimistic, beautiful vision of a time and space where people of all color, creed, religious, ideological, and racial backgrounds come together in support of each other," says Jey. "Being a community artist with a focus on public facing projects and sculptural installations, I'm excited for this opportunity to create a site-specific work about community and beauty. I look forward to building strong communities through hands-on creative experiences with the members of the neighborhood."

The artist and the Collective are working to conduct creative placemaking and the eventual installation of the artwork. The exhibition at CAM will evolve to include updated information about the artwork as it develops, and will invite visitors to contribute their reflections about how values are expressed through color. The 2022–23 Collective includes Audrey Ellermann, Melita Harry, Ronald Jones, Alexis Merriweather, Ada Parker, Dazanni Smith, DeZha Smith, Mia Vance, and Quinton Ward.

Collective Impact: Building Beautiful Community will be on view between July 12–August 13, 2023.



Photo courtesy Diane Anderson.

Mee Jey is a multidisciplinary Indian artist who was honored with the St. Louis Visionary Emerging Artist Award in 2022. Jey has shown works, performed, and been creatively associated with the Saint Louis Art Museum, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Missouri History Museum, and Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis. She was the Community Artist in Residence at Laumeier Sculpture Park in 2022 and is currently an Artist in Residence at Craft Alliance. Her works have been shown regionally in St. Louis, Columbia, MO, and Alton, IL; nationally in New York City and Miami; and internationally in London, Athens, and New Delhi. She received her MFA degree from Sam Fox School of Arts, Washington University in St. Louis. Jey has a BA degree in History and MA degree in Archaeology from Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University, respectively.

CRXLAB x CAM is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Michelle Dezember, Director of Learning and Engagement, and Miriam Ruiz, School and Community Programs Manager, in partnership with Creative Reaction Lab's Antionette Carroll, Founder, President, and CEO; Robert Beckles, Programs and Education Coordinator; and Tepa Wells, Development and Communications Coordinator.

Collective Impact is presented by PNC Arts Alive. This program is generously funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, Mid-America Arts Alliance, and the state arts agencies of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas.



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To schedule a Zoom or phone interview with the exhibition organizers, including artist Mee Jey and CRXLAB organizers Tepra Wells and Robert Beckles, please contact slyons@camstl.org.

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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