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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis to receive \$40,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts



Justin Favela, *Valley of Oaxaca, after José María Velasco*, 2018. Paper and glue on board, 42 x 63 1/4 inches. Courtesy the artist. Photo courtesy The Berman Museum of Art.

May 24, 2023 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) has been approved for a \$40,000 Grants for Arts Projects award from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to support an exhibition of new works by Las Vegas-based artist Justin Favela. The exhibition will premiere at CAM September 8, 2023–February 11, 2024.

Known for his vivid large-scale murals and sculptures, Favela's exhibition will feature a new site-specific installation highlighting the artist's bold, colorful designs and signature piñata paper technique on the Museum's 60-foot Project Wall. The exhibition will also include a new video work as part of CAM's outdoor Street Views projection, on view from dusk to midnight every night. CAM's project is among 1,130 projects across the country, totaling more than \$31 million, that were selected during this second round of Grants for Arts Projects fiscal year 2023 funding.

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10–5 Wed
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CAM is free. Visit often!

“The National Endowment for the Arts is pleased to support a wide range of projects, including *Justin Favela* at the Contemporary Art Museum of St. Louis, demonstrating the many ways the arts enrich our lives and contribute to healthy and thriving communities,” said NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. “These organizations play an important role in advancing the creative vitality of our nation and helping to ensure that all people can benefit from arts, culture, and design.”

The grant also supports a free, Family Fiesta performance that will activate the installation and provide opportunities for St. Louis audiences to meet the artist and explore Latin American culture. As part of his socially-engaged practice, Favela regularly hosts Family Fiestas at museums and in unexpected locations. These public performances of the artist’s own family celebrations are designed to attract new museum audiences and draw attention to institutional inclusion efforts. Since 2014, he has staged Family Fiestas at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas; Michael Heizer’s earthwork *Double Negative* in Moapa Valley, Nevada; Denver Art Museum; and Des Moines Art Center, among others. Favela and his family will present a Family Fiesta at CAM during the fall exhibition season, inviting hundreds of guests to participate in traditional Mexican and Guatemalan games and activities. Viewers will also be invited to see Favela’s installation in its final days of completion and hear from the artist at CAM’s [Work in Progress](#) public event.

“With the NEA’s support, CAM is honored to provide a platform for Favela’s joyful and monumental vision. This generous funding will enable the artist to create a new site-specific work and connect with St. Louis audiences both inside and outside the museum in an incredible celebration of art, culture, and community,” said CAM’s Executive Director, Lisa Melandri.

For more information on other projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news).

This exhibition is generously supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Whitaker Foundation.



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Justin Favela is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Misa Jeffereis, Associate Curator.

More About the Artist

Favela gained significant attention in the art world after receiving the 2021 Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship and participating in El Museo del Barrio’s *ESTAMOS BIEN – LA TRIENAL 20/21*. His creative practice explores notions of authenticity, place, and identity through the use of familiar materials. Drawing inspiration from traditional Mexican or Latin American craft, specifically *cartonería*—or piñata making—Favela’s technique uses paper and glue to create dynamic, large-scale forms. His piñata-like sculptures and installations become vibrant symbols of Latinx joy and visibility. Informed by his own Mexican-

Guatemalan upbringing, Favela's colorful and often humorous works aim to critique cultural stereotypes and create public dialogue around what it means to be Latinx in the US. His installations have been commissioned by museums including the Denver Art Museum in Colorado; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas; and El Museo del Barrio in New York. He holds a BFA in Fine Art from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

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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