

New Art in the Neighborhood How to Change Yourself World



New Art in the Neighborhood participant Ivy Kanak's painting *Table Man*, made with acrylic and sand. Photo courtesy CAM staff.

This exhibition highlights works made by young artists in CAM's teen studio program New Art in the Neighborhood (NAN). Since 1995, NAN has sought to nourish the creative minds of our city's talented young artists. On Saturday afternoons during a 12-week residency in the fall and winter/spring, up to 15 teens, selected through a competitive application process, receive art instruction at a pre-professional level from Resident Teaching Artists, museum staff, and visiting artists. NAN artists also are provided with supplies, open studio time, and critique sessions to develop their portfolios.

How to Change Yourself World features artwork made in the 2022–2023 academic year with Resident Teaching

Artists (RTA) Lillian Gardner and Mee Jey. Gardner asked students the question: what do you want to change in the world? Using a variety of materials, including wood, collage, sand, and fabric, students engaged with meaningful issues and found inspiration in themes such as identity, environment, and legacy. They also had the opportunity to participate in workshops with 2022 Great Rivers Biennial artists Yvonne Osei and Jon Young.

Similarly, Mee Jey asked students to be deeply reflective in order to find their strengths. Using fabric and found items, the students created artworks that were just as much about the woven intricacies of human identity as they were about the materials. Mee Jey introduced

various stitching and fabric techniques that allowed each student to evolve their process in a unique direction. Some used fabric as a way to paint on canvas while others began working with the material three-dimensionally. The students were also introduced to New York-based artist Ruby Chishti, who they met virtually while in the studio.

While some of the artworks featured here share similarities in their use of materials, the exhibition as a whole highlights students' diverse approaches and individual paths undertaken throughout the program.

Featured NAN Projects

As part of the Fall 2022 NAN program led by RTA Lillian Gardner, participants learned how to create a wooden shadow box by using a miter saw to trim wooden planks. The shadow box was then used to create a new artwork that implemented ideas and techniques that were learned from previous projects. Students also created sand paintings that were inspired by Great Rivers Biennial artist Jon Young, who also used sand in his artworks gathered from significant places in his life. In class, students mixed it with acrylic paint to experiment with thickly textured surfaces.

RTA Mee Jey showed students how to use found materials and a range of fabric and cotton-stuffing to create three-dimensional forms based on previous collage work. Often painting on top of fabric and vice versa, artworks created by NAN participants ranged from self portraiture to abstract compositions.

Inspired by the work in Jacolby Satterwhite's exhibition, *Spirits Roaming on the Earth*, CAM Teen and Adult Programs Manager Brandon Barr worked with students to create DIY holograms. Using common materials—a wooden box, CD case, and a cell phone—students followed techniques taught by Mee Jey to create the illusion of objects and figures moving within a real miniature diorama. This project offered students new ways to explore ideas surrounding identity and personal utopias through digital and sculptural media.

2022–23 NAN artists include: Gray Baker, Lev Burmeister, Jay Elvert, Will Fendler, Hank Fosdick, Sofia Gleissner, Jesse Heater, Josie Hoskins, Finn Kanak, Ivy Kanak, Audrey LaBeaume, Summer Lewis, Cayan Moore, Cozette Mothershead, Sanai Todd, Tariq Upchurch-Bey, Mars Vance, Jovi Vaughn, Kevin Werts, Frankie Williams, Jacob Williams, and Yaa Williams.

Resident Teaching Artists

Lillian Gardner (she/her) is an African and Native American poet, visual artist, musician, and dancer. She earned a BFA at Webster University from the Department of Art, Design, and Art History. Through her work, she acknowledges and promotes underrepresented groups in the arts.

Mee Jey (she/her) is an Indian artist who has developed her unique way of engaging her local communities in India and the US in her creative projects. She received her MFA from Washington University in St. Louis in 2019.

New Art in the Neighborhood: How to Change Yourself World is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Brandon Barr, Teen and Adult Programs Manager.

New Art in the Neighborhood is generously supported in part by Anonymous, Crawford Taylor Foundation, Employees Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis, Mary Ranken Jordan and Ettie A. Jordan Charitable Foundation, Reinsurance Group of America, Inc. (RGA), and Terry D. Weiss, MD, Youth Education Endowment Fund.



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