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Contemporary Art  
Museum St. Louis

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Museum-wide exhibition *Like Water* considers landscape simultaneously as a material, physical condition and an interior emotional state, presenting an international and multigenerational group of artists. Exhibition opens March 7, 2025**



Candice Lin, *La Charada China*, 2018.

**October 9, 2024 (St. Louis, MO)**—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) will present *Like Water*, a museum-wide exhibition featuring an international and multigenerational group of artists. The exhibition considers landscape simultaneously as a material, physical condition and an interior emotional state. Works in *Like Water* address water in multiple ways—from its life-giving and destructive powers, to the Mississippi River and its numerous tributaries, fonts (of inspiration), floods (of emotion), climate change, leakiness, and the Middle Passage, among other subjects. Participating artists include Jamal Cyrus, Simone Fattal, Dionne Lee, Candice Lin, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, and Vivian Suter. *Like Water* will be on view at CAM from **March 7–August 10, 2025**.

*Like Water* will fill the museum with sculpture, video, ceramics, drawing, textiles, collages, and paintings. Each artist approaches the subject of water and fluidity in deeply individual ways that are made evident through substantive presentations of their work. For example, artworks by Cyrus, Lin, and Santiago Muñoz expose lesser-known histories of

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the Middle Passage and US colonial relationships with Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. In the hands of Suter, Lee, and Fattal respectively, fluidity is physically evident via liquid acrylic paint and cascading installations of unstretched canvases; in video and collages that focus viewers' attention on seen and unseen bodies of water; and in the plasticity of clay before the process of firing in a kiln.

The artists in *Like Water* share stories and ideas that have been shaped by and through this life-sustaining element. Taken together, their works encourage viewers to reflect on water's emotional and poetic resonances, and the changing cultural, ecological, and sociopolitical ecosystems in which we circulate.

#### **About the artists featured in Like Water:**

**Jamal Cyrus'** (b.1973) multidisciplinary practice draws on the languages of collage and assemblage to explore the evolution of African American identity in relation to Black political movements and African diasporic experience. Cyrus' aesthetic practice transforms mundane materials into objects with rich, densely packed networks of meaning and purpose. His *Blue Alluvial Glue* series focuses on denim, the workwear material whose dependence on indigo dyeing implicates it in US colonial trade, the Middle Passage, and Antebellum southern cotton production. His works also reference alluvial soil—deposited by flooding rivers—that enriches riparian land, and the musical genre of the Blues. CAM's presentation will include textile works as well as reimagined and repurposed musical instruments that are, in the artist's words, "ritual objects for reconnecting African and African American cultures." As a part of the exhibition's public programs, CAM is commissioning a performance in which Cyrus and invited collaborators will engage his sculptural works with sound and action.

**Simone Fattal's** (b.1942) ceramic sculptures appear simultaneously ancient and wholly modern. A small group of Fattal's earliest ceramic sculptures—never before publicly exhibited until *Like Water*—were inspired by a sculpture known as the Amorite Spring Goddess, which Fattal encountered decades ago in the collection of the Aleppo Museum in Syria. These homages appear alongside additional ceramic and cast bronze figures that suggest sentries and venerable deities, as well as architectural and natural phenomena. Fattal's presentation will chart a sinuous course through the museum, originating in the main galleries and culminating in the CAM's courtyard.

**Candice Lin's** (b.1979) practice—spanning ceramics, built environments, assemblage and drawing—critically exposes histories of colonization, extraction, consumption, and exploitation. Building what she refers to as "tactile theaters," Lin creates spaces in which buried, overlooked narratives are unearthed and teased. Referencing histories of Chinese laborers in the Caribbean, Lin's *La Charada China* occupies a room with an earthen floor, mylar walls, grow lights, and a rudimentary irrigation system with a raised platform in the center. The platform's mixture of red clay and cement is formed into a human silhouette where seeds are planted with the intention to cultivate growth. For the presentation at CAM, Lin has updated this work to include an audio component that offers a narrative of shifting and fluid identity. Celebrating decay, leaks, sputtering, and the disintegration of materials, Lin's work offers an analogue for the dissolution of unwelcome, oppressive systems.

**Dionne Lee** (b.1988) creates photographs, collages, and videos that explore power, survival, and personal history in relation to the American landscape. She delves into themes of autonomy, the presence of ancestral trauma and resilience, and the history and energies of particular places. From Lee's perspective, water is a wilderness that holds dueling forces of safety and danger, and her meditative videos and collaged photographic prints mine the visible and invisible undercurrents of American cultural history.

**Beatriz Santiago Muñoz** (b.1972) is an artist whose approach to making films and videos resembles the careful approach of an ethnographer. Her moving images often cast non-actors as protagonists, and amplify and expand cultural histories and local mythologies. Santiago Muñoz refers to her approach as the "sensory unconscious" and it allows her and her subjects to explore environmental experiences and realities that connect people with particular sites. At CAM, a three-channel video installation explores the Classical Greek myth of Philoctetes, a legendary hero and expert archer who fought for Sparta in the Trojan War. Drawn to this myth's shoreline setting and "the daydreams isolated places incite," Santiago Muñoz's work questions Puerto Rico's "left-behind" colonial relationship with the US, and the island's recent challenges due to hurricanes and rising sea levels.

**Vivian Suter** (b.1949) lives and works in Panajachel, Guatemala, painting in makeshift studios throughout a dense forest. Working outdoors, her paintings are subject to natural forces, and Suter welcomes the weathering of her canvases. Her unique presentations often immerse viewers in cascades of un-stretched canvases suspended from ceilings and walls. Suter's colorful, gestural paintings evoke fluidity both in their application of liquid acrylic paint, and as they slide between abstraction and representation. At once refined and riotous, the installation of nearly 100 paintings suspended from the ceiling across the museum's expansive galleries will significantly alter the experience of CAM's architecture, providing captivating spaces for contemplation and discovery.

*Like Water* is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Dean Daderko, Ferring Foundation Chief Curator.

Major support for *Like Water* is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. This exhibition is generously supported in part by Etant donnés, a program of Villa Albertine; Independent Curators International; Alison Sieloff and Sam Foxman; Emily Rauh Pulitzer; Ann R. Ruwitch and John Fox Arnold; Mary Ann and Andy Srenco; Pat Whitaker and Dick Miles; and Whitaker Foundation.



### Related Interpretive Exhibition

Taking inspiration from themes in *Like Water*, CAM will also present a related interpretive exhibition and symposium on view at the same time. *Make the River Present* will provide creative engagement with the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Although St. Louis is physically bordered by these rivers—the two longest in the US—their presence is obscured



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by industrialization, urban planning, and Indigenous erasure. Through an interactive space in CAM's Education Galleries, visitors will be invited to strengthen connections to these mighty rivers through artworks, resources, and activities that highlight present-day and ancestral stewardship of the river and its environments, especially focusing on Native and African American perspectives. A companion symposium in summer 2025 will activate how artists and cultural workers can realign human relationships to these waters.

*Make the River Present* is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Michelle Dezember, CAM's Director of Learning & Engagement and Allena Brazier, independent curator. The exhibition and symposium are presented in partnership with the Missouri Humanities and with support from the Missouri Humanities Trust Fund.



*CAM will host a press preview on March 7, 2025. For press inquiries, including access to the preview or interview opportunities with the artists or curator, contact Alexia Majors at [amajors@camstl.org](mailto:amajors@camstl.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](http://camstl.org).

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#### Image caption

Candice Lin, *La Charada China*, 2018 (detail from 11th Taipei Biennial: Post-Nature—A Museum as An Ecosystem, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan, 2018). Earth, red clay, guano, cement, poppy seeds, sugarcane, seeds of various poisonous Caribbean plants, grow light, Mylar, wooden and metal armature, soaker hoses, irrigation system, tinctures in glass bottles, ceramics, toy boat, gourds, pencil on paper drawings, teapots, teacups, photographs, dried flora, chain, hardware, and video (color, sound, total running time: 13 min.) Photo courtesy François Ghebaly, Los Angeles