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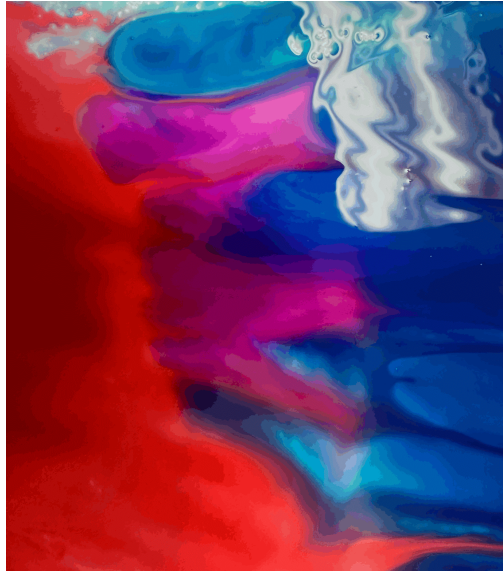


Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***ArtReach: Confluence* opens March 7, showcasing St. Louis waterways through art created by Sumner and Vashon students**



February 10, 2025 (St. Louis, MO)—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis presents ***ArtReach: Confluence***, featuring work made by student artists from Sumner and Vashon High Schools during the 2024–25 academic year. This year’s student showcase is inspired by the Museum’s spring exhibitions *Like Water* and *Make the River Present*. Under the instruction of Resident Teaching Artists (RTAs) Adrienne Outlaw, Dee Levang, and Rodrick Whetstone, participating students explored media and concepts related to the theme of “confluence,” as well as the waterways that surround St. Louis and define this city’s identity. *ArtReach: Confluence* will be on view in the Education Galleries at CAM from **March 7–August 10, 2025**.

Since 2017, CAM has partnered with Vashon High School to supplement curriculum, providing art experiences that are central to the development of healthy, active, and inquisitive minds. In 2021, we proudly expanded our ArtReach Partnership to include the historic Sumner High School. Through consistent, weekly art classes led by RTAs, young artists are introduced to new creative mediums and encouraged to explore their individual interests including theater, dance, music, fashion, and visual arts.

ArtReach: Confluence presents a selection of artwork showing how students have worked in a “flow” state with various water-based media, experimented with the “confluence” of multiple disciplines coming together, and learned about the ways to repurpose the post-consumer plastic pollution from the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.

RTA Adrienne Outlaw’s innovative curriculum centered on the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, with a strong focus on addressing plastic pollution. Highlighting the impact of waste flowing through these rivers from thirty-one states, Outlaw emphasized the potential for repurposing plastic waste to rescue environmental harm. Research shows that plastics account for 75% of the trash carried by the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. In her classroom, Outlaw guided Vashon students in transforming donated post-consumer plastics—such as bags, caps, and fabric—into intricate works of art. Through techniques like braiding, weaving, gluing, and fusing,

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students integrated graphic elements from the plastics and even (re)branded their work by recontextualizing logos or designing their own, fostering a creative dialogue around sustainability and waste reduction.

When thinking about confluence, the concept of “flow” provided **RTA Dee Levang** a powerful lens for exploring artistic expression. A “flow state” is characterized by a deep sense of focus, a loss of self-consciousness, and a feeling of timelessness, a state that artists and practitioners of any creative enterprise can enter. Levang engaged Sumner students in this concept by introducing them to liquid-based and water soluble media and sharing techniques to help them enter into a state of flow in various aspects of their lives. In an effort to embrace imperfection, surrendering to chance, and the unpredictable nature of creativity, students used ink droppers, spray bottles, plastic cards, and skewers, as well as larger tools like brooms, mops, and squeegees for large-scale abstractions. The process allowed students to tap into their personal creative motivations and connect those with the literal flow of their materials.

RTA Rodrick Whetstone approached the theme of confluence through the lens of geometry, guiding Sumner students to explore how multiple axes come together on a coordinate plane. During the first quarter, students delved into two-dimensional graphic design using Canva, creating informational brochures on topics ranging from soda to graffiti. Building on this foundation, students then transitioned to three-dimensional design with TinkerCAD, where they translated their ideas into virtual models. Each design was limited to a scale of less than 13 cm to ensure that the objects could be printed using a MakerBot 3D design, allowing students to connect creative ideas with practical technical skills.

ArtReach: Confluence is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Miriam Ruiz, Education Manager.

ArtReach is generously supported in part by the Berges Family Foundation; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; The Strive Fund; Ann Yeatman Sheehan Charitable Trust; Clayco; Dana Brown Charitable Trust, U.S. Bank Trustee; Pat Whitaker and Dick Miles; Jenny Birgé; Anonymous; The Saigh Foundation; The Terry and Phyllis Weiss Children’s Education Fund; Robert & Toni Bader Charitable Foundation; The Mary Ranken Jordan and Ettie A. Jordan Charitable Foundation; Reinsurance Group of America, Inc.; and Stantec.

About the artists

Participating artists from Sumner High School (*Creating Flow* with RTA Dee Levang):

Omari Adams, Andre Depass, Karmyn Griffith, Dalijah Harris, Demetrius Harris, Jayden Haulcy, Syniah Henson, Darihanna Jones, Faith Jones, Anthony Kimble, Jada Lampkin, Michael Miles, Rodney Phillips, Londyn Ranch, Khalil Ransom, Jerrell Reece, Matthew Sanders, Tre'Sean Smith, and Lamont Williams

Participating artists from Sumner High School (*Digital Confluence* with RTA Rodrick

Whetstone): Andre Depass, Karmyn Griffith, Demetrius Harris, Syniah Henson, Janiaya Hubbard, Darryl Jackson, Hannah Johnson, Darihanna Jones, Michael Miles, Rodney Phillips, Londyn Ranch, Khalil Ransom, and Tre'Sean Smith



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Participating artists from Vashon High School (*Braid it, Weave it, Fuse it: The Confluence of Plastics and Ideas* with RTA Adrienne Outlaw): London Blake, Amynie Bland, Brian Blockette, Elijah Holmes, Demarion Huston, Cameryn "Cam" James, Rihanna Kennell, Minetta McGruder, Darren Oneal, Charles Rozier, Samirah "Mirra" Simpson-Bey, Brandon Smith, Jaleigha Thomas, and Chasidy Weekly

Related Events

Friday, March 7

Patron and Press Preview, 10:00–11:30 am (RSVP required)

Member Preview, 6:00–7:00 pm

Public Opening, 7:00–9:00 pm

For press access on March 7, including interview opportunities with the curator, contact Alexia Majors at amajors@camstl.org

For full event details, visit camstl.org/calendar

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.

Image Captions

Image 1) Artwork by Sumner student Jada Lampkin

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