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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Houston-based artist Jamal Cyrus premieres *Horn Beam Sacrament*, a new performance commissioned by CAM, on Saturday, March 8



Jamal Cyrus in his performance *Texas Fried Tenor*. Photo by Liz Ligon.

February 10, 2025 (St. Louis, MO)—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis is proud to present [*Horn Beam Sacrament*](#), a performance by Jamal Cyrus on **Saturday, March 8 from 11:00 am–12:00 pm**. Cyrus' collaborators include St. Louis-based poet K. Curtis Lyle, Houston-based artist and musician Corey De'Juan Sherrard Jr., and St. Louis bassist Damon Smith. *Horn Beam Sacrament* was commissioned in conjunction with CAM's spring/summer 2025 exhibition *Like Water*, organized by Ferring Foundation Chief Curator Dean Daderko.

Cyrus' sculptures in *Like Water* incorporate musical instruments and draw on Afro diasporic spiritual and musical traditions. The exhibition also includes a trio of textile works that honor the world-renowned saxophonist Julius Hemphill, who lived in St. Louis from 1966-1973 and was a founding member of the Black Artists' Group of St. Louis (BAG). Between 1968 and 1972, BAG fostered multidisciplinary collaborations between musicians, actors, dancers, creative writers, visual artists, educators, and community organizers, and played an integral role in shaping the free jazz movement. This vision of collaboration across disciplines resonates with Cyrus, whose own work bridges visual and sonic realms. Raised in a musical family, Cyrus "channels the power of sound as a vehicle for transcendence and identity-building, particularly in relation to Black culture."

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During *Horn Beam Sacrament*, the artist will ritually anoint a saxophone with materials including Mississippi River water, aloe, sargassum, liquid clay, and smoke from oud, hickory, and cherry woods. Sherrard has composed a percussive sonic accompaniment, which Smith will enliven with free jazz bass, and Lyle has written a new poem that celebrates “the Blues as an incorruptible center of our creative reality.” A recording Lyle made in St. Louis in 1971 with Hemphill and the vocalist Malinke Kenyatta—*The Collected Poem For Blind Lemon Jefferson*—was an early inspiration for *Horn Beam Sacrament*, making this collaboration ever more poignant.

This event is free and open to the public, and registration is encouraged but not required. For more details and to register, visit camstl.org.

Support for *Horn Beam Sacrament* has been provided by Alison Sieloff and Sam Foxman.

Event Details

What: *Horn Beam Sacrament*: A Performance by Jamal Cyrus

When: Saturday, March 8, 2025

Time: 11:00 am–12:00 pm

Where: Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 3750 Washington Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108

Admission: Free to attend. Registration is encouraged, but not required, visit camstl.org

About the Exhibition

Featuring artworks by an international and multigenerational group of artists, [Like Water](#) considers landscape simultaneously as a material, physical condition, and an interior emotional state. The exhibition addresses water in multiple ways—from its life-giving and destructive powers, to the Mississippi River and its tributaries, fonts (of inspiration), floods (of emotion), climate change, leakiness, and the Middle Passage. *Like Water* will fill the museum with sculpture, video, ceramics, drawing, textiles, collages, and paintings—with each artist approaching the subject of water and fluidity in deeply individual ways.

Exhibiting artists in *Like Water* are Jamal Cyrus, Simone Fattal, Dionne Lee, Candice Lin, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, and Vivian Suter. The exhibition 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; Emily Rauh Pulitzer; Ann R. Ruwitch and John Fox Arnold; Mary Ann and Andy Srenco; Pat Whitaker and Dick Miles; and Whitaker Foundation.



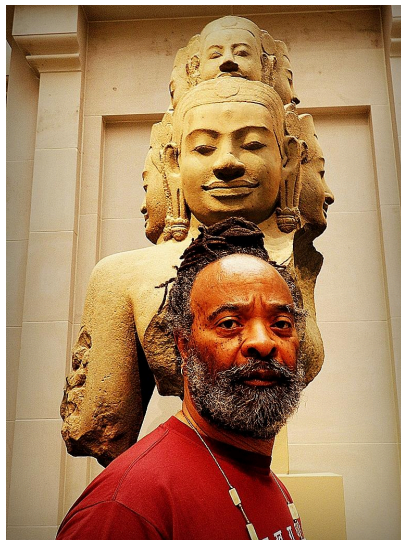
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About the Artists and Performers



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 reimaged 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. Photo: PATRON Gallery, Chicago and Inman Gallery, Houston.



K. Curtis Lyle was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA, where he was a founding member of the Watts Writers Workshop in 1966. From 1969-73 he was Poet-in-Residence for the Black Studies Department at Washington University in St. Louis. Lyle collaborated with the world renowned saxophonist Julius Hemphill, and his poem *Drunk on God* features on the album *Julius Hemphill Big Band*. His published titles include *Electric Church* (2003), *The Epileptic Camel Driver Speaks to a Refugee Death* (2008), and *Nailed Seraphim* (2008). His recent recording *29 Birds You Never Heard* with musicians George R. Sams, Adu Bu Dharma Joshua Weinstein, Damon Smith, Ra Kalaam Bob Moses, and Henry Claude was released in 2024. Lyle is based in St. Louis, MO and Mérida and Oaxaca, Mexico. Photo: K. Curtis Lyle



Corey De'Juan Sherrard Jr. (b. 1996, Houston, TX) engineers a developing system for composing songs and generating objects that respond to the deficit of black radical propaganda within a world culture. He is a School for Poetic Computation alum and graduated from the University of Houston with a BS in Digital Media in 2020. Since then, Sherrard has exhibited at Sanman Studios,

Sabine Street Studios, Cleve Carney Museum of Art, Basket Books and Art, and the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center. He is a recipient of the 2023 Jones Artist Award, a past resident of the George Washington Carver Museum's Small Black Museum residency program, and a past resident of Northwestern University's Black Arts Consortium Sonic Frequencies Summer Institute. Sherrard consults at the Kinder High School for Performing and Visual Arts, DJs monthly with internet radio station Ice House Radio, spins jazz on his weekly radio show STEAM at KTRU-LP 96.1 FM, and is a member of experimental music group Essex Moor. Photo: Corey De'Juan Sherrard Jr.



Damon Smith studied double bass with Lisle Ellis and has had lessons with Bertram Turezky, Joëlle Leandré, John Lindberg, Mark Dresser and others. Damon's explorations into the sonic palette of the double bass have resulted in a personal, flexible improvisational language based in the American jazz avant-garde movement and European non-idiomatic free improvisation. Visual art, film and dance heavily influence his music, as evidenced by his CAMH performance of Ben Patterson's Variations for Double Bass, collaborations with director Werner Herzog on soundtracks for Grizzly Man and Encounters at the End of the World, and an early performance with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Damon has collaborated with a wide range of musicians, including: Cecil Taylor, Marshall Allen (of Sun Ra's Arkestra), Henry Kaiser,

Roscoe Mitchell, Michael Pisaro, Wadada Leo Smith, Marco Eneidi, Wolfgang Fuchs, Peter Brötzmann and Peter Kowald. After many years in the San Francisco Bay Area, and six great years in Houston, Texas working regularly with Alvin Fielder, Sandy Ewen, David Dove & Chris Coghurn. Damon moved to the Boston area in the fall of 2016 and began working with Jeb Bishop, Joe McPhee and Ra-Kalam Bob Moses and many others. Damon has run Balance Point Acoustics record label since 2001, releasing music focusing on transatlantic collaborations between US and European musicians.

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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