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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Two civically-minded events aim to shape the future of St. Louis through community building, artistic activism, and dialogue at CAM on March 27



March 17, 2025 (St. Louis, MO)—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) is proud to host an evening of civic engagement and community-centered programming on Thursday, March 27, featuring two powerful events aimed at fostering dialogue and participation in local government and artistic activism. The evening will begin with the [St. Louis Mayoral Candidate Forum](#), hosted by the Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhood Association and the Brickline North Community Development Corporation from 4:00 pm—5:15 pm. Following this important forum, [Arts + Activism + Advocacy](#) will take place from 6:00 pm—8:00 pm, presented in partnership with the Regional Arts Commission.

“We are proud that CAM can be a place where our neighbors can gather and participate in civic life together. By engaging directly with those shaping the future of St. Louis, we have the opportunity to amplify our collective voices in a way that highlights the needs, perspectives, and values of our community,” said CAM Executive Director Lisa Melandri. “We are not only witnesses to change, but active participants in it and art has long served as a powerful tool in creating safe, inclusive spaces for expression, connection, and civic involvement.”

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Hours
10–5 Wed
10–5 Thu
10–8 Fri
10–5 Sat & Sun

CAM is free. Visit often!



The **St. Louis Mayoral Candidate Forum** provides an opportunity for community members to engage directly with the candidates running for mayor in the upcoming April 8, 2025, General Municipal Election. Hosted by the [Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhood Association](#) and the [Brickline North Community Development Corporation](#), this forum will feature the two candidates on the ballot, Mayor Tishaura Jones and Alderwoman Cara Spencer. After each candidate presents their vision for the future of St. Louis, a conversation moderated by Elaine Cha, Host of St. Louis Public Radio's *St. Louis on the Air* will pose questions from the audience. Questions may be submitted through this form. Registration is encouraged; please visit camstl.org/event/st-louis-mayoral-candidate-forum to sign up.

This event is organized in partnership with the Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhood Association and the Brickline North CDC.



Directly following the Mayoral Forum, attendees are invited to stick around for **Arts + Advocacy + Activism**. Hosted by the [Regional Arts Commission](#) in collaboration with CAM, the event will explore how the arts and creative thinking can play a role in civic participation and visioning at the city, regional, and national levels.

“The arts have deep roots in civic discourse, engagement and progress. Our gathering is intended to hold space for people in and around the arts sector – and to foster organizing and action,” said Ann Haubrich, grants director at the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis. “Our panel, made up of leaders at the local, state, and national levels, will center and encourage engagement, serving as a reminder that the arts will continue to galvanize our community, envisioning and creating a culture of possibility in a time of uncertainty.”

Attendees can look forward to performances by Grammy Award-winning vocalist Anita Jackson and visual, spoken, and teaching word artist Pacia Anderson. The panel will include Kelly McGowan, Founder and Executive Director of Transform 314, Missouri Lobbyist Kyna Iman, and Randy Cohen, Vice President of Research at Americans for the Arts. Kathryn Bentley, an actor, director, and teaching artist, will facilitate the conversation as the panelists discuss the real-world impact of voting, advocacy, and artistic expression in shaping our society, highlighting how our collective voices shape the future of St. Louis.

A comment and creative response wall will be available for attendees to share their thoughts and reflections on the topics being discussed. A reception will follow with complimentary food and beverages, allowing space for attendees to continue sharing, in community, and how we can work together as artists, creatives, and culture lovers to create a better city and better region.



REGIONAL ARTS COMMISSION OF ST. LOUIS

This event is organized in collaboration with the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis.

Event Details

What: St. Louis Mayoral Candidate Forum

When: Thursday, March 27, 2025

Time: 4:00 pm—5:15 pm

Where: Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (3750 Washington Boulevard St. Louis, MO 63108)

What: Arts + Activism + Advocacy

When: Thursday, March 27, 2025

Time: 6:00 pm—8:00 pm

/ 5:45 pm: Doors open; music by Anita Jackson

/ 6:00 pm: Welcome address

/ 6:15 pm: Panel discussion with Kelly McGowan, Kyna Iman, and Randy Cohen;
facilitated by Kathryn Bentley

/ 7:30 pm: Reception

Where: Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (3750 Washington Boulevard St. Louis, MO 63108)

Accessibility notes

To request an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for this event, please contact programs@camstl.org with as much prior notice possible to ensure availability.

About Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhood Association

Made up of residents, business owners, employees, students and stakeholders, the **Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhood Association** (CBGCNA) is an organized group of volunteers who work together to create a unified voice by enhancing the environment and addressing neighborhood concerns. The mission of CBGCNA is to live out the American Dream of a positive living environment with the support of the infrastructure components in place, solidifying and securing substantial opportunities for future generations.

About Brickline North Community Development Corporation

Brickline North Community Development Corporation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works to empower individuals and neighborhoods served by the Brickline Greenway's North Connector, namely Covenant Blu-Grand Center, Jeff-Vander-Lou (JVL), and St. Louis Place, by fostering inclusive and sustainable neighborhoods through collaborative initiatives and partnerships. The economic development programming will provide comprehensive community development services including neighborhood capacity building, neighborhood revitalization, public safety Initiatives, nonprofit and small business support and community engagement and advocacy.



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About the Arts + Activism + Advocacy Panelists and Contributors

Anita Jackson is a graduate of the American Music and Dramatic Academy in New York and has performed extensively nationally and internationally in theater productions, concerts and workshops. She has recorded and performed as a background vocalist on Grammy Award winning songs and albums for artists such as Bette Midler, Whitney Houston and Cissy Houston.

Pacia Anderson is a visual, spoken, and teaching word artist who uses language in its many expressed forms to tell vivid stories, record and share history, and as a vehicle for both introspection and communal connection. She has worked with several dozen youth, arts, nonprofit, and community organizations across the region and the country.

Kelly McGowan is Founder and Executive Director of Transform 314. She is a proud St. Louisan and health equity advocate, armed with a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science from Saint Louis University and a Master of Public Health from Washington University in St. Louis. Through Transform 314, Kelly is working to amplify community in local decision-making processes to ensure all St. Louis neighborhoods are designed for their inhabitants to thrive.

Kyna Iman is a Missouri lobbyist, who since 1993, has run her own one-person lobbying firm, Kyna Iman LLC. Unlike some of her colleagues at the Capitol, she did not study political science or law; she was an English and Communications Major, who minored in dance. She represents a wide variety of issues related to arts, education, and health.

Kathryn Bentley is Associate Professor of Theater Performance at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and Artistic Director of Southern Illinois University's Black Theatre Workshop. A theater professional with extensive experience as an actor, director, and teaching artist, she holds an MFA in Theater Directing and professional training in community arts and social justice. She has committed to utilizing her artistry as a way to challenge, inspire, and build community through shared experiences.

Randy Cohen is Vice President of Research at Americans for the Arts—the national advocacy organization for the arts—where he has been empowering arts advocates since 1991. He recently published *Arts & Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts & Culture Organizations* and *Audiences and Americans Speak Out About the Arts* in 2023, a national public opinion study about the arts. He is the 2024 recipient of the Sidney Yates Advocacy Award for outstanding advocacy on behalf of the performing arts in America.

About the Regional Arts Commission

The Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis (RAC) is the largest public funder of the arts in the region, investing more than \$115 million in the community since 1985. More than a funder, RAC is a passionate advocate, a true partner, and a leading catalyst for positive change in the arts and culture sector. Learn more about the organization's grants, programs and initiatives at racstl.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.



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