

Access is an Invitation: CAM Connect Showcase is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Alexis Creamer, Community Access Manager.

CAM Connect is presented by PNC Arts Alive.



Participating quilters from Central Baptist Church: Rose Bruce, Shelbe Bullock, Ashley Bush, Bessie Bush, Deborah Carnes, Alberta Carpenter, Carolyn Curry, Nellie Fogg, Karin Fowler, Teresa Simmons, Glendon Nedrick, and Rodney Williams

North St. Louis Creative Field Guide: Members include Qhuin Binion, Ronda Smith Branch, Cary Brown, Gabi Cole, AleXeana harlem Lopez, Tosha Phonix, and Frankie Williams with lead artists Dail Chambers and Juan William Chávez. Collaborating organizations include City of St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency, Creative Reaction Lab, Forest ReLeaf, and Northside Workshop

Tornado Relief Art Partners: 314 Oasis, Artists First, Jorden Latson, Dee Levang, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Olivia Obi, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, People’s Art and Recreation Center, Saint Louis Art Museum, and Aimee Wilkinson

Disability Justice Steering Committee: Angela Botz, Asia Johnson-Brimmage of Artists First, Hana McChesney, Gray Wilde, and Alexis Williams-Cavanaugh



Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis
3750 Washington Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63108
314.535.4660

Wed–Sun 10:00 am–5:00 pm
Open until 8:00 pm Fri

AO&Co at CAM
Wed–Sat 10:00 am–3:00 pm

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Related Programs

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MATI Places Drop-In Workshops

Fri, Sep 12, 12:00–8:00 pm
Sat, Sep 13 and Sun, Sep 14, 12:00–5:00 pm

First Friday: Gather ‘Round

Fri, Nov 7, 5:00–9:00 pm

Learn More

Visit our website for more information about *Access is an Invitation: CAM Connect Showcase*, including an **audio guide** from the curator.



Gallery Guide
Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

September 5, 2025–February 8, 2026



Access is an Invitation

CAM Connect Showcase



North St. Louis Creative Field Guide member Frankie Williams picks rose hips at Northside Workshop. Photo: CAM staff.

What does it mean to truly feel welcome? *Access is an Invitation: CAM Connect Showcase* uplifts the creative expressions, relationships, and ideas made as part of CAM Connect, in collaboration with community members who have historically faced barriers to accessing museum spaces. This showcase is not only a display of finished works of art, but also a celebration of shared time, trust, and transformation. It is a collective offering of presence, possibility, and human connection.

CAM Connect is the Museum’s ongoing initiative to strengthen social connection, community advocacy, and creative expression with North St. Louis residents, older adults, and people with disabilities. As the program has grown, so have the relationships, which have reached into church basements, gardens, and neighborhoods. Every work in this showcase is a story of

proximity and co-creation, and what happens when institutions slow down, open the door, and let the community lead.

This showcase features the hand-stitched quilts made by seniors at Central Baptist Church just blocks away from the Museum, the reflections from the North St. Louis Creative Field Guide, and the youth-created artworks developed in the wake of the May 2025 tornado. The Disability Justice Dreamer Space invites visitors to reflect, rest, and contribute ideas for a world built without barriers. Together, these contributions ask us to rethink access not just as entry, but as welcome, care, and belonging.

We invite you to think. We invite you to dream. We invite you to co-create. We invite you to come on in.



Central Baptist Church Quilting Group Founder Shelbe Bullock (right) working with a member of the group on a quilt. Photo: CAM staff.

The Warmth We Carry

Each week, just down the street from CAM, the hum of sewing machines and laughter fills the basement of Central Baptist Church. Under the leadership of Reverend Anthony L. Riley and Minister of Discipleship Natasha Nedrick Adzudzkor, the church’s mission to “transform lives” is alive in its quilting ministry, one of many acts of care and creativity nurtured through its discipleship efforts.



A member of the Central Baptist Church Quilting Group. Photo: CAM staff.

Founded in 2023 by Shelbe Bullock, the ministry welcomes both seasoned sewers and first-time quilters with patience, encouragement, and joy. The resulting quilts are as unique as their makers, stitched with memory, experimentation, and community. As one quilter shared, “There is beauty in a finished product... if no one else would notice a mistake, let it go.”

Supported by co-leader Karin Fowler and instructors Deborah Carnes and Nellie Fogg, the ministry now includes over a dozen participants, many from outside the church. One quilter reflected, “When I feel like quitting, their voices say, ‘You can do this!’”

The presentation of quilts will rotate periodically during the exhibition, which is on view through February 8, 2026. We invite you to return, witness new works, and celebrate the ever-growing community behind them.



Photo: CAM staff.

Rooted Here

Over the past year, a group of artists, North St. Louis residents, and CAM staff have been working on North St. Louis Creative Field Guide—a collaborative project that uplifts neighborhood green spaces as art studios. Members’ efforts celebrate ancestral knowledge, ecological care, and cultural memory. A peek into the process and some of the projects are on view in this exhibition.

Gabi Cole, co-founder of Fit and Food Connection, is creating a chakra-themed garden with color-coded flower beds alongside a wooden floral sculpture. Blending health, spirit, and community, her backyard becomes a living meditation.



Tosha Phonix’s farm, 314 Acres. Photo: CAM staff.



North St. Louis Creative Field Guide member AleXeana harlem Lopez picks rose hips at Northside Workshop. Photo: CAM staff.

AleXeana harlem Lopez, a third-generation fiber artist, created *Our Ancestor’s Compass Points North*, a soft-sculptural installation of textiles and what they call “time totems” made from stories and found materials from North St. Louis. Lopez explains:

“Throughout time in the Americas, peoples of African lineage have found safety seeking North... We honor the past to care for the present and lay ground for the future. This is a recording of the way home.”

These projects are just the seeds for what is to come from the North St. Louis Creative Field Guide. A publication that will come to fruition in 2026 will share more about the range of creative projects that have grown out of this endeavor.



314 Oasis in Fountain Park. Photo: CAM staff.

What Remains Must Grow

When a deadly tornado swept through North St. Louis in May 2025, it uprooted lives, homes, and routines. CAM responded quickly, partnering with local organizations and artists to create a Tornado Relief Summer Camp

within the Museum, and to bring free art activities to 314 Oasis in Fountain Park. These creative spaces offered youth and families a chance to process the storm, play freely, and reclaim joy.

One of the standout elements was a series of large-scale “doodle tables” created by Aimee Wilkinson, who goes by the artist name Amata Doods. Using recycled vinyl banners and thick markers, Wilkinson drew giant botanical illustrations across the tables, inviting young people and families to color them however they wanted. The result: a colorful, ever-evolving ecosystem of creativity. “Kids from toddlers to teens have taken to it very naturally,” Wilkinson shares. “It creates a beautiful, messy ecosystem that can be easily displayed after all the kids have had their turn.” A selection of the works presented here speak to grief, resilience, imagination, and recovery. They are not just expressions, they are acts of reclaiming the future.



Young participants work on a doodle banner by Amata Doods at 314 Oasis in Fountain Park. Photo: CAM staff.

Disability Justice Dreamer Space

What might it feel like to live in a world where access is *built-in*, not added on? What if rest, play, and creative freedom were foundational to every public space?

The Disability Justice Dreamer Space is an interactive environment in the Museum where visitors are invited to pause, reflect, and imagine. Designed in collaboration with disability leaders and advocates from CAM Connect, this space encourages dreaming as a radical act. Through writing prompts, playful objects, and a quiet invitation to vision differently, this space asks you to contribute to a more just and joyful future.

You’re invited to write, draw, rest, and share your ideas. Because access isn’t just a checklist, it’s a shared responsibility, a creative endeavor, and an invitation that begins with a simple “Yes, you belong here.”