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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CAM survey exhibition *Nobody's Gonna Love You the Way I Do*, opening September 10, celebrates the Brooklyn-based artist Ayana Evans' longtime commitment to live arts**



Ayana Evans, *Loophole of Retreat: Sparkle #5: I Love You* (performance still), 2022 at the *Loophole of Retreat* symposium, Venice, October 2022. Photo: Glorija Blazinsek.

**May 11, 2026 (St. Louis, MO)**—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) will present the first museum survey exhibition of work by Ayana Evans, a Brooklyn-based artist and performer. Celebrating Evans' dedication to live arts, the exhibition brings together new and recent videos, ephemera, live performances, and events that invite audience participation. ***Ayana Evans: Nobody's Gonna Love You the Way I Do*** will be on view at CAM from **September 10, 2026–February 7, 2027**.

Questioning social hierarchies and inequities through her work, Evans shows up “ready to do the most” to create and protect spaces where people can be their most authentic selves, be celebrated, and heal. Originally trained as a painter, Evans has established an unapologetic and emotionally invigorating voice as a performance artist over the last two decades. Her first live works were active social experiments: For *Operation Catsuit* (2012–present), Evans wore a now-signature neon green, zebra-striped catsuit in public, seeking to test her own self-confidence, while friends recorded videos that show how unsuspecting audiences received her. Since then, these performances have become a



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Museum St. Louis

vehicle through which Evans lays bare and challenges the ways class, race, gender, and sex are inextricably linked to broader social attitudes.

*Nobody's Gonna Love You the Way I Do* includes documentation of works that span decades of Evans' creative process. Viewers will encounter videos of guerilla performances presented on New York City streets; works staged for audiences in Venice, Michigan, and Montreal; and ephemera including a sign that reads, "I JUST CAME HERE TO FIND A HUSBAND," which Evans has worn serially in public appearances. A coat rack draped with yellow feather boas—adornments that often figure in Evans' performances—comes with an open invitation for visitors to don them and walk a red carpet.

Evans' work is direct, purposeful, and therapeutic. Through live performance, Evans demonstrates how collective experiences can generate accessible, humorous, challenging, and often profound results. With her prodigious body of work, Evans shares her experiences as a Black woman and builds bridges with her audiences through honesty and a disarming warmth. Programming for *Nobody's Gonna Love You the Way I Do* includes a new performance by the artist commissioned by CAM, and additional events.

*Ayana Evans: Nobody's Gonna Love You the Way I Do* is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Dean Daderko, Ferring Foundation Chief Curator, with support from Grace Early, Exhibitions Assistant.

This exhibition is generously supported in part by Whitaker Foundation.

## WHITAKER FOUNDATION

*CAM will host a press preview on September 10, 2026. For press inquiries, including access to the preview or interview opportunities with the artist or curator, contact Alexia Majors at [amajors@camstl.org](mailto:amajors@camstl.org)*

### **Related Events**

#### **Thursday, September 10**

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

#### **Saturday, October 10**

C.R.E.A.M. Career and Opportunity Fair, 10:00 am–3:00pm



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Museum St. Louis

### **About the artist**



**Ayana Evans** (b. Chicago, IL) is a performance artist based in New York City whose guerilla-style work has been staged at El Museo del Barrio, The Barnes Foundation, The Bronx Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum, Newark Museum, Queens Museum, and various public spaces. Her performances have been reviewed in *The New York Times*, *Bomb Magazine*, *ArtNet*, *Hyperallergic*, and *New York Magazine's The Cut*. She received the Franklin Furnace Fund (2017–18), NYFA Fellowship (2018), Jerome Hill

Artist Fellowship (2021–22), was Professor of the Practice at Brown University (2021–22), and won the 2022 Chamberlain Award at Headlands Art Center. Residencies include Yaddo, Skowhegan, Vermont Studio Center, and Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. Her current solo projects include exhibitions at Loyola University (Spring 2025) and Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (2026), and an annual arts career fair serving 200+ formerly incarcerated individuals. Evans is currently a professor at Fordham University, Brooklyn College, and NYU. Photo courtesy Dominique Duroseau and Nyugen Smith.

### **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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