

ArtReach: Near Futures is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Miriam Ruiz, Education Manager, in partnership with Counterpublic.

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Learn More
Visit our website for more information about *ArtReach: Near Futures*, including an **audio guide** from our Learning & Engagement team.



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

Museum
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Open until 7:00 pm Thu

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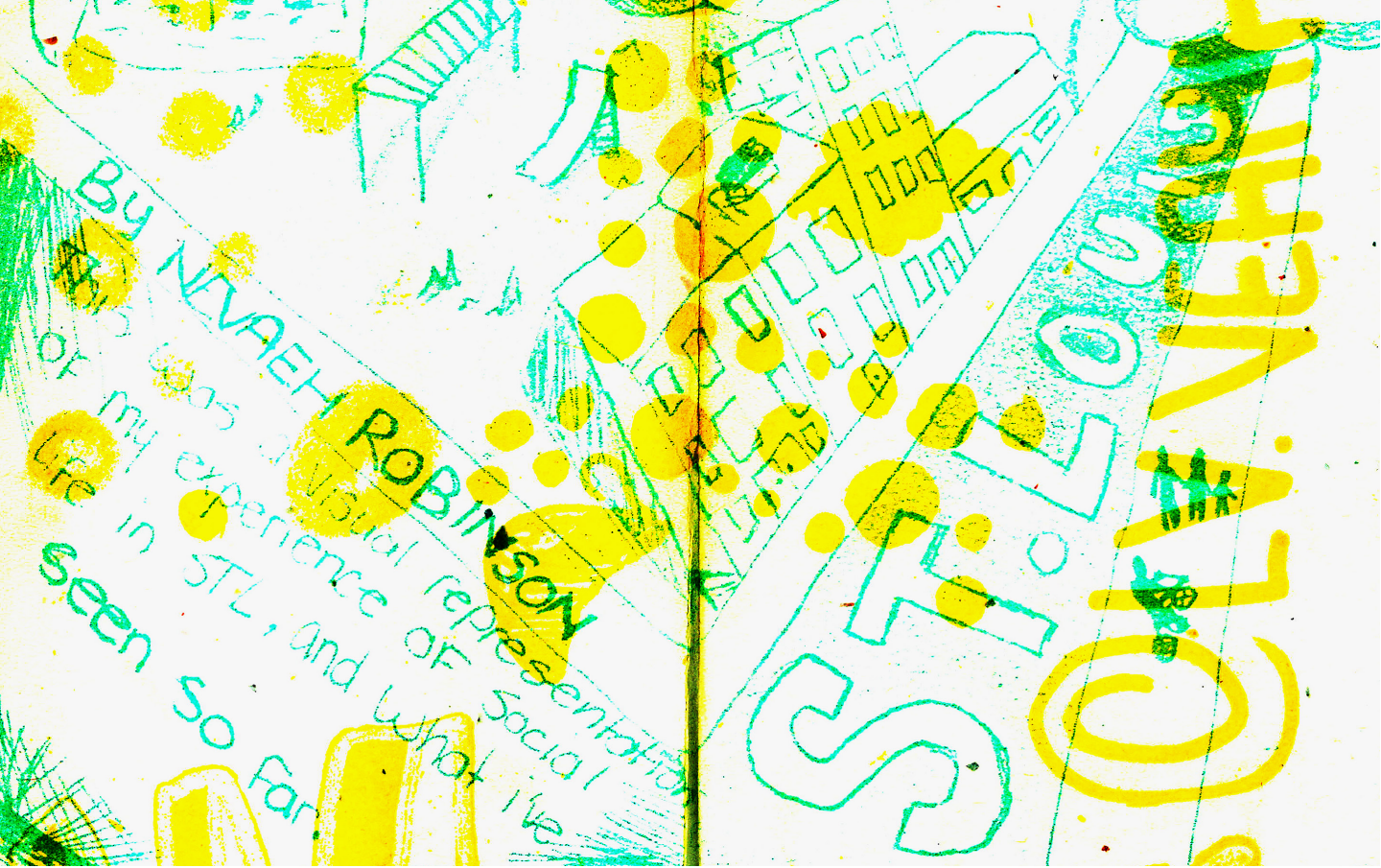


Gallery Guide
Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

September 10, 2026–February 7, 2027



ArtReach: Near Futures



Nevaeh Robinson, *Welcome to St. Louis* (detail), 2026.

CAM’s ArtReach Partnership works with St. Louis Public Schools to provide support in classrooms where art is needed most. Started in 2017 with Vashon High School, this suite of programs ensures a consistent art curriculum is available for students year-round at Vashon and Sumner High Schools through twice-weekly classes led by Resident Teaching Artists (RTA). For more than nine years, CAM has worked with local teaching artists to provide classes in creative disciplines from photography and found object installations to digital graphic design and improvisational performance. Students also benefit from field trips to CAM and other arts and culture spaces throughout the year. The ArtReach program culminates in an annual showcase of student artwork each fall in

CAM’s Education Galleries. During the fall/winter exhibition opening night, students, families, staff, and faculty attend a private reception, and the students are celebrated alongside the other exhibiting artists that season.

Our commitment to Sumner and Vashon will continue into the 2026–2027 school year with the curricular theme “Art and Ecology,” where students will explore their relationships with the natural world through various artistic media. Work by those students will be presented at CAM next fall.

Near Futures

“What role does collaboration play in transforming individual creative visions into collective community action?” This was one of the essential questions that ArtReach Resident Teaching Artists considered as they designed their curricula for the year’s theme of “Collaborative Futures.” Through various quarter-long projects, students at Sumner and Vashon High Schools were invited to conceptualize themselves in relation to the collective in multiple ways.

Under the guidance of Rodrick Whetstone, the classes drew inspiration from former CAM exhibiting artist Teresa Baker’s abstract landscapes as they reimagined a room in their home as an ideal haven for themselves and their family. With Anna Katz, students at Vashon created ceramic dishes that collectively form a banquet, while at Sumner, students learned about communal marine polyps and sculpted their own coral reef. Also working in ceramics, Sarah Knight instructed students in lantern-making, with the goal of creating an ensemble of small lights that together illuminate a room. Students working with Cleonique Hilsaca examined the theme more directly by translating their experiences of St. Louis into zinemaking. Martha Valenta taught students about design thinking and encouraged them to develop solutions to some of the biggest challenges facing their peers, producing prototypes for their resulting “inventions.”



Christopher Loss, People’s Art and Recreation Center, with a student at Sumner High School. Photo: CAM staff.

Throughout the year, ArtReach partners Counterpublic and Great Rivers Greenway provided additional resources for students to see how artmaking can exist within communities.

Zines as Activism at St. Louis Lambert International Airport

A small selection of zines produced by student artists from Sumner High School is also on view as part of St. Louis Lambert International Airport’s Art & Culture Program. *ArtReach: Zines as Activism* is installed near Gate E14 in Terminal 2 through December 15, 2026 and features enlarged reproductions of some of the designs Sumner students created for their zines with Cleonique Hilsaca.

Participating Sumner students: Sterling Aston-Williams, Rasean Barnes, Teriyah “Riyaa” Bass, Alexis Brown, Cassidy Brown, Saqqara “2D” Brown, Katelyn Catterson, Max Curtis, Andre Depass, Brianna Dillard, Zion Evans, Jamayne Fierce, Jayden Franklin, Dashon Frazier-Stokes, Marcinio Gray, Jai’Shaun Gregory, Kran Hawkins, Kerron Holloway, Kariah Holmes, Eniyah “Niyah” Hunt, Joshua Jones, Ka’Mayah Lakes, Chevet “Vet” McAlpine, Samara Morton, Ashuntay Payne, Isaac Perry, Nevaeh Robinson, Serenity Terry, Makala Thomas-Perry, Shailyn Wallis, Kevelle Watson El, Daesha Wilson, and Arielle Wooten

Participating Vashon students: Italy Bivens, Faith “Simon” Brefford, London Connors, Kaleze Doss, Kassidy Edwards, John Hayes, Nina Lawrence, Derrick Lee, Braelynn Mills, Monte Murray, Lamaria “Moria” Patterson, Keon Pannell, Arzell Pitts, Garbrielle Rhodes, Keyon Sinclair, Malaysia Smith, Morris Starks, Jermaine Taylor, Jayion Thomas, Ja’Miyah Ware, Shunta Wilkins, and Cameron Williams

Resident Teaching Artists



Cleonique Hilsaca is an award-winning multidisciplinary artist and educator from Honduras. She earned her BFA in Illustration with a minor in Graphic Design from Savannah College of Art and Design, and her MFA in Illustration & Visual Culture from Washington University in St. Louis. Her professional work can be found in comics, picture books, board games, and galleries. Her creative practice is focused in Latin American folklore and illustrated children’s literature. She lives in St. Louis with her cat and partner.



Anna Katz is an artist and educator who has been working in ceramics for over 25 years. Her work focuses on food and everyday objects. She uses scale and context to elevate these items to places otherwise reserved for more traditional items of beauty and reverence, with the intention that viewers will momentarily delight at the absurdity of the contradiction. She has a BA in Studio Art and a Masters of Arts in Teaching with a K-12 teaching certificate.



Sarah Knight is a ceramic mixed media artist and instructor. Their sculptures and installations use clay, rock, light, and found materials to question the inherent queerness of material and capacity for nature to reflect the realities of cultural, social, and global erasure of

marginalized identities. Solo exhibitions, including at venues in St. Louis, Minneapolis, and Kansas City, ask the viewer to engage with light, texture, and the fusion of natural and human materials in unexpected ways. Their teaching practice has allowed them the privilege of facilitating courses for all ages at places including COCA Center of Creative Arts, St. Louis Public Schools, the St. Louis Artist Guild, Washington University in St. Louis, and Eastern Illinois University.



Martha Valenta is a St. Louis-based artist whose practice centers on immersive environments and sensory objects built from inside a neurodivergent nervous system. Her work includes the ADHD Brain Coral series and Lost & Found Meditation, exhibited at the Saint Louis Art Museum in 2024. In partnership with MADE Makerspace, she recently launched Upward Spiral, an 18-month community collaboration marking the May 2025 St. Louis tornado. She is a recipient of Regional Arts Commission grants in 2024 and 2025 and a 2026 Saint Louis Art Fair Emerging Artist. She brings a background in UX research, innovation design, and accessibility design to her studio work and teaching.



Rodrick Whetstone is a St. Louis-based artist whose creative practice explores the combination of digital art and the playful exploration of analog materials. Driven by a commitment to community-based arts education, he has collaborated with local youth across various platforms to encourage experimental making. He holds a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa and continues to maintain a studio practice in St. Louis, focusing on community engagement, the playful exploration and combination of unlikely materials, and upcycling.

Special thanks to art teachers Abby Botts at Sumner and Sherry Holman at Vashon. Both educators are key to the ArtReach program’s educational team and whose presence in the classroom is indispensable.