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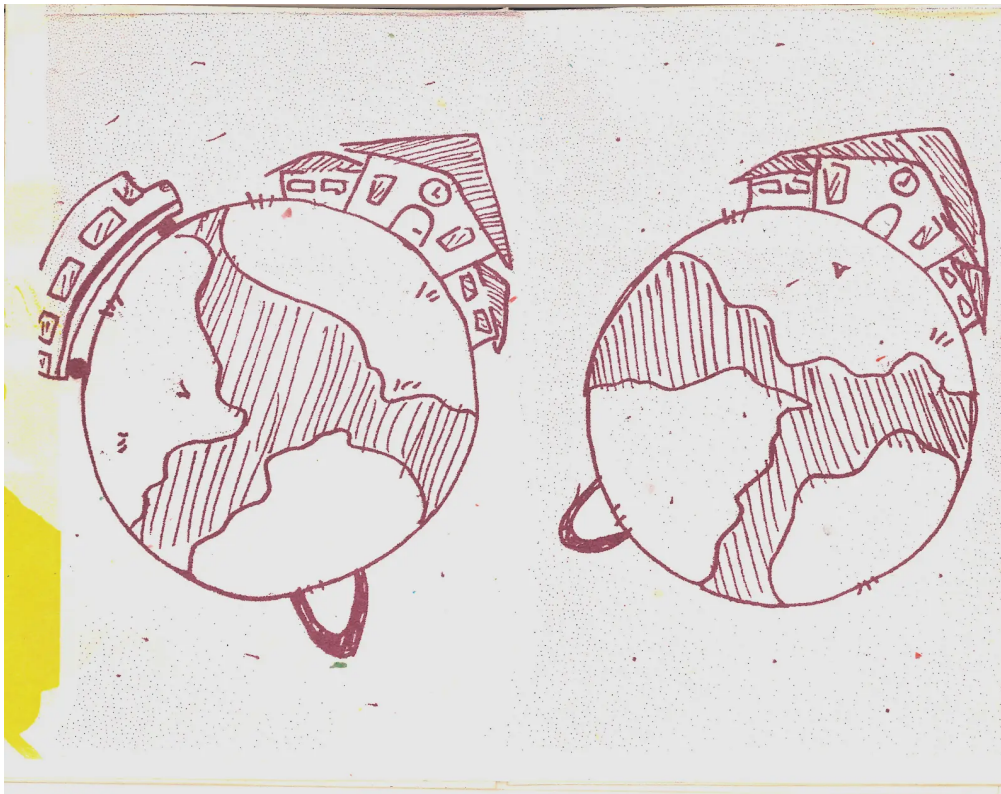


Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ArtReach: Near Futures opens September 10, showcasing a year of collaborative student art from Sumner and Vashon High Schools, with a companion installation on view at St. Louis Lambert International Airport



Detail from Sumner High School student artist Andre Depass, *St. Louis Is Just a...*, 2026.

August 12, 2026 (St. Louis, MO)—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents *ArtReach: Near Futures*, featuring work made by student artists from Sumner and Vashon High Schools during the 2025–26 academic year. The student showcase explores the theme of "collaborative futures," asking what role collaboration plays in transforming individual creative visions into collective community action. This year's program at Sumner High School was presented in partnership with Counterpublic, a triennial exhibition reimagining the possibilities of art in public life, on view at locations throughout St. Louis from September 10–December 12, 2026. ***ArtReach: Near Futures* will be on view in the Education Galleries at CAM from September 10, 2026–February 7, 2027.**

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

CAM is free. Visit often!

Since 2017, CAM has partnered with Vashon High School to supplement curriculum, providing art experiences that are central to the development of healthy, active, and inquisitive minds. In 2021, we proudly expanded our ArtReach Partnership to include the historic Sumner High School. Through consistent, weekly art classes led by Resident Teaching Artists (RTAs), young artists are introduced to new creative mediums and encouraged to explore their individual interests including theater, dance, music, fashion, and visual arts.

Under the instruction of RTAs Rodrick Whetstone, Anna Katz, Sarah Knight, Martha Valenta, and Cleonique Hilsaca, participating students explored media and concepts related to collaboration. Across a series of quarter-long projects, students conceptualized themselves in relation to the collective in a range of media and forms.

Digital Drift, Analog Anchor, led by **RTA Rodrick Whetstone**, guided Sumner and Vashon student artists from digital design in Adobe Illustrator into hands-on sculpture, building high relief wall pieces—inspired by former CAM exhibiting artist Teresa Baker's abstract landscapes—as they reimagined a room in their home reconfigured for themselves and their family.

RTA Anna Katz led three units across both Sumner and Vashon in ceramics. At Sumner, students completed a relief print project, and their capstone linocut prints will be displayed above a collective banquet installation. At Vashon, Katz's students used pinch-pot techniques to sculpt the food sculptures that populate that same banquet. Similarly, **RTA Sarah Knight's** students at Vashon, used pinch, coil, and slab building techniques to create ceramic luminaries which were designed to be lit as a communal installation. Taken together, these ceramic works comprise *Come to the Table*. In Katz's third unit, *Coral Reef*, Sumner students sculpted marine invertebrates and created a single ocean scene.

RTA Martha Valenta introduced Vashon students to design thinking in *Collective Pivot: The Vashon Design Lab*, leading them from a spinning-top-building contest to prototypes for original inventions addressing challenges facing their peers.

At Sumner, **RTA Cleonique Hilsaca** used her own experience as an immigrant Latinx artist and zinester to teach students how to research, write, and self-publish zines exploring their criticisms and hopes for a better future for themselves, their communities, and St. Louis. Hilsaca's students engaged in drawing, painting, screen-printing, and risograph printing. The class hosted local artists Phoebe Santalla and Dan Zettwoch, who shared insights from their own zine practices; took part in printing workshops with People's Art and Recreation Center and Swan Meadow; and visited the Counterpublic offices and the Zine & Minicomic Collection at the St. Louis Public Library, where they learned the history of the form with Librarian Wes Harbison.

Throughout the year, CAM partnered with Counterpublic and Great Rivers Greenway, whose collaboration with the RTAs and student artists gave students a glimpse of the many community contexts that their work can exist within.

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

COUNTERPUBLIC



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ArtReach is generously supported in part by Jeanne and Rex A. Sinuefield; The Terry and Phyllis Weiss Youth Education Fund; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; The Strive Fund; Ann Y. Sheehan; Clayco; Counterpublic; Dana Brown Charitable Trust, U.S. Bank Trustee; Great Rivers Greenway; Anonymous; The Saigh Foundation; Crawford Taylor Foundation; Norman K. Probststein Charitable Foundation; St. Louis Philanthropic Organization, Inc.; The Mary Ranken Jordan and Ettie A. Jordan Charitable Foundation; Stantec; and The Gellman Team.



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 Brown at abrown@camstl.org

Related Events

Thursday, September 10

Patron and Press Preview, 10:00–11:30 am (RSVP required)

Member Preview, 5:00–6:00 pm

Public Opening, 6:00–8:00 pm

Also on view:

A selection of the zines produced in RTA Hilsaca's class at Sumner is also on view at St. Louis Lambert International Airport in an exhibition titled *Zines as Activism*. The installation features large-scale print reproductions of the students' original publications, offering travelers a glimpse of the work on view in full at CAM. Presented as part of the Lambert Art and Culture Program, the exhibition is part of an initiative that elevates the visitor experience and uplifts regional pride through artwork by local, national, and international artists, reaching more than 16 million travelers each year. **ArtReach: Zines as Activism is installed near Gate E14 in Terminal 2 and will remain on view through December 15, 2026.**

ArtReach: Zines As Activism is co-presented by the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis and Counterpublic, and organized for St. Louis Lambert International Airport by Miriam Ruiz, CAM Education Manager.



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About the Artists

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, Jayden Franklin, Dashon Frazier-Stokes, Jamayne Fierce, Marcinio Gray, Jai’Shaun Gregory, Kran Hawkins, Kerron Holloway, Kariah Holmes, Eniyah “Niyah” Hunt, Joshua Jones, Ka’Mayah Lakes, Chevet “Vet” McAlpine, Samara Morton, Ashunty Payne, Isaac Perry, Nevaeh Robinson, Serenity Terry, Makala Thomas-Perry, Shailyn “Shai” 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 Pawnell, Arzell Pitts, Garbrielle Rhodes, Keyon Sinclair, Malaysia Smith, Morris Starks, Jermaine Taylor, Jayion Thomas, Ja’Miyah Ware, Shunta Wilkins, and Cameron Williams

About the Resident Teaching Artists

Cleonique Hilsaca is a multi-media illustrator, designer, and painter from Honduras. Her creative process is inspired by mythology and nostalgia, fueled by research and idea exploration to bring whimsical ideas to life. Her professional work can be found in picture books, newspapers, magazines, board games, and galleries. Cleonique’s work has been honored by Spectrum: Fantastic Art, The Society of Illustrators of NY and LA, 3X3, and La Biental de Ilustración de México. She is a recent WashU MFA alumna and new STL resident.

Anna Katz is a ceramics artist whose hyper-detailed sculptures celebrate everyday objects. Influenced by the artists of the UC Davis Funk movement, her work blends technical skill with wit and weirdness. She combines hand-building, wheel-throwing, and casting techniques to create her pieces. Katz holds a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art and a Master of Arts in Teaching. Her work has been exhibited nationally, and she lives and works in St. Louis, Missouri.

Sarah Knight (they/them) is a transgender artist and educator whose practice encompasses ceramic, painting, and installation. Their work focuses on ecology, symbiotic communities, and transgender resilience. They grew up in the S.F. Bay Area and attended Mills College. They hold an MFA from Washington University in St. Louis and have committed to teaching art to students of all ages. They have participated in several residencies, including Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts and Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. Knight’s most recent solo exhibitions include, *Queer Alchemy* at Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis, MN and *Radiant Aberrance* at Kansas City Artist Coalition.

Martha Valenta is a St. Louis-based interdisciplinary artist and former UX designer who approaches her work through a design thinking lens—starting with a problem or lived experience and shaping materials around the solution. She builds immersive, multisensory installations that explore the sensory chaos and unexpected humor of living with ADHD. Her work blends tactile experiences, nostalgic imagery, and sharp wit to invite curiosity,

connection, and radical self-acceptance. She recently brought an interactive installation to the Saint Louis Art Museum as part of an ADHD Awareness activation and brings that same participatory spirit to her teaching and community collaborations.



Rodrick Whetstone is a graphic designer residing in St. Louis, MO and an Assistant Professor of Graphic Design Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in Edwardsville, IL. Through his work of bringing greater awareness to the instances of police brutality, he hopes to encourage a change within the system. Whetstone earned a BA from Grand View University in Des Moines, IA and an MA and a MFA in Graphic Design from The University of Iowa in Iowa City, IA.

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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