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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's longtime commitment to live arts



Ayana Evans at the VIVA Performance Festival in Montreal. Photo: Paul Litherland.

August 12, 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's dedication to live arts, the exhibition brings together documentation of recent and past works, ephemera, live performance commissions, and opportunities for audiences to become participants. ***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 spaces where people—Evans included—can be their most authentic selves. 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 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 over 20 years of Evans's creative process. Viewers will encounter videos of guerilla performances presented on New York City streets; works staged for audiences in Venice, Italy; Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Montreal in Canada, and in digital realms.

The presentation also features ephemera including a sign that reads, "I JUST CAME HERE TO FIND A HUSBAND," which Evans has worn serially in public appearances. Made for this exhibition, an interactive work titled *Recognition (St. Louis Sugar)* (2026), consists of a red carpet lined with velvet ropes and brass stanchions placed in the Museum's lobby. A coat rack draped with feather boas serves as an open invitation for visitors to don them and have their own red carpet moment.

Evans's work is deeply improvisatory and, ultimately, therapeutic. Through live performance, Evans demonstrates how intimate or 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 Shereen and Michael Fischer, Pat Whitaker and Dick Miles, and 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 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

Friday, October 9

Performance by Ayana Evans, 6:00–7:00 pm

Saturday, October 10

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



Contemporary Art
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.

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