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Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAM St. Louis and Counterpublic present Tony Cokes's tribute to the legend Tina Turner in a video work for Street Views, projected on the Museum's facade, opening on September 10

Tony Cokes, installation view, *Let Yourself Be Free*, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz, Liechtenstein, 2025. Courtesy the artist; Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz; Greene Naftali, New York; Hoffman Donahue, Los Angeles and New York; Felix Gaudlitz, Vienna; and Electronic Arts Intermix, New York. Photo: Sandra Maier.

August 12, 2026 (St. Louis, MO)—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) is pleased to present a new video installation by Providence, RI-based visual artist Tony Cokes in collaboration with Counterpublic. As one of the largest public art exhibitions in the US, the triennial will present new commissions and artworks by nearly 50 artists, duos, and collectives across key St. Louis sites including CAM, Kemper Art Museum, Kranzberg Arts Foundation, The Luminary, Pulitzer Arts Foundation, and the Saint Louis Art Museum, among others. The video installation at CAM is part of Cokes's multi-sited project for **Counterpublic 2026: *Coyote Time***, which includes an installation in the sanctuary of Antioch Baptist Church in The Ville neighborhood and a series of outdoor billboards bridging the two sites. ***Tony Cokes*** **will be on view at CAM from September 10, 2026–February 7, 2027 and from September 10–December 12, 2026 at Antioch Baptist Church and outdoor billboard locations.**

Since the 1980s, Cokes has developed a visual language all his own, drawing from pop culture sources—including songs, critical theory texts, news reports, and courtroom documents—and remixing fragments of the media landscape to confront issues of structural racism, power, and visibility. Cokes's tightly choreographed video essays layer found text over monochromatic color fields, often set to dissonant soundtracks that echo the rhythms of advertising even as they subvert them. The result is a propulsive, immersive form that makes reading text feel visceral.

This newly commissioned work explores the global legacy of Tina Turner, the "Queen of Rock and Roll" whose musical career began in St. Louis, as well as how she is remembered by the community. Created for St. Louis, *TT The River Won't Stop (Edit)* reanimates archival material related to Tina Turner, including her time at Sumner High School in The Ville neighborhood, where she lived as a teenager in the 1950s. Built from interviews with members of Antioch Baptist Church's congregation, public documents, and Cokes's own memories of growing up with a mother who adored Turner's music, the piece centers Turner even as it grapples with the appropriation and extraction of Black culture by other communities, and celebrates the resilience of The Ville and neighborhoods like it in the face of structural racism. As it moves between celebration and anger, the work resists a single interpretation.

Cokes's work transforms CAM's facade into a public gallery as part of the Museum's ongoing Street Views series. The video will be projected nightly between dusk and midnight, freely accessible to all passersby.

Tony Cokes is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis and Counterpublic by Dean Daderko, Ferring Foundation Chief Curator, and Stefanie Hessler, curator, writer, and the Director of Swiss Institute in New York, with support from Grace Early, Exhibitions Assistant.

COUNTERPUBLIC

This exhibition and Street Views are generously supported in part by Counterpublic 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

Saturday, September 12
Artist Talk and Walking Tour: Tony Cokes, 10:00 am–12:00 pm
Counterpublic's Hub in The Ville (4140 Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, St. Louis, MO 631130)

Visit camstl.org and counterpublic.org for other events.

About the artist

Tony Cokes (b. 1956, Richmond, VA) lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island, where he serves as Professor in the Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University. Cokes was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 2024 and the Rome Prize in 2022–23. A solo presentation of his work, *Texts, Tracks, Talks* (1992-2026), will open at The Institute of Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University, on September 18, 2026. Other recent solo exhibitions include Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz (2025–26); Batalha Centro de Cinema, Porto (2024–25); Dia Bridgehampton, The Dan Flavin Art Institute, Bridgehampton, New York (2023–24); Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York (2024); De Balie, Amsterdam (2022); Haus der Kunst and Kunstverein in Munich (2022); Greene Naftali, New York (2022, 2018); Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, Rochester (2021); MACRO Contemporary Art Museum, Rome (2021); CIRCA, London (2021); Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona (2020); ARGOS centre for audiovisual arts, Brussels (2020); Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2020); BAK – basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, Netherlands (2020); Luma Westbau, Zurich (2019); Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, London (2019); The Shed, New York (2019); Kunsthall Bergen, Norway (2018); and REDCAT, Los Angeles (2012). Photo courtesy the artist and the MacArthur Foundation.

About Counterpublic
Counterpublic is a triennial exhibition reimagining the possibilities of art in public life. Located in St. Louis, MO, Counterpublic connects art with lasting impact by bringing together bold ideas with the region's most pressing challenges. As one of the largest public art exhibitions in the nation, Counterpublic celebrates and spotlights the St. Louis region as an epicenter of art and culture through ongoing partnerships and artistic programming. The focal point is a three-month, citywide exhibition with dozens of the world's leading artists.

Working in public places, cultural institutions, historic houses, and community gathering spaces, Counterpublic commissions artists, and cultural leaders, and civic stakeholders to make and present artworks and ideas that engage history and imagine new futures. In addition to presenting artworks, programs, and publishing, Counterpublic rethinks the model for art exhibitions, supporting civic initiatives that extend beyond the exhibition. Guided by community engagement, each three-year cycle focuses on a new set of dynamic sites and questions, remaining responsive to the moment and aligning with the most impactful opportunities in the region to cultivate generational change. Counterpublic is a 501c3 nonprofit founded in 2021. For more information, visit counterpublic.org.

Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

About *Coyote Time*

Opening this fall, Counterpublic 2026: *Coyote Time* spans the storied City of St. Louis, engaging historic sites, world-renowned art institutions, and beloved community spaces. The title derives from artist Alice Bucknell's 2026 Triennial commission, marking the moment in a video game when a character leaps off a cliff and is suspended in midair, unsure of what comes next. This moment of anticipation guides the exhibition, positing uncertainty as a space for experimentation and possibility.

Collectively curated by Jordan Carter, Raphael Fonseca, Stefanie Hessler, Nora N. Khan, and Wanda Nanibush, the exhibition builds on Counterpublic's mission to connect art with lasting systemic change. *Coyote Time*, Counterpublic's third edition, presents new commissions and historical reinterpretations by nearly 50 contemporary artists, free and welcoming to all across key St. Louis sites from September 12–December 12, 2026.

About Street Views

Street Views turns CAM inside-out, transforming its stainless steel mesh facade into a 60' x 16' public gallery through video installations which are on view every evening from dusk to midnight. Rotating twice a year, these public artworks by important contemporary artists visually redefine the Grand Center Arts District—contributing to a more vibrant, and uniquely artistic cultural hub. Since 2013, *Street Views* has exhibited the work of more than 20 internationally acclaimed artists and artist collectives such as Jennifer Steinkamp, Lorna Simpson, Oliver Laric, Marina Zurkow, Paul Chan, Charles Atlas, and more.

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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