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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAM presents a new commissioned performance and community-based event by Ayana Evans on October 9-10 in conjunction with her exhibition *Nobody's Gonna Love You the Way I Do*



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.

September 21, 2026 (St. Louis, MO)—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents a newly commissioned performance and a community-based event by Ayana Evans in conjunction with the artist's first museum survey exhibition, *Nobody's Gonna Love You the Way I Do* on view at CAM through February 7, 2027. Evans premieres the new performance [Sparkle #8](#) on Friday, October 9, 6:00 pm–7:00 pm, followed by the [C.R.E.A.M. block party and opportunity fair](#) on Saturday, October 10, 10:00 am–3:00 pm. Both events are free and open to the public.

Building on recent performances in Venice and Montreal, *Sparkle #8* will unfold on October 9 in CAM's Performance Space among Evans's exhibition, welcoming audiences to interact directly with Evans. Evans typically assigns both individual and collective tasks that turn audience members from viewers to participants, and which speak to relevant and pressing concerns. Her performances are vehicles through which she challenges the ways class, race, gender, and sex are implicated in prevailing sociopolitical attitudes. Over the past two

decades, Evans—who was mentored by the late conceptual and performance artist Lorraine O'Grady—has established an unapologetic and emotionally invigorating voice as a performance artist. Whether orchestrating intimate or collective experiences, or inviting audiences to participate, her work is accessible, humorous, challenging, and often provocative and profound. Her approach is deeply improvisatory and, ultimately, therapeutic.

"I hope people leave feeling like they participated in something instead of just observing it," says Evans. "Even if it's brief. Even if it feels strange. If people leave feeling a little less separate from each other, then that's enough."

The following day, from 10:00 am–3:00 pm, Evans will host the C.R.E.A.M. Fair, a community engagement event that serves as a block party and opportunity fair. Inspired by the Wu-Tang Clan song "C.R.E.A.M." (Cash Rules Everything Around Me), the C.R.E.A.M. Fair connects St. Louis community members—including artists, students, job seekers, queer activists, prison-affected individuals, and more—with free resources, entertainment, and supportive services.

The C.R.E.A.M. Fair opens with Play Date: Dream it, Build it!, CAM's free monthly creative play event held each second Saturday. Designed with children ages 2–7 in mind but open to families and friends of all ages and abilities, Play Dates feature hands-on art making, exhibition-inspired activities, and musical and dance performances. The featured performance for this month's Play Date will be the Harris-Stowe State University Honeycombs and Swarm Drumline.

Throughout the day, attendees can make art with Freedom Arts & Education Center and explore cultural resources from partners 4theVille, Show Me The World, and The Black Rep. Keyway Center for Diversion & Reentry will offer assistance with housing stability, financial security, emotional wellness, and community reengagement, while Mission: St. Louis shares its Beyond Jobs program for employment, career advancement, and stability. The St. Louis Public Library will help attendees sign-up for library cards and access Tech Connect services, including website development, resume writing, and its Creative Experience studio—consisting of recording rooms, 3D printers, laser cutters, and digital creative software. Admissions representatives from Harris-Stowe State University, Ranken Technical College, and Webster University will be on hand, alongside health resources from the St. Louis City Health Department.

St. Louis-based yoga instructor Nico Marie will offer wellness guidance, and photographer Tyler Small will provide free professional headshots. Brooklyn-based conceptual artist Chloë Bass and St. Louis-based multidisciplinary artist and designer Hayveyah McGowan will participate in a panel discussion moderated by Evans. The C.R.E.A.M. Fair concludes with a performance by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. step team.

[*Nobody's Gonna Love You the Way I Do*](#) is the first museum survey exhibition of Ayana Evans's work, celebrating her longstanding dedication to performance and live arts, bringing together documentation of recent and past works with ephemera, live performance commissions, and opportunities for audiences to become participants. The exhibition will be on view at CAM through February 7, 2027.

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. The C.R.E.A.M. Fair is generously supported in part by Jenny Birgé and Alison and Sam Foxman.

WHITAKER FOUNDATION

For press inquiries, including access to Sparkle #8 and the C.R.E.A.M. Fair, or interview opportunities with the artist and curator, contact Alexia Brown at abrown@camstl.org

Event Details

What: *Sparkle #8*, a performance by Ayana Evans

When: Friday, October 9, 2026

Time: 6:00 pm–7:00 pm

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

Admission: This event is open to the public and free to attend. [Register here](#)

What: C.R.E.A.M. Career and Opportunity Fair

When: Saturday, October 10, 2026

Time: 10:00 am–3:00 pm

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

Admission: This event is open to the public and free to attend. [Register here](#)

/ 10:00–11:30 am: Play Date drop-in art activity; [Register here](#)

/ 11:00 am: Performance by Harris Stowe State University Honeycombs and The Swarm Drumline

/ 11:30 am–2:00 pm: Complimentary food

/ 12:00–12:30 pm: Resume-writing and job-search workshop with St. Louis Public Library

/ 12:00–1:00 pm: Free headshots with Tyler Small

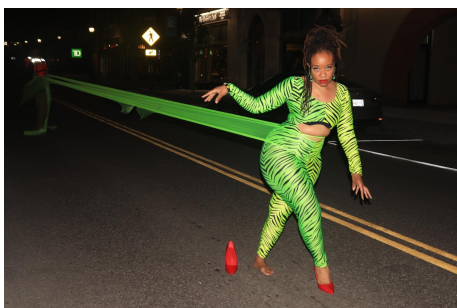
/ 12:30 pm: Art + Wellness with Nico Marie

/ 1:00 pm: Panel Discussion moderated by Ayana Evans

/ 2:00 pm: Step performance by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.

/ 2:30 pm: Closing Remarks

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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