

Press contact: Alexia Brown
314.535.0770 ext. 313
abrown@camstl.org



Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

3750 Washington Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63108
314.535.4660 camstl.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Friday celebrates St. Louis native and Great Rivers Biennial 2026 exhibiting artist Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr. on October 2



Great Rivers Biennial 2026: Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr., installation view, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, September 10, 2026–February 7, 2027. Photo: Izaiah Johnson.

September 21, 2026 (St. Louis, MO)—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents [First Friday: Celebrating Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr.](#) on October 2 from 5:00 pm–9:00 pm. As a part of the ongoing First Fridays in Grand Center series, this event will showcase art, music, and culture in honor of local artist Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr., who is featured in CAM's fall/winter 2026 exhibition, [Great Rivers Biennial 2026](#).

First Friday: Celebrating Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr. is a casual gathering for visitors to mingle with the artist and explore his presentation which includes new and existing paintings of monumental scale that surround visitors in color and dynamic movement. Taking a cue from Davis's practice of shredding and unraveling the fabric of his paintings, attendees are invited to bring old clothing and fabric to distress and reshape by hand and embrace the power of deconstructing something familiar into a transformed creation. Throughout the evening, enjoy an artist-inspired playlist, hear insights from the artist about his practice and the work on view at 7:30 pm, and complimentary light bites. Drinks and specialty cocktails will be available for purchase from the bar. This program is free and open to the public; [registration is encouraged](#).

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

CAM is free. Visit often!

In addition to the festivities, visitors will have the opportunity to view CAM's newly-installed fall 2026 exhibitions as the galleries will be open late until 9:00 pm—including fellow Great Rivers Biennial artists Lauren dela Roche and Vincent Stemler. The fall 2026 exhibitions will be on view through **February 7, 2026**. For more information, visit camstl.org.

Great Rivers Biennial 2026 is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Dean Daderko, Ferring Foundation Chief Curator, and Misa Jeffereis, Associate Curator, with support from Grace Early, Exhibitions Assistant.

The Great Rivers Biennial is made possible by the Gateway Foundation. In 2026, the Foundation will celebrate its 40th anniversary, marking four decades of support for public art, urban design, fellowships, and cultural grantmaking throughout the St. Louis region.



For press access on October 2, including interview opportunities with Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr. and curators, contact Alexia Brown at abrown@camstl.org.

Event Details

What: First Friday: Celebrating Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr.

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

When: Friday, October 2, 2026

Time: 5:00 pm–9:00 pm

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

Event Schedule

/ 5:00 pm: Bar and CAM Shop opens

/ 6:00–8:30 pm: Drop-in art making activity

/ 7:30 pm: Comments by Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr.

Related Events

First Friday: Celebrating Lauren dela Roche

Friday, November 6, 5:00–9:00 pm

Artist Talk: Lauren dela Roche and Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr. at Webster University

Friday, November 20, 12:00–1:00 pm

First Friday: Celebrating Vincent Stemmler

Friday, December 4, 5:00–9:00 pm

About the Artist



Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr. (b. 1995, St. Louis, MO) is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in St. Louis. His practice expands the language of painting by engaging directly with its physical deconstruction. His works embody ideas of rupture, transformation, and resistance, often suspended or draped from wall to floor—existing between painting and sculpture. Organic and open-ended in form, the pieces are shaped by gravity and tension, revealing new structures through acts of distressing, tearing, and removal. Davis builds from what is taken away as much as what remains, exploring the relationship between destruction and creation. His surfaces—marked by exposed canvas, visible cuts, and frayed edges—disrupt traditional notions of beauty, resolution, and

control. Davis holds a BFA in Sculpture from Webster University in St. Louis. His work has been exhibited at Romer Young Gallery, San Francisco, CA; Nazarian / Curcio, Los Angeles, CA; Dimensions Variable, Miami, FL; The Luminary, St. Louis, MO; and Tripoli Gallery, Wainscott, NY, among others. In 2023, Davis created a torn flag sculpture to be hoisted outdoors at Laumeier Sculpture Park in Sappington, MO, in tandem with his solo exhibition in the museum's gallery. Davis is an exhibiting artist for Counterpublic 2026: *Coyote Time*.

Davis pours richly pigmented acrylic paint onto raw canvas, soaking it with layer upon layer of vibrant, saturated color. To achieve intensity, he also paints with fabric dyes. On the floor in his studio, paint pools and colors bleed, suffusing the fabric with a sense of energy, gravity, and depth. Once these canvases dry, Davis returns to them, using blades to incise, shred, and unravel the fabric's warp and weft. Holes, flaps, and fringes open up the painted surfaces, blurring the lines between creation and destruction before reaching resolution. Challenging painting's traditional two-dimensionality, Davis's paintings establish an architecture of their own: orchestrating configurations that drape and sag, soften the hard angles between walls and floors, and reach into the air. For *Great Rivers Biennial 2026*, Davis presents a selection of new and existing paintings, taking advantage of the double-height ceilings of CAM's gallery space to surround viewers in color and dynamic movement. Photo: Ji Yang.

Previous Great Rivers Biennial Recipients

2024: Saj Issa, Basil Kincaid, and Ronald Young
2022: Yowshien Kuo, Yvonne Osei, and Jon Young
2020: Kahlil Robert Irving, Tim Portlock, and Rachel Youn
2018: Addoley Dzegede, Sarah Paulsen, and Jacob Stanley
2016: Lyndon Barrois Jr., Nanette Boileau, and Tate Foley
2014: Brandon Anschutz, Carlie Trosclair, and Cayce Zavaglia
2012: David Johnson, Asma Kazmi, and Mel Trad
2010: Martin Brief, Sarah Frost, and Cameron Fuller
2008: Juan William Chávez, Corey Escoto, and Michelle Oosterbaan
2006: Jason Wallace Triefenbach, Moses, and Matthew Strauss
2004: Jill Downen, Adam Frelín, and Kim Humphries

About the Gateway Foundation

Founded in 1986, the Gateway Foundation seeks to enrich life and culture in the St. Louis area by supporting efforts to acquire, create, or improve tangible and durable art and urban design. This year, the Foundation will celebrate its 40th anniversary, marking \$136 million invested through grantmaking for public parks, playgrounds, lighting initiatives, and cultural organizations across the St. Louis metropolitan area. In 2009, the Foundation's largest project, a two-block sculpture park called Citygarden, opened in downtown St. Louis in the Gateway Mall. From prominent public sites downtown to community college campuses in St. Louis County and a substantial installation site within the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Foundation has purchased and installed more than 70 sculptures in the area. Additionally, the Foundation has designed and funded the lighting of the Gateway Arch, City Hall, the Old Courthouse, the Civil Courts Building, the City's three landmark Water Towers, and other historically and architecturally significant structures. More information about the Gateway Foundation and its 40th Anniversary year are available at gateway-foundation.org.

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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