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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**First Friday celebrates queer punk feminist and Great Rivers Biennial
2026 exhibiting artist Lauren dela Roche on November 6**



Great Rivers Biennial 2026: Lauren dela Roche, installation view, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, September 10, 2026–February 7, 2027. Photo: Izaiah Johnson.

October 8, 2026 (St. Louis, MO)—The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents [First Friday: Celebrating Lauren dela Roche](#) on November 6 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 Lauren dela Roche, who is featured in CAM's fall/winter 2026 exhibition, [Great Rivers Biennial 2026](#).

First Friday: Celebrating Lauren dela Roche is a casual gathering for visitors to mingle with the artist and explore her presentation, which moves from bold, large-scale paintings of female figures animated by dynamic patterns and color to layered encaustic pieces that suggest history accumulating and peeling away. Attendees are invited to drop-in and make watercolor paintings on found paper, echoing dela Roche's materials and process, while enjoying a live music set from local sound artist Jane Wave, 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.

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 Vaughn Terrell Davis Jr. and Vincent Stemmler. The fall 2026 exhibitions will be on view through **February 7, 2027**. 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 November 6, including interview opportunities with Lauren dela Roche and curators, contact Alexia Brown at abrown@camstl.org.

Event Details

What: First Friday: Celebrating Lauren dela Roche

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

When: Friday, November 6, 2026

Time: 5:00 pm–9:00 pm

Admission: This event is open to the public and free to attend.

Event Schedule

/ 5:00 pm: Bar and CAM Shop opens

/ 6:00–8:30 pm: Music by Jane Wave and drop-in art activity

Related Events

Artist Talk: Lauren dela Roche & 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



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About the Artists



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Lauren dela Roche (b. 1983, Santa Rosa, CA) is a self-described queer punk feminist artist whose autodidactic approach integrates a broad range of references, including zines, European modernisms, and autobiography. Though largely self-taught, her consumption of visual culture and art history allows her to draw upon long artistic traditions, remixing diverse sources ranging from Egon Schiele's line work and transgressive cinema to Persian miniatures, Greek mythology, and folklore. Dela Roche's recent work—painted on found, mended, and repurposed cotton feed sacks—shows multiplying, echoing views of a nude woman, a recurring central character. In her iconic, fresh style, her work ties deeply to the land, agriculture, ecology, and systems of caretaking. For nearly a decade, dela Roche

lived off the grid in Northern Minnesota, building a cabin from found materials and becoming fully self-reliant through farming. She is the recipient of several grants and residencies, including a 2024 Joan Mitchell Center residency in New Orleans. Dela Roche is represented by Eric Firestone Gallery in New York. Her work is found in the collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the North Dakota Museum of Art, and the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard College, among others. She has resided in the Midwest since young adulthood and currently lives and works near St. Louis.

In many of dela Roche's recent large-scale paintings, female figures lounge together in highly stylized architectural spaces animated by dynamic patterns and color. The vintage feed sacks she quilts together and paints on are full of patinas of use. Dela Roche incorporates these holes, logos, patches, and mends into her compositions, creating depth, and suggesting renewal. This exhibition sees dela Roche experimenting with new forms and mediums. In one new series, linear drawings of figures appear alongside cutout tissue paper shapes, pressed leaves and flowers, and treasured collage elements collected by the artist that she sandwiches between layers of encaustic wax; their rippling surfaces suggest layers of history accumulating or peeling away. Alongside these paintings, dela Roche debuts new figurative sculptures in cast bronze, presented alongside sculptures fabricated from vintage dollhouses.

Photo: Macayli Hausmann.



Jane Wave is the solo experimental project of Sam Pounders, a self-taught sound artist based in St. Louis, Missouri. Producing songs in a home studio, Jane Wave experiments with vocals, bass-heavy pop rhythms, found sounds and instrument loops. Weaving traditional music, primitive punk, no wave and abstract sound, Wave's performances are coordinated and improvised. Wave has



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performed for the last 10 years in the St. Louis area, both as a solo musician and as a member in bands such as Swear Beam, Fried E.M. and Pineapple RnR. Her recent album, *Quality Time* is available for streaming on Subvert FM and Bandcamp; a tape release is forthcoming in late 2026.

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 Frelin, 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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