

# Kahlil Robert Irving: Ground water from screen Falls [(Collaged media) + Midwest] STREET

February 21 through August 30, 2020

Curated by Amara Antilla

ARTIST(S) Kahlil Robert Irving

Assembling images and materials drawn from diverse sources and histories, Kahlil Robert Irving works with sculpture, textile, and digital media to reflect upon his own biography and the socio-political context of Black life in the Midwest. For this new commission, Irving asks viewers to reconsider their daily engagement with social media, civic community life, and the urban landscape. The installation's title recalls TLC's 1995 Grammy-nominated hit "Waterfalls" and the song's narrative, which describes the desires and struggles of an inner-city black family. Irving contrasts the aspirational tropes of aiming high or shooting for the "clear blue and unconditioned skies" as TLC's lyrics state, with the realities of urban life for global majority populations by articulating the street as an emancipatory space. Visual slippages between the cosmos and asphalt, and pooled water's capacity to reflect the clouds with the atmosphere, suggest a reversal: should we be aiming for the street instead of the sky? Positioned in conversation with Zaha Hadid's "Urban Carpet"—an architectural intervention wherein the sidewalk enters the CAC lobby and continues to form its northern wall—Irving's installation offers a powerful meditation on Blackness and the urban street as a site of becoming and resistance.

Kahlil Robert Irving was born in 1992 in San Diego and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He received a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute (2015), and MFA from Washington University, St. Louis (2017). His work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions including *Alternative Currencies, Vox Populi*, Philadelphia (2015); *Young Sculptors Competition*, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio (2017, 2019); *Former Glory*, RISD Museum, Providence, Rhode Island (2018); *Counterpublic, The Luminary*, St. Louis; *The Singapore Biennial*; and *Making Knowing: Craft in Art, 1950-2019*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (all 2019). His work is the subject of a solo show opening at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Saint Louis in May 2020. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn and Saint Louis.