

Press Release

Exhibition

Cary Leibowitz: Museum Show

May 12–August 26, 2018



Installation view of *Cary Leibowitz: Museum Show* (January 26–June 25, 2017) at The Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, California. Image courtesy The Contemporary Jewish Museum. Photo by JKA Photography.

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HOUSTON, TX (April 4, 2018)—The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH) is pleased to present *Cary Leibowitz: Museum Show*, the first comprehensive career survey and solo museum exhibition of Leibowitz’s work. The exhibition features nearly 350 original artworks from 1987 to the present, including paintings, fabric works, multiples, installations, documentation, photography, and ephemera. *Cary Leibowitz: Museum Show* has an opening reception on the evening of May 11 and will remain on view through August 26, 2018.

New York–based artist Cary Leibowitz (b. 1963) creates bold, brightly colored, and comically self-effacing text-based works which draw on both a gay and Jewish perspective in order to address issues of identity, kitsch, modernist critique, and queer politics. Included in the exhibition are paintings that read, “Here I am please don’t be mean” and “I just got a pair of Gucci for Bergdorfs loafers for 50% off and I really do feel better.” A white porcelain fish-shaped dish reads, “Fucked up homo bar-mitzvah gay boy worries too much about what

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Cary Leibowitz
Study 4 Portrait of an 18th Century Lesbian Couple,
1995
Porcelain figurine
7 x 4 x 2 1/4 inches
Image and work courtesy the artist and INVISIBLE-
EXPORTS, New York, New York

his mother will wear.” Additionally, works include knit caps with “Fran Drescher Fan Club” emblazoned on the front and foam footballs that read, “Candyass Sissy.”

Since the early 1990s—when he became widely known under the moniker “Candyass”—Leibowitz has, as his gallery INVISIBLE-EXPORTS states, “created unmistakable work that is the product of a riveting and consistent practice—driven by anxieties, neuroses, and premonitions of difference—that transform self-doubt and social skepticism into something much larger than niche art-world critique: a heartrending and intimate meditation on our inescapable secret doubleness.”

With a preference for lowbrow aesthetics and threadbare materials, Leibowitz creates work with a bold, cartoon-like quality. Pop colors are combined with a childish scrawl, proclaiming abundant displays of insecurity and exposing simplistic raw truths about contemporary society. “I have long been convinced that Leibowitz is among the most influential artists working, as I have witnessed generations of young artists being inspired by how he employs the reproducible type of manufacturing and distribution available today as an art making tool,” says CAMH Director and exhibition curator Bill Arning. “Cary, due to his self-deprecating style and love of lowbrow humor, often gets overlooked in the art-making pantheon. This show firmly establishes his ongoing importance as a major conceptual artist.”

In both his cheeky multiples (inexpensively mass-produced buttons, mugs, and more) and his irregular-format paintings, Leibowitz mixes his obsession with popular culture, fine art, and Jewishness with elements of therapy and self-loathing, interrogation and self-interrogation, institutional critique, social commentary, and stand-up comedy routine. His work manages to seamlessly blend comedy and neurosis in such a way that questions about appearance and identity become a running commentary on the self/other.

In addition to original works, the exhibition will also include many of the multiples created specifically for individual exhibitions that carry on his obsession with popular culture, identity, and fine art, including team pennant flags for “Homo State” that say, “Go Fags!”; a Marcia Tucker seat cushion; a Cindy Sheehan megaphone; and “J’Adore Gertrude Stein” buttons. One installation features a display of his editioned work, *Gain! Wait! Now!* (2001), an aluminum garbage can that features an image of Leibowitz as a chubby adolescent at his bar mitzvah in 1976.

Cary Leibowitz: Museum Show is organized by The Contemporary Jewish Museum (The CJM) and is curated by Anastasia James, former Associate Curator at The CJM. The exhibition is accompanied by a 224-page fully-illustrated hardcover catalogue with contributions by James and Leibowitz, as well as Hilton Als, David Bonetti, Fran Drescher, Glen Helfand Rhonda Lieberman, and Simon Lince. The catalogue will be available for purchase in CAMH’s Museum Shop when the exhibition opens to the public on May 12, 2018.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a full complement of all-ages programming, which

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Cary Leibowitz
Do These Pants Make Me Look Jewish, 2001
Latex on wood panel
16 x 16 inches
Image and work courtesy the artist and INVISIBLE-EXPORTS, New York, New York



Cary Leibowitz
Untitled [My Other Body is in the Shop], n.d.
Photograph with pin, framed
12 3/4 x 6 1/2 inches
Image and work courtesy the artist and INVISIBLE-EXPORTS, New York, New York

includes an artist talk, public dialogues, hands-on workshops, tours, and more. To see a full schedule of these programs, please visit CAMH.ORG.

Cary Leibowitz Biography

Cary Leibowitz (b. 1963, New York) also known as “Candyass,” is an American artist whose work has shown in museums and institutions across the globe including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts; Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota; the Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany; The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York; Jewish Museum, New York, New York; Museum of Modern Art PS1, New York, New York; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany; White Columns, New York, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art, Pennsylvania; Art Metropole, Toronto, Canada; Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany; Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany; Cabinet Gallery, London, United Kingdom; The Kitchen, New York, New York; Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Denmark; Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; Galerie Claudio Botello, Turin, Italy; List Visual Arts Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge.

Leibowitz’s work has been included in the landmark exhibitions *Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities* at the Jewish Museum in New York; *In a Different Light* at the University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley; and *Bad Girls*, New Museum, New York, New York. His work has been reviewed in *The New Yorker*, *Artforum*, *The New York Times*, *Frieze Magazine*, and *Art in America*, among others. Leibowitz is represented by INVISIBLE-EXPORTS.

Organization and Funding

Cary Leibowitz: Museum Show is organized by The Contemporary Jewish Museum and is curated by Anastasia James, former Associate Curator at The CJM.

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston presentation of *Cary Leibowitz: Museum Show* is made possible in part by generous contributions from Rebecca and Ken Bruder, the Cardinal Four Foundation, INVISIBLE-EXPORTS, Richard Gerrig and Timothy Peterson, and Nancy and Fred Poses.

Public Programs

This selection of events are free, open to the public, and take place at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. Seating is limited. Please check camh.org for the most current information.

Opening Reception | Cary Leibowitz: Museum Show
Friday, May 11, 2018 | 6:30–9PM (Cash bar)

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Cary Leibowitz
Please Check One, ca. 1998
Latex paint on wood panel
22 x 11 inches
Image and work courtesy the artist and INVISIBLE-EXPORTS, New York, New York

In Conversation | Artist Cary Leibowitz, Anastasia James, and Bill Arning

Saturday, May 12, 2018 | 2-3PM

Join artist Cary Leibowitz; Anastasia James, the former Associate Curator of The CJM, San Francisco, California; and CAMH Director Bill Arning as they discuss the work and context for the exhibition *Cary Leibowitz: Museum Show*.

Workshop | Words & Art

Saturday, May 19, 2018 | 12:30-1:30PM

Explore the exhibition using prompts, group discussion, and your imagination. Participants delve deeply in the artist's world through stories and poems. This workshop is open to all writing levels.

Reading | *Camp Marmalade* with Wayne Koestenbaum

Thursday, May 31, 2018 | 6:30-7:30PM

Poet and critic Wayne Koestenbaum will read from his newly published *Camp Marmalade*, as well as passages from his earlier books and from unpublished new work, to compose a free-style lecture-performance, combining elements of recitation and improvisation.

Open Studio | Art Exchange

Saturday, June 2, 2018 | 2-4PM

Leave an artwork, take an artwork. Draw inspiration from artist Cary Leibowitz's multiples and create duplicates of a paper collage to exchange with fellow CAMH visitors.

Comedy Show

Thursday, July 12, 2018 | 6:30-7:30PM

Join us for an evening of laughs with a cast of local comedy favorites as they share their stand-up routines inspired by the humorous and self-deprecating work of artist Cary Leibowitz.

Art at Noon | Tamarie Cooper

Friday, July 13, 2018 | Noon-1PM

Join Tamarie Cooper, the Associate Director and Co-founder of The Catastrophic Theatre, for a discussion on the work of artist Cary Leibowitz. Cooper is drawn to Leibowitz's subversive and self-deprecating humor and his commentary on pop culture, "high" art, his neurosis, and his tendency toward self-examination. As a theatre artist, Cooper creates work ripe with these elements, all of which she finds to be powerful tools and universal access points. Light lunch provided.

Family Day

Saturday, July 21, 2018 | 1-4PM

Come participate in hands-on activities inspired by current exhibitions.

Screening | *Chisholm '72 Unbought & Unbossed*

Thursday, July 26, 2018 | 6:30-8PM

This provocative film about a woman who demonstrated "the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo" will teach you more about why artist Cary Leibowitz made reference to Chisholm in his work.

Reading | Words & Art

Thursday, August 2, 2018 | 6:30-7:30PM

Houston-based authors and poets share new work inspired by the exhibition.

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General Support

Support for CAMH is generously provided by the Museum's Board of Trustees and their families: Allison and David Ayers, Candace Baggett and Ron Restrepo, Vera and Andy Baker, James M. Bell, Jr., Jereann Chaney, Estela and David A. Cockrell, Margaret Vaughan Cox and Jonathan Cox, Ruth Dreessen and Tom Van Laan, Barbara and Michael Gamson, Dan and Eleanor Gilbane, Blakely and Trey Griggs, Melissa and Albert J. Grobmyer IV, Catherine Baen Hennessy and Matt Hennessy, Leslie and Mark Hull, Louise Jamail, Dillon Kyle and Sam Lasseter, Erica and Benjy Levit, Lucinda and Javier Loya, Catherine and George Masterson, Libbie Masterson, Greg McCord, Mac and Karen McManus, Jack and Anne Moriniere, Cabrina and Steven Owsley, Howard and Beverly Robinson, Andrew and Robin Schirrmeister, Nicholas and Kelly Silvers, David P. and Marion Young, and Elizabeth and Barry Young.

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United is the Official Airline of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

CAMH Mission

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is a leading destination to experience innovative art. CAMH actively encourages public engagement with its exhibitions through its educational programs, publications, and online presence. Always fresh, always free.

General Information

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, at the corner of Montrose and Bissonnet, in the heart of Houston's Museum District. Hours are

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Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 10AM–7PM, Thursday 10AM–9PM, Saturday 10AM–6PM, and Sunday 12PM–6PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit CAMH.ORG or call 713.284.8250.

Media Contact

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