

BEMIS × CENTER

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May 7, 2021

Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts Presents
All Together, Amongst Many: Reflections on Empathy
June 5–September 19, 2021



Stephanie Syjuco; *I AM AN...*, 2017; Cotton fabric, cut and hand-sewn by the artist, mounted on the ceiling track; 99 x 276 inches; Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York, NY.

Omaha, Neb.—Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts presents *All Together, Amongst Many: Reflections on Empathy*, a group exhibition exploring the cultural and sociopolitical issues currently defining the United States, June 5 through September 19, 2021. Fostering empathy and understanding through the power of art, 20 multi-generational artists engage ideas centered on land rights and Indigenous rights, climate change and the environment, food justice, accessibility and healthcare, immigration and migration, systematic racism, LGBTQIA2S+ rights, the criminal justice system, police brutality, and violence on all accounts. Presented on the heels of the 2020 U.S. elections, *All Together, Amongst Many: Reflections on Empathy* aims to awaken shared beliefs in humanity during these polarizing times. This exhibition, while not an exhaustive survey, provides a snapshot of America's turbulent society today.

All Together, Amongst Many: Reflections on Empathy includes works by artists Joshua Bennett, Lee Cannarozzo, Lizania Cruz, Cass Davis, Brendan Fernandes, Marcus Fischer, Cameron Granger, Jeffrey Gibson, Ekene Ijeoma, Seitu Ken Jones, Molly Joyce, Christine Sun Kim, Glenn Ligon, Kambui Olujimi, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Julia Rose Sutherland, Stephanie Syjuco, Jordan Weber, Carmen Winant and Jody Wood. These artists are in constant dialogue with the complex narratives of structural injustices and cultural heritage and make art as a civic and empathetic act. Several works facilitate or employ participation, offering views of how we can engage in civic life during the intertwined crises of systemic racism and COVID-19, and emphasize the joining of voices to transform our culture.

“The works in *All Together, Amongst Many: Reflections on Empathy* reaffirm and continue Bemis’s vision to inspire an open and diverse dialogue on the critical issues of our time by supporting the role artists play in helping us examine our world and what it could be,” said Rachel Adams, Chief Curator and Director of Programs at Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts.

All Together, Amongst Many: Reflections on Empathy connects artists from across the country with local organizations in an effort to highlight their work focused on issues represented in the exhibition. These partnerships will result in a variety of public and private programs with the Asian Community and Cultural Center, The Big Garden, Big Muddy Urban Farm, Bluebird Cultural Initiative, City Sprouts, Immigrant Legal Center, KANEKO, Latino Center of the Midlands, The Lincoln Indian Center, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Nebraska Writers Collective, and No More Empty Pots among others.

The exhibition gallery guide features text by Adams, several participating artists’ voices on the role of empathy in their work, Joshua Bennett’s poem “America Will Be” and *Blues for George*, a stencil of George Floyd by Seitu Ken Jones. Gallery materials are available in English and Spanish.

The exhibition includes new commissions and adaptations of existing projects by Fernandes, Jones, Ijeoma, Sutherland, Winant, Weber and Wood.

All Together, Amongst Many: Reflections on Empathy is organized by Rachel Adams, Chief Curator and Director of Programs.

RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Summer 2021 Exhibitions Opening Reception

June 5, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

3:00 p.m. – Performance by exhibiting artist Marcus Fischer

4:00 p.m. – Performance of exhibiting artist Ekene Ijeoma’s *Deconstructed Anthems* by pianist Dr.

Kristín Jónína Taylor

Reservations are requested at bemiscenter.org/events. Capacity is limited to 30 visitors in the galleries but walk-ins will not be turned away if space is available. Performances will take place outdoors and stream live at twitch.tv/bemiscenter.

Deconstructed Anthems

July 1, July 29, and September 2, 7:00 p.m.

Performed by pianists Dr. Kristín Jónína Taylor and Bryan Stanley

Deconstructed Anthems is an ongoing series of music performances and sound-reactive light installations in which a musician and/or music ensemble deconstruct “The Star-Spangled Banner”, repeating it multiple times, removing notes at the rate of mass incarceration, and ending in silence.

Free Fall 49

July 23, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Free Fall 49 by Brendan Fernandes is an ongoing series of live, dance-based performances responding to the June 12, 2016 shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida. The work poses the falling body as a metaphor for queer politics and the dance floor as a space for resistance and experiencing agency. Conceptualized by Fernandes and DJ’ed by Karsten Sollars, *Free Fall 49* will be performed by local dancers. An open call for dancers is forthcoming.

Intersections: Building Up Our Community with Seitu Ken Jones

September 17–19

An adaptation of Jones’s iconic “Community Meals,” *Intersections* is a collaborative project between Bemis, Jones, multiple Omaha-area urban agriculture and food justice organizations, and Omaha chefs Obed Sanchez and Wesleyon Zollicoffer. Jones will facilitate the creation and distribution of free meal and wellness kits designed to prompt the sharing of food stories that will ultimately become a representation of Omaha’s diverse communities. Bemis is seeking volunteers to help assemble and deliver meal/wellness kits to recipients nominated by each partner organization. Contact exhibitions@bemiscenter.org for more information.

In-person and virtual attendance details for *Deconstructed Anthems* performances, *Free Fall 49*, and additional related public programs will be announced at bemiscenter.org/events.

Bemis Center Gallery Hours: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.;
Thursday 11:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.

Exhibition and Public Program Admission: Free

A Visitor Code of Conduct and safety protocols have been implemented to keep staff and visitors as safe as possible and to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

Access details can be found at bemiscenter.org/accessibility.

For more information about exhibitions and related public programs, visit bemiscenter.org.

SUPPORT

All Together, Amongst Many: Reflections on Empathy is generously supported, in part, by Douglas County, Nebraska; Lozier Foundation; Mutual of Omaha; Nebraska Arts Council and Nebraska Cultural Endowment; Omaha Steaks; Polina and Bob Schlott and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Support for *Art in Practice: The Intersection of Poetry and Visual Art* is provided, in part, by Art Bridges, Humanities Nebraska and Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Support for Brendan Fernandes's *Free Fall 49* is provided, in part, by the Omaha Community Foundation's Equality Fund for LGBTQIA+. Support for Seitu Ken Jones's *Intersections: Building Up our Community* is provided, in part, by Conagra Brands Foundation.

About Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts

Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts facilitates the creation, presentation, and understanding of contemporary art through an international residency program, exhibitions, and educational programs to inspire an open and diverse dialogue on the critical issues that give shape and meaning to the human condition.

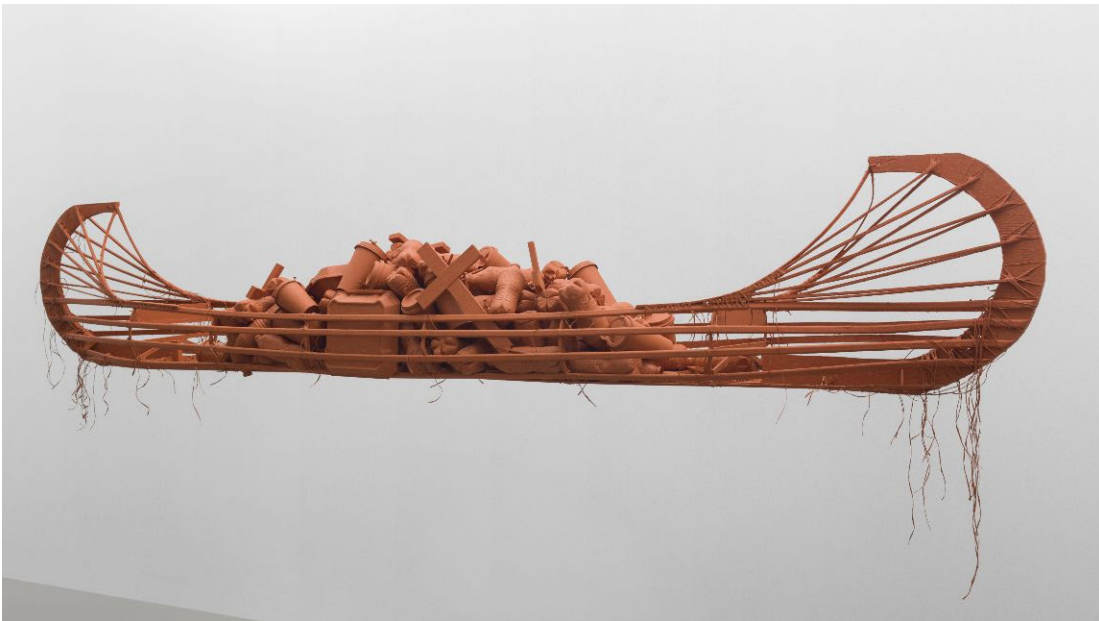
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Cameron Granger; *This Must Be the Place*, 2018.; Digital video; 4:32 minutes; Courtesy of the artist.



Jaune Quick-to-See Smith; *Trade Canoe: Making Medicine*, 2018; Mixed media: pine, sinew, plastic, Styrofoam, paper, metal, paint; 22 x 132 x 18 inches; Courtesy of Beth Rudin DeWoody, the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York, NY.



Marcus Fischer; *Untitled (Words of Concern)*, 2017; Tape recorder, tape loop, spindle, sound; 3:00 minutes; Courtesy of Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Purchased with funds from the Painting and Sculpture Committee and the Director's Discretionary Funds; © Marcus Fischer; Photo: Jim Golden.

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Christine Sun Kim; *listen hear listen*, 2017; Originally made as a postcard (10 x 15 cm) for Primary Information (2017); Courtesy of the artist.