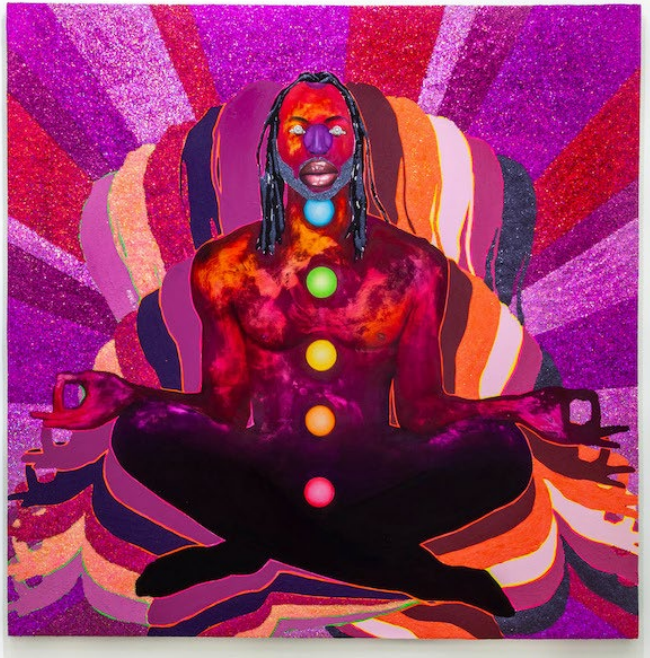


BEMIS × CENTER



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 2, 2022

Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts Presents Two New Exhibitions

Elisabeth Kley: Minutes of Sand

and

Opulence: Performative Wealth and the Failed American Dream

December 9, 2022 - April 16, 2023

Omaha, Neb. — Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts presents two new exhibitions; *Elisabeth Kley: Minutes of Sand* and *Opulence: Performative Wealth and the Failed American Dream* on view from December 9, 2022 through April 16, 2023. *Minutes of Sand* showcases Kley's ceramics alongside print yardage which was created while in-residence at The Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia,

PA. *Opulence: Performative Wealth and the Failed American Dream* is a group exhibition celebrating lavish, decadent aesthetics while exploring the socioeconomic conditions that drive some within marginalized communities to revel in them.

Elisabeth Kley's work sits at the distinctive confluence of pattern, decoration, and contemporary art. Known for her black-and-white patterns featured in ceramics, drawings, paintings, and site-specific installations, the artist draws inspiration from motifs featured in ornamentation, architecture, interior decoration, and a myriad of global art traditions. Merging the ancient and modern, Kley translates these fragments into an interdisciplinary practice conveying ideas of opulence and mystery.

Elisabeth Kley: Minutes of Sand was organized by The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) and presented in 2021 as the artist's first solo museum exhibition. Invited to print yardage utilizing FWM's world-renowned screen-printing facilities, Kley worked to interweave her ceramic and painting practices with three new yardage designs and a new suite of ceramic sculpture for this exhibition. Bemis Center will showcase this entirely new body of work that has only been previously viewed in Philadelphia. A catalogue for the exhibition, co-produced by Bemis Center, The Fabric Workshop and Museum, and Canada Gallery will be released in April 2023.

"We are thrilled to introduce our community to Elisabeth Kley's dynamic work, which is inspired by a multitude of global histories - from Islamic tile work to Egyptian hieroglyphics and Roman frescoes and mosaics to Wiener Werkstätte textile designs," says Rachel Adams, Bemis Center Chief Curator and Director of Programs. "This exhibition highlights the intersection of design with two distinct mediums – ceramics and printmaking. By joining forces with The Fabric Workshop and Museum, we spotlight Elisabeth Kley's important interdisciplinary practice. Collaborating with the FWM, which, like Bemis Center, has continued to support artistic process and experimentation since 1977, is key to highlighting how artist residencies continue to impact and support artistic practice."

Opulence: Performative Wealth and the Failed American Dream assembles diverse artistic practices – including, painting, sculpture, ceramics, video, nail art, and fashion – to examine how America's obsession with wealth and the ways it is displayed shapes class, race, and gender. Foregrounding questions around how identities are constructed and performed through material and imagery, the works in this exhibition employ sumptuous aesthetics to critique how systemic barriers deny

some communities access to wealth, hindering social mobility.

Opulence: Performative Wealth and the Failed American Dream includes artists Larry Buller, Caitlin Cherry, Max Colby, Yvette Mayorga, Rashaad Newsome, Faleasha Savage, Devan Shimoyama, and Imagine Uhlenbrock. These artists are acutely aware of how notions of ‘good taste’ can possibly signal wealth and regulate access to it. Their works often toy with high and low culture to challenge the way taste sustains hierarchies of status and power.

“When framed in conversation with each other, the works in this exhibition offer both a sumptuous, visually exciting experience as well as thoughtful commentary on social and economic challenges facing the United States. History shows that artwork can have a great impact when fusing sensorial pleasure and politics. Bemis is proud to present artists who exemplify that tradition,” says exhibition curator Jared Packard.

This exhibition is pleased to spotlight artistry not typically framed in the context of contemporary art. Faleasha Savage, a nationally celebrated, Omaha-based drag queen, shares the extravagance and intimacies of her wardrobe and performance practice. Similarly, Imagine Uhlenbrock, an entrepreneur and gifted nail artist, will operate her business out of a nail salon-as-art-installation within Bemis Center’s galleries for the duration of the exhibition. Visitors are encouraged to schedule an appointment to bedazzle their nails directly with the artist: justimainenails@gmail.com.

Opulence: Performative Wealth and the Failed American Dream is curated by Jared Packard, Bemis Center Exhibitions Manager.

RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Lunch & Learn: Larry Buller

Jan 25, 2023 | 12 PM

Bemis welcomes Lincoln-based exhibiting artist, Larry Buller, to discuss his creative practice, kink, camp, and ceramics. Bring your own lunch!

Jillian Hernandez: Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment

March 30, 2023 | 7 PM

Jillian Hernandez will discuss her book, *Aesthetics of Excess*, examining how bodies of women and girls of color are racialized through cultural discourses that mark them as sexual “others,” and how in turn, aesthetic value is generated through the presentation of their bodies.

Desired Forms: Ceramics at Bemis and Beyond

April 8, 2023 | 2 PM

In addition to *Elisabeth Kley: Minutes of Sand*, Bemis Center will present two solo exhibitions by ceramics-focused artists Jennifer Ling Datchuk and Raven Halfmoon in 2023 and 2024 respectively. Join all three artists and MASS MOCA Senior Curator Susan Ross (curator of *Ceramics in the Expanded Field*) to discuss their ceramics practices and interests as well as the history and future of clay art at Bemis. Moderated by Rachel Adams, Chief Curator and Director of Programs.

madison moore: there’s always energy for dancing X LOW END

April 15, 2023 | 7 PM

This event – equal parts lecture and dance party – will explore the iridescence of queer nightlife, weaving together oral history and intergenerational family narrative, alongside the legacies and possibilities of queer nightlife to tell a story about queerness and opulence.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Curator-led Tour

January 21, 2023 @ 2 PM | March 8, 2023 @ 6 PM

Join Rachel Adams, Chief Curator and Director of Programs, and Jared Packard, Exhibitions Manager, for a tour and discussion of the exhibitions on view at Bemis Center.

All programs are Central Time. RSVP at bemiscenter.org/events.

SUPPORT

Elisabeth Kley: Minutes of Sand is supported by the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation, Harry Hu, Maja Paumgarten and John Parker, and Canada Gallery. *Elisabeth Kley:*

Minutes of Sand at Bemis Center is supported by Omaha Steaks, Nebraska Arts Council, and Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

Opulence: Performative Wealth and the Failed American Dream is supported by Omaha Steaks, Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and Humanities Nebraska.

ABOUT BEMIS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

- Exhibition and Public Program Admission: Free
- 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.
- Gallery materials are available in English and Spanish.
- Access details can be found at [bemiscenter.org/accessibility](https://www.bemiscenter.org/accessibility).
- For more information about Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, visit [bemiscenter.org](https://www.bemiscenter.org).

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.

PRESS CONTACT

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Installation view of Elisabeth Kley: *Minutes of Sand*, installed at The Fabric Workshop and Museum. Courtesy of the artist and The Fabric Workshop and Museum. Photography by Carlos Avendaño.



Larry Buller, Who's a Good Boi, 2022, Low-fire clay, decals, gold luster. 15" x 13". Courtesy of the artist.



Devan Shimoyama, CHAKRA CHART II, 2021 Oil, Colored pencil, glitter, acrylic, rhinestones, and collage on canvas stretched over panel, 72 x 72 x 1 1/4 in. Courtesy of the artist and Kavi Gupta, Chicago.