

The Regional

23 ARTISTS,
14 CITIES,
1 REGION

Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati
December 10, 2021 — March 20, 2022

Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art
June 2 — September 11, 2022

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The Midwest—loosely defined as the area that stretches from the Dakotas to Ohio, and from Minnesota to Missouri—is united by geography, history, and culture. But despite its commonalities, this vast area also encompasses an enormous diversity of concerns and approaches. Resisting the possibility of a shared Midwestern “style,” *The Regional* gathers new and recent work by twenty-three emerging and mid-career artists to uncover themes and connections across a broad range of artistic voices.

Reconsidering the status of the Midwest as America’s “heartland,” some artists in the exhibition respond directly to stereotypes about the region. **Dan Gunn, Devan Shimoyama, Alice Tippit, and Nikki Woods** examine their environments through references to local craft traditions, pop culture, and Surrealism, while **Rachel Cox, Anissa Lewis, Rashawn Griffin, and Natalie Petrosky** use photography, installation, painting, and drawing to explore ideas of home and belonging.

Other artists in *The Regional* look at some of the ways in which the Midwest has been, and continues to be at the center of national discourse around race and class. **Matthew Angelo Harrison, Lorena Molina, Yvonne Osei, and Jordan Weber** each look to the places they live as sites for challenging traditional narratives and creating space for accountability and healing as a response to violence against communities of color. **Lyndon Barrios Jr., Mara Duvra, Conrad Egyir, and Gisela McDaniel** use portraiture to explore themes of race, gender, and identity.

The exhibition’s artists also document contemporary and historical sites of trauma, nostalgia, or alienation as a means of reclaiming personal and community power. Using photography, weaving, and installation, **Hellen Ascoli, Isa Gagarin, Dakota Mace (Diné), and Margo Wolowiec** apply strategies of textual fragmentation, patterning, and erasure to an analysis of the Midwestern landscape alongside other real and imagined places. **Jonathan Christensen Caballero, Pao Houa Her, and Hường Ngô** highlight the ways in which the region has shaped, and been shaped by, experiences of migration and displacement. These multiple, sometimes contradictory, through lines reveal how one region, fourteen cities, and twenty-three artists prompt us to reconsider what the Midwest is and might become.

Ask Yourself

- 1 When you think of the Midwest, what stereotypes come to your mind?
How do some of the artists in the exhibition address those stereotypes?

- 2 Some artists in *The Regional* use traditional crafts such as weaving
and ceramics. How does the idea of American folk art draw from these
practices and what ideals are bound up in these styles?

- 3 Over the past twenty years, immigrant populations have accounted for
a large percentage of the growth of Midwestern metropolitan areas.
How do some of the artists in *The Regional* comment on the expansion,
diversification, and tensions associated with this population change?

- 4 Historical and present day labor, social, and tax policies contribute to
inequities felt in the region. How do some of the artists in *The Regional*
point out racial disparity? What examples can you think of in Cincinnati
or in other Midwestern cities and towns?



The Regional is the first recurring, multi-museum survey to highlight artists currently, or recently, working in the midsection of the United States. It is co-curated by Amara Antilla and Jade Powers, with Stephanie Kang, and was conceived in collaboration with Courtenay Finn. It is co-organized by the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati and Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City.

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