

**Cincinnati's CAC Presents First U.S. Solo Exhibition of Turner-Prize Winner Tai Shani**



Film still: Tai Shani, *My Bodily Remains, Your Bodily Remains, and all the Bodily Remains that Ever Were and Ever Will Be* (2023). Color video, with sound, 62 minutes, 48 seconds. Courtesy of the artist, co-commissioned by the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Art Night, Dundee; KM21, The Hague; and POR:TA, Lisbon. Additional support is provided by Southbank Centre, London; Creative Scotland, Edinburgh; the Henry Moore Foundation, Hadham; Luminous Art Foundation, Lisbon; and the Museum of London with support from Arts Council England.

**Cincinnati, OH – September 1, 2023** – In the fall of 2023, The Contemporary Arts Center will present *My Bodily Remains*, the first U.S. solo museum exhibition by British artist Tai Shani (b. 1976, London). The exhibition will bring together all facets of Shani’s expansive practice, including the U.S. premiere of a newly commissioned feature-length film from which the exhibition draws its title: *My Bodily Remains, Your Bodily Remains, and all the Bodily Remains that Ever Were and Ever Will Be* (2023).

Tai Shani works with painting, sculpture, installation, performance, and film to explore the politics of emancipation from a feminist perspective. A prolific writer, Shani draws on sources including punk rock, cult cinema, Greek mythology, feminist theory, and science fiction to craft otherworldly environments and experiences. The new feature-length film makes use of the vernacular of video games and sci-fi cinema to explore leftist resistance movements through the past 150 years. A critique of the recent global rise of authoritarianism and fascist politics, it follows four protagonists as they grapple with fundamental life questions about love, grief, and societal change. A character named the “Reader of the Book of Love” recounts historical quotations by different revolutionary groups who were proponents of direct action as they describe the relationship between protest and eroticism and pleasure. These include American labor movement activist Lucy Parsons, the Civil Rights Movement leader Angela Davis, and German anti-imperialist journalist and communist Ulrika Meinhof, among others. Quoting from

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Raoul Vaneigem the Reader states, “If love is under siege, it is because it threatens the very essence of commercial civilization.” They continue, “Everything is designed to make us forget that love is our most vivid manifestation and the most common power of life that is in us.” The film’s expansive narrative is enhanced by interludes of digital animation and a mesmeric score composed in collaboration with Maxwell Sterling. Produced during a residency at Southbank Centre, London with a Gamelan orchestra, the soundtrack consists of repetitive drone-like waves of sound that elicit a visceral response by extending beyond the film viewing area and filling the entire second floor galleries.

To accompany the film, Shani has produced one of her signature floor-based installations. Occupying nearly 30 feet across and resembling an inverted Medieval ceiling, the stepped platform will be accessorized with an array of artifacts, ceramic and glass objects, and soft sculptures that echo environments and references woven throughout the film. Suspended above it and on the adjacent wall will be fragmented architectural forms—columns, an altar, and circular discs—that further emphasize Shani’s interest in conjuring immersive dream-like environments. At one end of the installation, the altar-like wall relief will feature a glowing image of a pink anthurium flower. This symbol of eroticism emphasizes the work’s spiritual allusions and suggests that nature or sexuality might be more apt subjects of worship than any religious figures. The exhibition also features a suite of 9 watercolors, a painted triptych, and an earlier film, *The Neon Hieroglyph* (2021), demonstrating Shani’s multi-disciplinary practice and investigating the transformative potential of psychedelics. Drawing on queer and feminist theory and political ideologies of collectivism, the works together ponder love as a device for healing and resistance.

*Tai Shani: My Bodily Remains* will be on view at the Contemporary Arts Center from November 3, 2023 until April 14, 2024. The exhibition is curated by Amara Antilla, CAC Senior Curator at Large, with support from Erin Adelman, Curatorial Assistant. Annual exhibition sponsorship is provided by Gale and Dave Beckett, Belflex and Jason McCaw, Barbara Weston Sasser and Carol Weston Roberts, Ronnie and John Shore, Helen and Brian Heekin, Barbara Myers and the generous contributors to the CAC Exhibition Fund. General operating support for the CAC is provided by ArtsWave, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ohio Arts Council, P&G Fund, and the Johnson Foundation. [www.cincycac.org](http://www.cincycac.org).



Tai Shani, *DC Semiramis*, 2019, Turner Prize 2019 at Turner Contemporary. Courtesy the artist. Photography by Stephen White

### About Tai Shani

Tai Shani (b. 1976, London; lives and works in London) is an interdisciplinary artist and writer who employs performance, installation, photography, and film. She draws from pop culture references, psychedelic aesthetics, science fiction, and Gothic sensibilities, which are used to create mystical narratives that are rooted in feminism, anti-fascism, and capitalist critique. Largely self-taught, she shifts seamlessly between genres, media, and periods to uncover marginalized histories and craft research-based works as tools for imagining post-patriarchal futures.

Shani's work has been the subject of special projects and performances at venues including the Barbican, London; ICA, London (both 2010); Loop, Barcelona (2011); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2015); Tate Modern, London; Serpentine Galleries, London (both 2016); Glasgow International; The Tetley, Leeds (both 2018); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Grazer Kunstverein, Graz; Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK (all 2019); and Manchester International Festival (2021), among others.

She has participated in numerous group exhibitions internationally such as *Tableau Vivant: A Wandering Retrospective*, Prospect 1.5, New Orleans (2011); *Diffusions*, Tate, Britain London (2011); and *Music as Medium: Tate Shots commission*, Tate Britain (both 2011); *We Are The Time*, Gerrit, Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam (2012); *Visionary Kingdom*, Arnolfini, Bristol (2012); *Drawing Biennial*, The Drawing Room, London; *Open Heart Surgery*, The Moving Museum, London; and *Anthology Live/Film in Space*, Camden Arts Center, London (all 2013); *Mirrorcity*, Hayward Gallery, London (2014); *Preserves and Presences*, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; *The Serpentine Miracle Marathon*, The Serpentine Galleries, London; and Reality Production, *Tensta Konsthall*, Stockholm (all 2016); *Still I Rise*, Nottingham

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Contemporary; *ALIAS*, Netwerk Aalst, Belgium (both 2019); *100 Years Of Conviviality: what you can see is what you can imagine*, Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo (2021); *Testament*, CCA Goldsmiths, London (2021); and *You Are a Wave and I am a Wave*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2022).

Shani is a joint winner of the 2019 Turner Prize alongside Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Helen Cammock, and Oscar Murillo. She currently teaches at the Royal College of Art, London.

### **About the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC)**

The Contemporary Arts Center is a catalyst for dialogue and discovery, driven by the art, artists, and ideas of our time. Through an innovative slate of exhibitions, performances, educational and community programs and partnerships, the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) provides opportunities for encounter with trailblazing artists both local and global, with cultural thought leaders, and with one's own creative potential. Embedded in the fabric of its community and committed to lifelong learning, the CAC serves as an integral forum where people can reflect, create, collaborate, and connect around a more inclusive and sustainable culture of tomorrow.

Since its founding in 1939, the CAC has been a champion of emerging ideas in contemporary art, hosting one of the first Midwest exhibitions of Picasso's *Guernica* in 1939; mounting an early exhibition of Pop Art in 1963; representing the United States at the São Paulo Biennial in 1975; and presenting—and successfully defending—the 1990 Mapplethorpe retrospective that became a lightning rod in the era's culture wars and propelled the CAC into the national spotlight. More recently, the CAC presented *Art and Race Matters*, the first comprehensive retrospective of Robert Colescott, one of America's most compelling and provocative artists. The exhibition was awarded a Sotheby's Prize in 2018 in recognition of curatorial excellence and its exploration of an overlooked and under-represented area of art history. Today, the CAC occupies the Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art, the first museum designed by architect Zaha Hadid and the first U.S. museum designed by a woman.

The CAC's mission and work is made possible thanks to ongoing support from ArtsWave, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Ohio Arts Council.

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