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The Contemporary Dayton presents

Two New Exhibitions

Susan B. Byrnes: Lightness and Weight

A Zachary Armstrong Curatorial Project

& Special Project

Elyssa Wortzman: Be a Blessing

January 17 – April 12, 2025

DAYTON (Dec 18, 2024) – The Contemporary Dayton (The Co) announces the opening of two new exhibitions: ***Susan B. Byrnes: Lightness and Weight*** and ***A Zachary Armstrong Curatorial Project***. The exhibitions will be on view January 17 – April 12, 2025. They will open Friday, January 17, with a reception free and open to all from 6-8 p.m. In addition to the new exhibitions, The Co will premiere a new social justice project by Elyssa Wortzman: *Be a Blessing* on January 26, 2025.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

Susan B. Byrnes: Lightness and Weight

The Dr. Robert L. Brandt, Jr. Family Gallery

The Eichelberger Video Gallery

The Ira & Susan Thomsen Family Gallery

Jan 17 – Apr 12, 2025

A groundbreaking exploration of the paradoxes inherent in the human experience drawing from themes in Milan Kundera's novel, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being," *Lightness & Weight* will feature three new sound and sculptural installations that explore the complexities and dualities of the human condition. The exhibition will include a variety of non-traditional materials including cast iron, tulle, artificial hair, glass, smoke, video, and sound.

Byrnes, a sculptor and audio producer who most often uses her work to challenge and reflect on the burdens of sexism and the resilience of the female body, will launch a companion podcast series featuring interviews with women artists across various media and backgrounds. Created through a new partnership between The Co and WYSO 91.3 FM, the flagship National Public Radio (NPR) member station for the region, the podcast will provide an important platform for female voices in the arts, fostering dialogue and community engagement.

Byrnes is a Cincinnati-based visual artist whose diverse body of work spans sculpture, multimedia installation, radio broadcasts, writing, and curatorial projects. Her work has been exhibited in galleries and museums across the Midwest, including the Korean Cultural Center of Chicago, the Dayton Art Institute, and the Weston Gallery, Cincinnati.

OPENING NIGHT / Jan 17, 2025

Members Preview with the Artist 5-6 pm / Public Reception 6-8 pm

A Zachary Armstrong Curatorial Project

Jan 17-Apr 12, 2025

Intricate. Intimate. From the heart. The Co presents the reveal of a new project by Zachary Armstrong—an enigmatic force whose work features the ritualistic repetition of symbols and motifs rooted in recollections of his childhood and family, of people and places, of rural Midwest Americana.

While the details remain under wraps, we promise a love letter to technical innovation, imagination and memory as a means of connecting.

Armstrong lives and works in Dayton, Ohio. Recent solo exhibitions include GNYP Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium (2023); Tilton Gallery, New York, NY (2022, 2018, 2016); Faurschou Foundation, New York, NY/Beijing, China (2022, 2021); and The Contemporary, Dayton, OH (2021); among others.

FRIENDS & FAMILY RECEPTION / Jan 3, 2025 / 6-8 pm

OPENING NIGHT / Jan 17, 2025 / 6-8 pm

Elyssa Wortzman: Be a Blessing

A Social Justice Activation Produced by The University of Dayton, Department of Religious Studies and The Contemporary Dayton

As part of The Co's ongoing Arts & Wellness initiatives, the public is invited to join us for a transformative experiment to foster inclusion through mindful art-making, action, and reflection. Project leader, Dr. Elyssa Wortzman, will present several workshops facilitating simple, easy practices to foster compassion and recognition of our shared humanity—and individual and collectively what it means to be a blessing in this world. Upon completion, participants will be asked to enter a “social contract” that requests each to wear a “Be a Blessing” graphic sweatshirt and seek to engage other participants in recognizing the blessing through a silent choreography of acknowledgement and connection. The project will culminate with an event offering a model of “protesting” for shared humanity. Documentation of the project and event will be shared in the Co's galleries.

Dr. Elyssa Wortzman (D. Min, L.L.B) is a spiritual director, educator and artist, and currently serves as the Education Director of the Religious School at Beth Abraham Synagogue, Dayton. She is the recipient of the Rabbi Samuel Sandmel Award for her innovative doctoral thesis on art as spiritual direction from the

Graduate Theological Foundation (2016). She has worked as a Jewish educator in seminaries, community centers, schools and synagogues.

WORKSHOPS

Sunday, Jan 26, 2025

9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Student & Family Workshop / Free with Registration at TBD / The Contemporary Dayton

Feb TBD - Student Workshop / Free with Registration at TBD / Multi-Ethnic Education and Engagement Center (MEC), University of Dayton

Friday, Mar 7, 2025

9:30 a.m.--12 p.m. General Public (ages 18 & up) / Free with Registration at TBD / The Contemporary Dayton

SPONSORS:

Presenting Sponsor: University of Dayton, Department of Religious Studies

Education & Public Program Partners: Dr. Robert L. Brandt, Jr.

Digital Strategy Partner: Catapult Creative

Hospitality Partner: Gather by Ghostlight

PUBLIC PROGRAMS / ALL PROGRAMS TAKE PLACE AT THE CONTEMPORARY DAYTON

FRIENDS & FAMILY RECEPTION / Jan 3, 2025 / 6-8 pm

OPENING NIGHT / Jan 17

Members Preview with the Artist 5-6 pm / Public Reception 6-8 pm

ARTIST TALK: Susan Byrnes / Thursday TBD / 6:30 pm

ARTIST TALK: Zachary Armstrong / Thursday TBD / 6:30 pm

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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2024-2025 OPERATING SUPPORT DONORS

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Culture Works, The Dayton Foundation, The Montgomery County Arts & Cultural District, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Ohio Arts Council, The Virginia W. Kettering Foundation, and our Members.

GALLERY & CoSHOP HOURS

Wednesday–Saturday 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

Closed Sunday–Tuesday

ALWAYS FREE & OPEN TO ALL

ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY DAYTON

Advancing art for the community and a community for artists since 1991.

The Contemporary Dayton (The Co) is the region’s contemporary art center. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, The Co produces and presents ART EXHIBITIONS, ARTIST TALKS, and PUBLIC ART by local, national, and global creatives and makers; and is ALWAYS FREE & OPEN TO ALL. As a non-collecting art center, The Co is one of 45 non-collecting art centers and museums across North America that specialize in presenting modern and contemporary art.

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