



MEDIA CONTACT

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The Contemporary Dayton presents Three New Exhibitions That Explore Protest

DAYTON (October 14, 2021) – The Contemporary Dayton (The Co), presents artists who perpetually confront subjects surrounding current events encompassing political resistance and protests. This new exhibition features Indiana-based and internationally renowned painter, **Samuel Levi Jones**, Dayton's most prolific artist, activist, and elder statesman, **Willis "Bing" Davis**, and Vietnamese film and visual artist, **Tuan Andrew Nguyen**. The three exhibitions will open the evening of Friday, November 5, 2021 and be on view through January 16, 2022.

"The Co is committed to presenting artists whose practices speak to prominent issues of our time," states The Co's Executive Director, Eva Buttacavoli. "These three exhibitions will challenge the way brutality is embedded in institutional systems and the beauty in consistently seeking out the truth."

Samuel Levi Jones: The Empire is Falling

The Dr. Robert L. Brandt, Jr. Gallery

The Co is pleased to present **Samuel Levi Jones: The Empire is Falling**, featuring recent large-scale paintings by internationally renowned artist Samuel Levi Jones. Jones' works are comprised of the reworked covers of books whose purpose is to influence, educate, and inform. In his effort to investigate omissions and falsehoods deeply embedded within these volumes, Jones sews the book covers back together to create uncannily beautiful abstract paintings, often at a large scale. Upon closer inspection, the striking vistas of these works give way to a reckoning with the misinformation that the source material embodies, particularly as it pertains to race and equity. Jones seeks to move the viewer closer to the "truths" of encyclopedias, law volumes, medical texts, and art books. In this practice, Jones deals with multiple histories at once: the history rooted in the reconstructed volumes, the history of abstract painting, the history of quilting and repurposing, and the history of protest and resistance.

Jones's work has been featured in exhibitions at the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, IN; The Brooklyn Museum, NY; The Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, IL; and The Studio Museum, Harlem, NY. His work can be found in public and private collections including The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; The Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin – Madison, WI; The Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; The Studio Museum, Harlem, NY; and The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY.

In 2014, Jones was the recipient of the prestigious Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize, an annual award presented by The Studio Museum in Harlem, whose past recipients include some of the most prominent artists working today, including Leslie Hewitt, Glenn Ligon, and Lorna Simpson.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an Artist Talk and a Gallery Guide with an essay by Curator, Michael Goodson. The exhibition was organized in part by Galerie Lelong & Co, NY.

Willis “Bing” Davis: Kneel

The Co is pleased to present ***Willis “Bing” Davis: Kneel***, featuring a newly commissioned body of work by Dayton’s most prolific artist, activist, and elder statesman, Willis “Bing” Davis. The exhibition explores recent issues of police brutality and will feature *Colin Kaepernick, George Floyd Knee Cushion, 2020*, an installation of what Davis refers to as “kneelers.” In this work, Davis adorned an antique wooden machine part mold from Dayton’s now evaporated industrial manufacturing culture, with carpenter nails, decorative upholstery studs, and paint. Cradled in this ornate-yet-earthly object is a muddied and used, red, white, and blue football meant to accept the knee of someone kneeling in solemnity and protest. It also represents the other end of this harrowing cultural spectrum: the knee held on George Floyd’s neck for over 9 minutes resulting in his death.

Davis is known internationally for his large-scale, boldly colored and patterned African Spirit Dance paintings, contemporary African masks and ceramics, as well as being an activist, educator, and mentor. He founded the Willis Bing Davis Art Studio & EbonNia Gallery in Dayton, OH and works locally, nationally, and internationally, which include projects in Russia, Bermuda, China, and Ghana, among others. He co-founded Ohio’s The African American Visual Artists Guild (AAVAG), and is currently the President of the Board of Directors of the National Conference of Artists.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an Artist Talk and a Gallery Guide with an essay by Curator, Michael Goodson.

Tuan Andrew Nguyen: The Boat People

The Jack W. and Sally D. Eichelberger Foundation Video Gallery

The Co presents ***Tuan Andrew Nguyen: The Boat People***. Vietnamese artist, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, explores strategies of political resistance enacted through counter-memory and post-memory narratives. Extracting and re-working stories via history and supernaturalism is an essential part of Nguyen’s video works and sculptures where fact and fiction are both held accountable. Set in an unspecified future at the precarious edge of humanity’s possible extinction, *The Boat People* follows a group of children led by a strong-willed and resourceful little girl who travel the seas and collect stories of a world they never knew through objects that survived through time.

Nguyen received a BFA from the University of California, Irvine in 1999 and an MFA from The California Institute of the Arts in 2004. Nguyen has received several awards in both film and visual arts, including an Art Matters grant in 2010 and Best Feature Film at VietFilmFest in 2018 for his film, *The Island*. His work has been included in several international exhibitions including the Asia Pacific Triennial (2006), the Whitney Biennial (2017), and the Sharjah Biennial (2019).

The exhibition will be accompanied by an Artist Interview with Tuan Andrew Nguyen and Curator, Michael Goodson that will be viewable at thecontemporarydayton.org, and a Gallery Guide with an essay by Goodson. The screening is courtesy the artist and James Cohan, New York.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

OPENING NIGHT

Friday, November 5, 2021

Members Preview: 5–6 p.m. *Open exclusively to current \$100 members and above*

Public Reception: 6–9 p.m.

Free admission. Donation bar and light bites.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

ALWAYS FREE

CURATOR'S TOURS

Saturday, November 13 and Saturday, December 11, 2021, at 2 p.m. in The Co's galleries.

ARTIST TALKS

SAMUEL LEVI JONES

Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 6 p.m. in The Co's galleries

TUAN ANDREW NGUYEN

Artist interview will be available at thecontemporarydayton.org

WILLIS "BING" DAVIS

Saturday, January 8, 2022 at 2 p.m. in The Co's galleries

ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY DAYTON

Mission: To provide art for the community and a community for artists.

Overview: The Contemporary Dayton (The Co) is the region's contemporary art center. Established in 1991 as The Dayton Visual Arts Center, a 501c3, The Co produces and presents 8-12 original exhibitions and 12-15 programs, events, community partnerships, and artist opportunities each year. Exhibitions and education programs feature the most exciting and meaningful work of our time created by artists living and working today, with an emphasis on the artists of Ohio, women artists, and artists of color. The Co is led by Executive Director, Eva Buttacavoli, a 30-year museum administrator, curator and educator who previously served as curator and director of exhibitions and education at the Austin Museum of Art (TX, now The Contemporary Austin) and the Miami Art Museum (FL, now the Perez Art Museum Miami); and Curator Michael Goodson, who previously served as Senior Curator at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus; Director and Curator at the Columbus College of Art and Design's Beeler Gallery; and as Director at James Cohan Gallery, NY.

ABOUT THE DAYTON ARCADE

Cross Street Partners, Model Group, and McCormack Baron Salazar are redeveloping the historic Dayton Arcade, a collection of nine buildings totaling over 500,000 SF in the heart of downtown Dayton's central business district. The full development plan will recast the Arcade in much the same way it was initially developed in the first decade of the 20th century—with a mix of retail, offices, event space, and housing. The first phase of the project, the South Arcade, will consist of an innovation center with the University of Dayton as a higher education partner. Included in the South Arcade are 110-unit residential LIHTC and market rate development for artists and creative entrepreneurs, a shared commercial kitchen program, multiple event spaces, and food and beverage-focused retail. The second phase, the North Arcade, will include a marketplace retail and restaurant environment as well as a boutique hotel.