

**The Contemporary Dayton
presents
The Inaugural Exhibitions in the Dayton Arcade
Opening April 30, 2021**

The premieres include a massive new art installation by internationally renowned Dayton resident, Zachary Armstrong, and the unveiling of a permanent sculpture by Dayton native, Shon Walters, each created especially for the opening.

DAYTON (April 20, 2021) – The Contemporary Dayton (The Co), formerly known as Dayton Visual Arts Center, is thrilled to present the Inaugural Exhibitions at its new home in the historic Dayton Arcade, featuring the work of Dayton natives, Zachary Armstrong and the late Curtis Barnes, Sr., and LA filmmaker, Cauleen Smith. Additionally, The Co will unveil a commissioned sculpture by Daytonian, Shon Walters, which will serve as the permanent welcome desk for the new space. The three exhibitions and the sculpture unveiling will open concurrently on Friday, April 30, 2021 with a socially distanced public party followed by a celebratory weekend with extended hours. The exhibitions will be on view April 30–July 17, 2021.

Of the Inaugural Exhibitions and the exhibitions slated already for the next two years, The Co’s Executive Director, Eva Buttacavoli, states:

“The Co’s focus will remain as it has for its 30-year history--to present the ideas and expressions of artists whose work emanates from Dayton, from Ohio, nationally, and internationally whose practice speaks to prominent issues of our time. Subjects that continue to be explored are the social justice concerns of our Generation; including Voting Rights, Racial Injustice, Climate Justice, Healthcare, LGBTQ Rights, the Refugee Crisis, Income Gaps, Gun Violence and Hunger & Food Insecurity.”

The Co’s Curator, Michael Goodson, expands:

“For this next evolution of The Co, we will definitively put into practice what many arts and cultural institutions around the country are ruminating upon. Through thoughtful discussion and ineffable action, we will define our movement toward equity not only in statements and well-meaning missives, but through that which is tangible and demonstrative—exhibitions, programming, and public outreach—that both speak to our dedication to this idea, but that also indelibly address it with members of our community for whom contemporary art has likely felt an exclusive endeavor. It is not, and, from this moment forward, will not be treated as such by The Co.”

The Inaugural Exhibitions Series begins with premiere of new work by internationally renowned artist, Dayton native and resident, Zachary Armstrong, will christen The Co’s new galleries’ most distinct feature—a dramatic 74-foot wall, bisecting the main gallery—with a floor-to-ceiling “installation.” The exhibition, **Zachary Armstrong: Grids & Abstracts**, curated by the Co’s curator, Michael Goodson, will feature a dizzying array of large encaustic paintings and sculptural forms sourced from Armstrong’s childhood drawings, family history, and a gathering of iconic Dayton signs and symbols (such as the Elder-Beerman logo) layered on top of floor-to-ceiling vinyl “wallpaper” of repetitive, swooping forms executed entirely in shades of gray. The artist worked closely with Chris Welker of Dayton’s Select Signs to create and install the custom wallpaper, meticulously bespoke to the space. An original short film produced by The Co will accompany the exhibition along with a full-color catalogue that will include essays and interviews by

Goodson and Dr. Greer Pagano, Instructor, Columbus College of Art & Design and former Chief Curator, The Pizzuti Collection, Columbus.

Consisting largely of self-portraits and paintings of family members and friends, the late educator, mentor, and Dayton legend, Curtis Barnes, Sr. represents a generation of black painters whose contributions are still deeply felt today. The artist's prolific output and myriad stylizations will be on full display in the new **Dr. Robert L. Brandt, Jr. Family Gallery** and the new **T. Chase Hale and Jon A. Hale Gallery** through groupings of several dozen vibrant and compelling large and small paintings. **Curtis Barnes, Sr.: Love & Peace** is curated by Michael Goodson and Zachary Armstrong, who worked closely with Barnes' family to restore and present a never-before-exhibited immersive grid of 36 "community portraits" made by Barnes during his long affiliation with Dayton's Wesley Community Center. An original short film produced by The Co, featuring Barnes' longtime friends, including Custom Frame Services owner and craftsman, Dave Crowell; artist, gallerist, and community activist Willis "Bing" Davis; artist and former Sinclair Community College Gallery Coordinator, Pat McClelland; and artist and Sinclair Community College Art Professor, Sally Struthers, will accompany the exhibition along with a full-color catalogue.

The Co is thrilled to present the regional premiere of LA-based, globally recognized filmmaker and recent Studio Museum (Harlem, NY) Wein Artist Prize winner for her work on Black Identity, feminism, and Afrofuturism, Cauleen Smith. **Cauleen Smith: Remote Viewing** will be on view in the new **Eichelberger Video Gallery**. Smith's short film depicts a true story about a boy who witnessed the whites in his town attempt to obliterate every trace of the black community's history by digging a deep hole in which to bury a historical schoolhouse. Curated by Michael Goodson, the exhibition will be accompanied by a screening of a selection of Smith's short films and Virtual Artist Q&A.

Finally, The Co is excited to unveil what will be an intrinsic presence in its new galleries in the form of a commissioned work by accomplished Dayton-based sculptor, Shon Walters. The 18-foot long organic, bulb-like form will be presented in the space as both a work of art and as a reception point for visitors. The sculpture was created from Ash trees that fell in Dayton's Sinclair Park during the devastating 2019 tornadoes which Walters painstakingly milled; glued together shaped and joined 26 layers; then sculpted and sanded to form the massive 1,120-pound sculpture. Walters describes the distinct "spear" of the work--which is designed to literally pierce the walls of the gallery--*as his interpretation of "a delicate vulnerability stricken with inexperience, wonder, and will that push beyond what we know and where we have been."*

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A PRESS PREVIEW:

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

8:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m.

The Contemporary Dayton at the Dayton Arcade
25 W 4th Street, Dayton, OH, 45402

Pastries and coffee provided

[REGISTER](#)

OPENING WEEKEND

Friday, April 30, 2021

Members Preview Party: 5:30 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

Public Party: 7:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.

Free Admission.

Beverages and light bites; donations appreciated

Saturday, May 1, 2021

Gallery Hours: 11:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

Celebration with the friends and family of Curtis Barnes, Sr.: 2:00 p.m.– 4:00 pm.

Gospel Ensemble Performance at 3:00 p.m.

Free Admission.

Beverages and light bites; donations appreciated.

Sunday, May 2, 2021

Gallery Hours: 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

In Studio: Zachary Armstrong with Michael Goodson

& In Studio: Curtis Barnes, Sr.

April 29, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. *Exclusively Online*

The premiere of The Co's new short film series includes an in-depth look at Armstrong's Dayton studio; followed by an in-depth look at Barnes through the eyes of Dayton-area friends.

Register at thecontemporarydayton.org.

Virtual Screening of *Remote Viewing* and Q&A with Cauleen Smith

May 27, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. *Exclusively Online*

Join us for a virtual screening of *Remote Viewing* followed by a livestream Q&A with the artist. Register at thecontemporarydayton.org

Curator's Tours

2nd Saturdays at 2:00 p.m.

May 8, June 12, July 10, 2021

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.