

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Sandra Keat German (1948-2014) was an artist, educator, quilt maker, and revolutionary. Sandra German was the was a true innovator in the art of free motion machine quilting; she was featured in the award winning documentary Pennsylvania Quilts. Sandra inspired hundreds of students to believe in their hands, in their hearts and in the creative genius of their instincts—through her intuitive quilting and teaching methods. She was the founder of the Grailville Quilters and the Grailville Quilt show. Her award winning works of fiber art have been shown in galleries and museums around the world.

vanessa german is a self-taught citizen artist working across sculpture, performance, communal rituals, immersive installation, and photography, in order to repair and reshape disrupted systems, spaces, and connections. The artist's practice proposes new models for social healing, utilizing creativity and tenderness as vital forces to reckon with the historical and ongoing catastrophes of structural racism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, resource extraction, and misogynoir.

## EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

### vanessa german

*grandaughter, the artist, in meditation upon the migratory patterns, forced and unforced, of grandmother liza jane and her descendants, past, present and future.*, 2023, mixed media assemblage, 56 x 24 x 48 inches

*HOLINESS*, 2022, mixed media sculpture, 19 x 12 x 12 inches

*Red Bird*, 2022, mixed media assemblage, 58 ¾ x 24 ½ x 44 ¾ inches

*SITTING IN THE POWER OF BEING EXACTLY WHO YOU ARE*, 2022, mixed media sculpture, 26 x 24 x 14 inches

*TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSMUTE DEEP SORROW AND DEPRESSION*, 2022, mixed media sculpture, 29 ½ x 22 x 11 ¾ inches

*TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSMUTE RAGE*, 2022, mixed media assemblage, 28 ¼ x 15 ¼ x 15 ½ inches

*White Bird*, 2022, mixed media assemblage, 69 ½ x 24 x 58 ½ inches

*YOU ARE ENOUGH LOVE YOUR BODY*, 2022, Mixed media sculpture, 17 x 10 x 10 inches

*YOUR BODY LOVES YOU OF BEING*, 2022, mixed media sculpture, 21 x 12 x 11 inches

*Black Imagination*, 2023, mixed media assemblage, 84 x 28 x 30 inches

*Blue Mother*, 2023, mixed media assemblage, 80 x 30 x 24 inches

### Sandra Keat German

*Can You Dig It*, 2009, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 59 x 41 inches

*Just Breathe*, 2007, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 78 x 78 inches

*Before My Time*, 2007, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 79 x 79 inches

*Suddenly Spring*, 2005, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 64 x 69 inches

*Love Always, Mother*, 2002, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 52 x 52 inches

*Egyptian Kimono*, 2002, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 45 x 57 inches

*Resurrection*, 2001, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 83 x 83 inches

*Peaceful Lagoon*, 1998, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 73 x 57 inches

*These Few Precious Days*, 1995, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 90 x 96 inches

*Honey Bees, Buttermilk, and Blues*, 1993, Fabric, thread, Mixed media, 103 x 103 inches



Sandra Keat German  
Courtesy of the German family.  
vanessa, Jen and Jocelyn



vanessa german  
Courtesy of the artist Kasmin Gallery,  
NY,

# GALLERY GUIDE

JUL 14 - OCT 1, 2023

When initially approached regarding an exhibition of recent sculpture, vanessa german almost immediately considered her family's history in Ohio, particularly the work, inspiration, and profound influence of her mother, Sandra Keat German. Sandra was an activist artist who sought not only correctives and resolution within the American system generally but also quite specifically within her family and, importantly, through her art. vanessa german has said of Sandra, "My Mother Was the First REAL Thug That I Knew."

This exhibition is the second time the mother/daughter work has been exhibited in the same gallery space, the first at The Lawrence Arts Center, Lawrence, KS.

As a citizen artist, vanessa explores the power of art and love as a transformative force in the dynamic cultural ecosystem of communities and neighborhoods. Sandra taught vanessa and her siblings to make things, question authority, speak up, show up, dance, sing, laugh, eat well, and fight for what is right. Vanessa cites her mother, Sandra Keat German, as the cornerstone of her approach as a maker.

Sandra German is considered a true innovator in free-motion machine quilting. This technique facilitated a full range of visual expression within each work, from intricate, balanced geometric composition, to skillful hand-worked parts of the compositions. Within this combination of techniques, Sandra was free to weave in personal narratives and political ideas and to entirely simply free herself to the fullest expression possible within any given quilt. This also included an ongoing dialogue with the deeper history of quilt making which allowed the passing on of family histories and codified messaging, including mapping, direction, and instruction for those traveling north on the underground railroad. This complex zeitgeist is present in every Sandra Keat German work.

vanessa german's artistic practice is intertwined with and inextricable from her dedicated activism and community leadership role. In 2011, german founded the Love Front Porch, an arts initiative for the local neighborhood's women, children, and families that began after she moved her studio practice onto the front steps of her home. Three years later, in 2014, german opened the ARThouse, which combines a community studio, a large garden, an outdoor theatre, and an artist residency.

## vanessa german with Sandra Keat German: *THE BLUE MOTHER*

THE DR. ROBERT L. BRANDT FAMILY GALLERY  
THE IRA H. & SUSAN P. THOMSEN FAMILY GALLERY

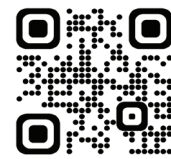
Upholding artmaking as an act of restorative justice, german confronts and begins dismantling the emotional and spiritual weight imposed by the multi-generational oppression of African American communities. As a queer Black woman living in the United States, german has described this as an essential process of adventuring into the wild freedom that inhabiting such identities demands. This activist instinct emerges in german's work to postulate powerful narratives of freedom and love.

In 2022, german was awarded the Heinz Award for the Arts. Other awards include the Don Tyson Prize from the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the United States Artist Grant in 2018, the Jacob Lawrence Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2017, and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant in 2015.

Her work is held in private and public collections, including the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Akron Art Museum, Akron, OH; Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, MA; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY; Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ; Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, MI, and Figge Art Museum, Davenport, IA.

german's premier exhibition at Kasmin, *Sad Rapper*, opened in September 2022 to critical praise and was named one of the top fifty exhibitions of that year by Hyperallergic. Her work has been exhibited at museums across the United States, most recently at the Montclair Art Museum, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, Figge Art Museum, The Union for Contemporary Art, The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, Flint Institute of Arts, Mattress Factory, Everson Museum of Art, Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Studio Museum, Ringling Museum of Art and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

In August 2023, german will unveil a new commission for the exhibition *Pulling Together* at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The exhibition will explore the role of monuments in the telling of American history and will mark the first organized group exhibition ever staged in The National Mall.



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SANDRA KEAT GERMAN  
*Can You Dig It*, 2009  
 Silkscreen on cut-out felt  
 59 x 41 inches  
 Courtesy of the German Family



vanessa german  
*BIRD #1 (detail)*, 2022  
 wood, foam, black pigment, grace, the dream of a human woman who became a bird to tell us that we are  
 all more than human, glass bottles found at the trash dump for the Biltmore— the largest house in America,  
 astrofurf, love, an open heart  
 gold metallic paint, plaster, plaster gauze wood, ribbon, astrofurf, love, an open heart  
 65 1/2 x 24 x 60 inches  
 Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin Gallery, NY