



MEDIA CONTACT

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The Contemporary Dayton Presents *Ella Kraimer: Appearances* September 25, 2026 - January 23, 2027

DAYTON (September 14, 2026) – The Contemporary Dayton is proud to present *Ella Kraimer: Appearances*, a world-premiere exhibition of large-scale photographs by Ohio-based artist Ella Kraimer. Opening September 25, 2026, as part of the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial: *The Long View*, the exhibition explores the blurred boundaries between authenticity, performance, memory, invention, one's self, and the images we construct for others.

In *Appearances*, Kraimer transforms herself into a cast of fictional personas through a series of striking self-portraits. Using secondhand garments gathered from thrift stores across the country, she creates elaborate costumes and assemblages that become vehicles for inhabiting different identities. Layered with irony, humor, and cultural critique, the resulting photographs question how identity is shaped and reshaped, through clothing, image-making, cultural expectations, and performance.

Previously experienced only as a digital project, *Appearances* will be presented at The Contemporary Dayton as a physical exhibition of large-scale photographs, inviting viewers to encounter Kraimer's constructed characters at an immersive scale. The project reflects on life in an age increasingly defined by social media, image culture, and spectacle, where the distinction between who we are and how we present ourselves can become increasingly difficult to discern.

Kraimer draws inspiration from childhood memories of paper dolls, in which a single figure can be transformed through an endless series of costumes and imagined roles. Through costume, collage, and assemblage, she fragments and reconstructs her own likeness, creating images that are simultaneously playful and unsettling. Her personas appear familiar yet elusive, raising questions about the stories we tell through appearance and the assumptions we make about the people we see.

"*Appearances* asks us to consider how much of identity is constructed through the images we make and the roles we perform," said Heather Jones, Interim Director and Chief Curator of The Contemporary Dayton. "Kraimer approaches these questions with humor and play, but beneath the surface is a sharp examination of image culture and our desire to understand and categorize one another."

Kraimer spent her formative years in Berlin, Germany, and is now based in New Bremen, Ohio. She earned a BA in Design and Visual Communication from the University of Europe for Applied Sciences in Berlin and an MA in Visual and Media Anthropology from HMKW University of Applied Sciences for Media, Communication, and Management in Berlin.

All exhibitions and public programs at The Contemporary Dayton are free and open to the public.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS & EVENTS / ALL PROGRAMS TAKE PLACE AT THE CONTEMPORARY DAYTON / FREE & OPEN TO ALL

Opening Reception with the Artist

Friday, September 25, 2026, 6–8 pm

Welcome remarks: 6:30 pm

Storytelling & Collage Night

Thursday, October 1, 2026, 5-8 pm

Our monthly Collage Night in October will feature inspiration from *Ella Kraimer: Appearances*. Join us for a hands-on workshop and get creative in a relaxed, welcome space—no experience necessary. We'll provide materials, but feel free to bring your own.

Reservations suggested through [Eventbrite](#).

Artist Talk

Thursday, November 12, 2026, 6:30 pm

Join artist Ella Kraimer for a conversation about *Appearances*, exploring identity, performance, and image-making through photographic self-portraiture, followed by an audience Q&A.

Guided Tours:

Thursday, October 8, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 14, 2 p.m.

Thursday, December 10, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 9, 2 p.m.

Community Photography Critique Night

Thursday, January 14, 6:30 p.m.

A community critique offering photographers an opportunity to share work, exchange ideas, and engage in conversation around photography.

ABOUT FOTOFOCUS

Ella Kraimer: Appearances is part of the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial: *The Long View*. Now in its eighth iteration, the Biennial activates more than 70 exhibitions, public art projects, and programs at museums, galleries, universities, and public spaces throughout Greater Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Northern Kentucky.



SPONSORS:

Support for this 2026 FotoFocus Biennial exhibition was provided in part by FotoFocus

Education & Public Programs: Dr. Robert L. Brandt, Jr.

Community Partners: Cross Street Partners, FilmDayton, Hilton Garden Inn Dayton Downtown

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2026-2027 OPERATING SUPPORT DONORS

The Charles D. Berry Foundation, Culture Works, The Dayton Foundation, The Montgomery County Arts & Cultural District, The Ohio Arts Council, The Virginia W. Kettering Foundation, and our Members.

GALLERY & CoSHOP HOURS

Wednesday–Saturday 11 am–6 pm

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 is the region’s contemporary art center. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, The Contemporary Dayton 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 Contemporary Dayton 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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