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ARTNEWS

## Counterpublic, New St. Louis Triennial, to Bring Activist-Minded Artworks to Everyday Spaces

BY *Claire Selvin* POSTED 03/28/19 3:07 PM

In the past decade, a spate of American cities have launched biennial-style events, with exhibitions of the sort having started up in urban centers as diverse as Honolulu, Kansas City, and Cleveland. This year, St. Louis will become latest city to join their ranks when Counterpublic, a new public art initiative set to occur triennially, opens in Missouri. Organized by the nonprofit arts platform the Luminary, the first iteration is set to run from April 13 to July 13 in South St. Louis, and it will showcase more than 30 site-specific commissions situated in a variety of public and commercial venues, among them a Buddhist temple, a punk club, a tea shop, a park and basketball court, and a Mexican bakery.

James McAnally, a cofounder of the Luminary, which is based in St. Louis, told *ARTnews* that the organization plans to adopt a triennial model for Counterpublic, with each iteration staged in a different neighborhood of St. Louis. He said that Cherokee Street, where the inaugural edition will be held, forms a center for the city's largest Latinx community and that it "tends to be where artists and activists gather."

McAnally will serve as an artistic director of Counterpublic with Brea McAnally, who is also a cofounder of the Luminary; Katherine Simóne Reynolds will curate the project. According to James McAnally, the first iteration of Counterpublic was partly catalyzed by the protests responding to police brutality in St. Louis in recent years, though works in the triennial will address a range of political and social issues, including immigration.

"For us, it's really about seeing how art enters into that conversation and productively envisions alternate futures forward," McAnally said. "We're interested in this national and international political moment of divisiveness and inability to work through dissent productively."

The show, which will be complemented by public programs, performances, and artist residencies of varying lengths, will span a 12-block radius, and it will be free and open to the public throughout its run.

McAnally also noted that the commercial thoroughfare of Cherokee Street "has this indigenous legacy that, outside of its name, has been mostly erased." Accordingly, the exhibition will feature works by indigenous artists, among them Sky Hopinka and Demian DinéYazhi, "to occupy and reimagine" the surrounding area.

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Among the projects planned for the first Counterpublic triennial are a large-scale outdoor installation by Kahlil Robert Irving, a series of “fictional museums” by Jon Rubin and Joseph del Pesco, and a new film by Cauleen Smith.

“We’re interested in how art can speak to the issues in the sites where people spend time,” McAnally said. “St. Louis is really an ideal site for this kind of project.”

The list of artists participating in Counterpublic 2019 follows below.

Lyndon Barrois Jr.  
Chloë Bass  
Sage Dawson  
Joseph del Pesco + Jon Rubin  
Demian DinéYazhi  
Jen Everett  
Fidencio Fifield-Perez  
José Guadalupe Garza + Miriam Ruiz  
Kimi Hanauer  
Jerome Harris + Serubiri Moses + Gee Wesley  
Sky Hopinka  
Kahlil Robert Irving  
Matt Joynt + Josh Rios + Anthony Romero  
NIC Kay  
Ted Kerr  
Thomas Kong  
Yowshien Kuo  
Isabel Lewis  
Rodolfo Marron III  
Ohad Meromi  
Azikiwe Mohammed  
De Nichols  
OOIEE  
Yvonne Osei  
PWMD  
John Riepenhoff  
Cauleen Smith  
Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste  
Kandis Williams