



**LAUMEIER**

SCULPTURE PARK

12580 Rott Road  
Saint Louis, Missouri 63127  
314.615.5278 [www.laumeier.org](http://www.laumeier.org)

# HOW WE SEE MATERIALITY AND COLOR

CLAIRE ASHLEY / JEDEDIAH CAESAR / JEFFREY GIBSON /  
BARBARA KASTEN / ANNE LINDBERG / ODILI DONALD ODITA

**MARCH 2 – JUNE 30, 2019**

**LAUME/ER**



above:

## BARBARA KASTEN

*Progression One*, 2018

Digital chromogenic print, fluorescent acrylic

36 x 36 x 5 5/8 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Bortolami, New York

## Introduction

Sometimes it's refreshing to get back to basics. *How We See: Materiality and Color* gathers together artworks in a variety of mediums that play with color, material and form. Perhaps it may seem like a contradiction, but in artmaking, fundamental elements like these can serve simultaneously as the rudiments of tradition and the domain of innovation. As this exhibition explores the ways we see material and form, it uncovers parallels between the basic and the complex, the organic and the man-made, flat image and volumetric structure.

We are proud to showcase and support the work of six distinguished artists who hail from all over the country, many of whom are showing in the St. Louis region for the first time. Artists, we are thrilled to be working with you, and thank you for bringing your work to our audience and community. We want to offer sincere thanks to Jori and Tommy Sternberg, who kindly agreed to lend artwork to the exhibition. For their assistance in coordinating with artists and lenders, we thank Olivia Gauthier, Susanne Vielmetter, Los Angeles Projects; Alexander Giniger, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; Rachel Gonzales, Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago; and Zora Moniz, Bortolami Gallery, New York. For their role in helping us identify participants in Claire Ashley's inflatable performances, we are grateful to Carol Hodson and Jeffrey Hughes at Webster University.

Exhibitions are always a team effort. I want to thank the entire Laumeier staff, as well as our colleagues at the St. Louis County Parks Department. We work in partnership every day to ensure the beauty of the Park, the care of our Collection, the presentation of excellent events and programs, and the success of exhibitions like this. Special congratulations to Curator Dana Turkovic and Chief Preparator Marty Linson, who always make the exhibitions look spectacular. Deep gratitude is always due to Laumeier's Board of Directors for their time, care and stewardship, with special thanks to Board member Ellen Curlee and her husband Durb who helped to provide hospitality to the artists while they were in town for the opening.

Lauren Ross, Executive Director

*"All nature manifests itself by the means of colors to the sense of sight." -Johann Goethe*

## A Manner of Nature

The artwork gathered for *How We See: Materiality and Color* activates the science of color through various combinations of materials and media, including drawing, painting, photography, sculpture and installation.

*How We See: Materiality and Color* investigates how each artist uses color and material to enliven and amplify artwork's form, shape, and surface. Some artists deal explicitly with color and its possibilities in mapping space, while others play with the power of perception. Each artist calls attention to the precise material interplay of the natural and the synthetic, by creating objects that have inherent and manipulated qualities.

At first glance the exhibition is a straight-forward chromatic display, however but scratching the surface a bit reveals more complexity. These artists' colored materials are the product of modern technology in material sciences, but also ultimately derived from nature. This exhibition does more than show the beauty of color. It suggests that the artists' production of countless color variations and applications is similar to nature in that both are subject to manipulation and change.

There have been many, contradictory theories about color throughout history. For example, the dialectical quality of Johann Goethe's Romantic theory of color as +/-,<sup>1</sup> with warm yellow-red lightness versus cold blue-green darkness, stands in stark contrast to Isaac Newton's epistemological explanation that color derives from waves of light as a rainbow prism. This contrast of approach encapsulates the artist's dilemma surrounding color in art since the Enlightenment and scientific revolution. Is color's value inherent, or a symbolic allusion to something external?

At the beginning of this aesthetic question hovering between the analytical and perceptual concept of color, JWM Turner embodied the conflict in his proto-modern paintings *Shade and Darkness* and *Light and Color*, which he saw as a hard nosed riposte to Goethe's romanticism, but which uses color in a mystical way nevertheless. As late as 1950, Ludwig Wittgenstein's last work *Remarks on Colour* suggests that twentieth-century philosophers at Cambridge were still just as puzzled by color as scientists and alchemists like Newton at Cambridge in the seventeenth century. Wittgenstein wrote:

"Goethe's theory of the constitution of colors of the spectrum has not proved to be an unsatisfactory theory, rather it really isn't a theory at all. Nothing can be predicted with it. It is, rather a vague schematic outline of the sort we find in psychology. Nor is there any experimentum crucis which could decide for or against the theory. Someone who agrees with Goethe believes that Goethe correctly recognized the nature of color."<sup>2</sup>

Color remains a problem that confounds the greatest of minds: Indeed Goethe is one of the earliest designers and promoters of the "Color Wheel" concept which forms the fundamental basis of art and design education today.

Claire Ashley, Jedediah Caesar, Jeffrey Gibson, Barbara Kasten, Anne Lindberg and Odili Donald Odita explore this unsolvable conundrum by using color to amplify a work's "objectness" and choice of material or surface.

Artist Barbara Kasten builds sculptural photographic hybrids using brightly colored Plexiglas mounted to digital prints to create ambiguous architectures and geometric patterns using mirrors, shadows and lighting effects. Openings of illumination reveal a vibrant palette, sliced with areas of shade that deepen the picture plane. Playing with perception, her mix of the multidimensional printed surface of saturated hues and shards of fluorescent plastic focus on the most basic materials, light and shadow. *Progression One*, 2018, a photograph with pieces of plastic piercing the picture plane, reveals her preoccupation with built environments and the formal power of architecture. Kasten documents corners of buildings looking for the meeting point of a sharp edge of a wall cast with a ray of brilliant sunlight to achieve her multidimensional abstract works. Similarly *Diptych Composition 1T-1E*, 2017, is concerned with observing spaces, perspective and light and in complete alignment with how the sculptural works in the collection of Laumeier behave in nature. In many ways her photographs achieve a related affect to those monumental pieces by bringing our bodies into the perception of spaces.

For this exhibition, Laumeier has commissioned Chicago-based artist Claire Ashley to create two new large-scale inflatable sculptures, *Catch (Honey Bunny in a Pickle)*, 2019 and *Ruddy Udder Dance*, 2019, each covered in layers of industrial paint and neon spray. *Ruddy Udder Dance* is the centerpiece of three on-site performances with local performers happening throughout the run of the exhibition, introducing a playful and humorous sculpture into the Park's landscape. The quick eight step dance, harmonized with Alan Jackson's catchy country tune "Little Bitty", animates both painting and sculpture, giving it feet and not taking itself too seriously. Inserting air into her canvases and a sense of humor are just two ways Ashley deals with her relationship to painting. Using PVC coated canvas tarpaulins, spray paint, and small blower fans from hardware stores, Ashley's wild surfaces with day-glow applications are abstract and figural puffed up paintings that float, stack, pile, suspend and protect. They are ironically romantic as they reveal the very essence and preoccupation artists have with materials. Also included is *Bugs*, 2016, a towering bulbous shape with loads of speedy and swift marks, mixed with layers of spray paint that is scratched, smeared, blotted and smudged to create 3-D canvases tethered with rope and weighted down with color associations and a map of Ashley's formal decisions.

Jedediah Caesar's series of eight muted, egg-shaped sculptures *Not Yet Titled*, 2019, reveals a slice of raw color compositions compiled from detritus which creates a contemporary "faux" archeology. Caesar's volumes are like miniature paintings with individual topographies trapped inside. Caesar's work involves collecting materials—surveying and scooping up pebbles, rocks, gravel and minerals, in an effort to mine a landscape, extracting what is naturally discovered just to jumble it up and recast it in a much smaller environment within his forms. His geological finds are then encased inside a large ostrich-sized "egg" made of ceramic and bound with resin. Caesar's use of color, while decidedly bleak à la Goethe, moving from white, to minty green to graphite, questions the inherently "natural" element of these objects with a synthetic authenticity. The egg shape, a symbol of life, re-presents Caesar's finds into a composition with an energy and vibration. To reveal his assemblages he slices one end of the egg form to uncover a cross section of its shapes, colors and patterns hidden within. The resulting sculptures hover between geology and artifice, an interplay of color and material that is both organic and inorganic. While Caesar's sculptures are literally culled from nature, his process is not unlike an abstract painter, revealing a similar relationship to composition and visual vocabulary. The resin that weaves his found materials, constructed spaces, inner geometries and color associations is the fabric for an inner composition.

Jeffrey Gibson's painting draws on his Cherokee and Choctaw heritage with abstract shapes and symbolic patterns bordered by an intricate beadwork frame. In *Turning and Returning Take My Breath Away*, 2018, Gibson synthesizes brightly colored abstractions and Native decorative traditions. While drawing on a variety of historical references, Gibson's work is a type of formalism where he creates color as movement, pigments pulsing between perception and pronunciation. There is a hint of things like textiles and ornament in these patterns. Embellished garments made from hide, cotton and wool are strongly suggested but also a personal language of graphic and vivid geometric shapes which jump from the surface resembling Hittite Cuneform filtered through Adobe Illustrator.

Odili Donald Odita's *Van Gogh's Trees*, 2016, is a diagonal slice of nature using black pigment to mask and reveal a story playing out between his intensely hued triangular planes that betrays his interest in looking at the edges of objects, where hues kiss together. Odita doesn't see outlines and contour lines in nature and looks instead at those forms created by shadow and light, like Goethe's +/--. But the shapes express themselves as analytically prismatic; Newton's prism expressed as interplay of paint, wood and panel. *Van Gogh's Trees* documents those separations of forms as shards of a textured black field cut through and bisected by Prussian blues, Martian greens and lemon yellows. Odita's paintings are derived from a variety of influences; from outlandish Nigerian wallpaper to the old-school methods of Jazz music composition and traditional African artefacts. An initial view of a direct color field painting Odita's careful compositions are fundamental to the unpredictable manner

in which his colors either conflict or coalesce with one another. Alternatively, Odita's composition could be viewed as a zoom in or blow up from a selection of bristles from Van Gogh's brush.

Delicate and strangely dimensional, Anne Lindberg's two monumental drawings, *the small hours*, 2017 and *as though air could turn to honey*, 2017 are examples of playful Op Art inspired by Lindberg's long walks. Her surfaces are built on careful gestural marks, creating an abstraction and graphic form that moves with the viewer. The effect is both impenetrable like thin colorful steel bars in a prison window, and immediate like the taste of a lollipop, and a veritable celebration of color that seems to transcend surface with visceral power. Lindberg's towering yet fragile pictures seem to say "if no one can beat color, why not join it?"

We can understand color in an approximate sequence of Newton's spectrum. We know what a color does to excite us but it is hard to tell what it is. There is a vibration that comes from all the work assembled here, what resonates beyond the material is the use of color and the power of how it is used and manipulated.

On a meta-scale, as a collection of work, the exhibition becomes a metaphor of the acreage, campus and collection created to make Laumeier Sculpture Park. The landscape of Laumeier is a living thing creating a complex civic space through performative and structural interventions within, as a response to and in harmony with nature.

Dana Turkovic, Curator

1. Enid Verity, *Colour Observed* (The Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1980) p. 127.
2. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Colour* (G. E. M. Anscombe, ed. University of California Press, 1977) pp. 70–71.

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## CLAIRE ASHLEY

*Catch (Hunny Bunny in a Pickle)*, 2015-19

spray paint on PVC coated canvas tarpaulin, latex enamel, rope and fan  
30 x 10 x 10 feet

Courtesy of the artist, Chicago

## JEDEDIAH CAESAR

*Not yet titled*, 2019

Ceramic, stone, epoxy

9 x 7 x 7 inches each

Courtesy of the artist and Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects





## JEFFREY GIBSON

*Turning and Returning Take My Breath Away*, 2018  
Acrylic on stretched canvas with beaded frame  
38 x 33 inches  
Collection of Tommy and Jori Sternberg, Chicago

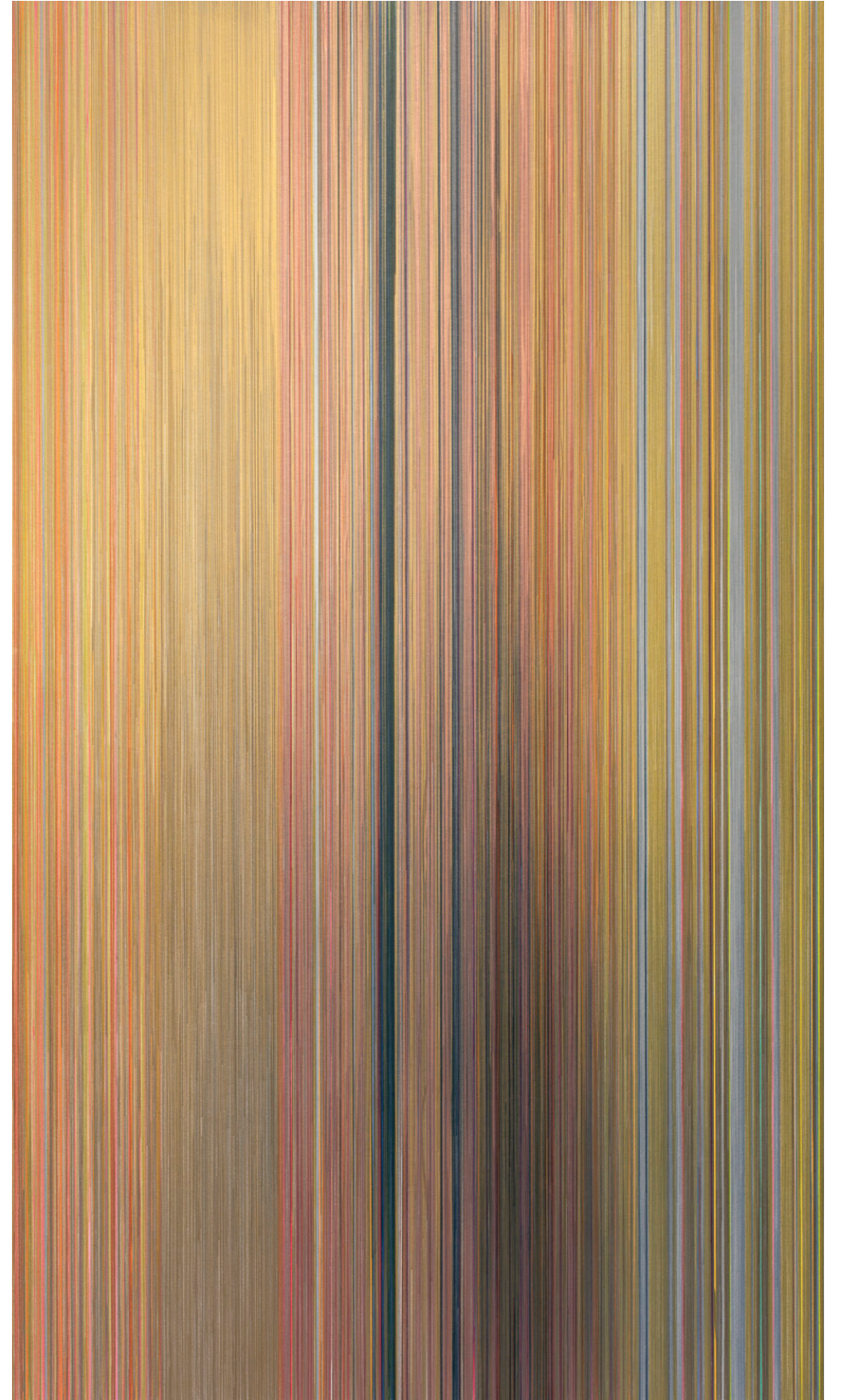
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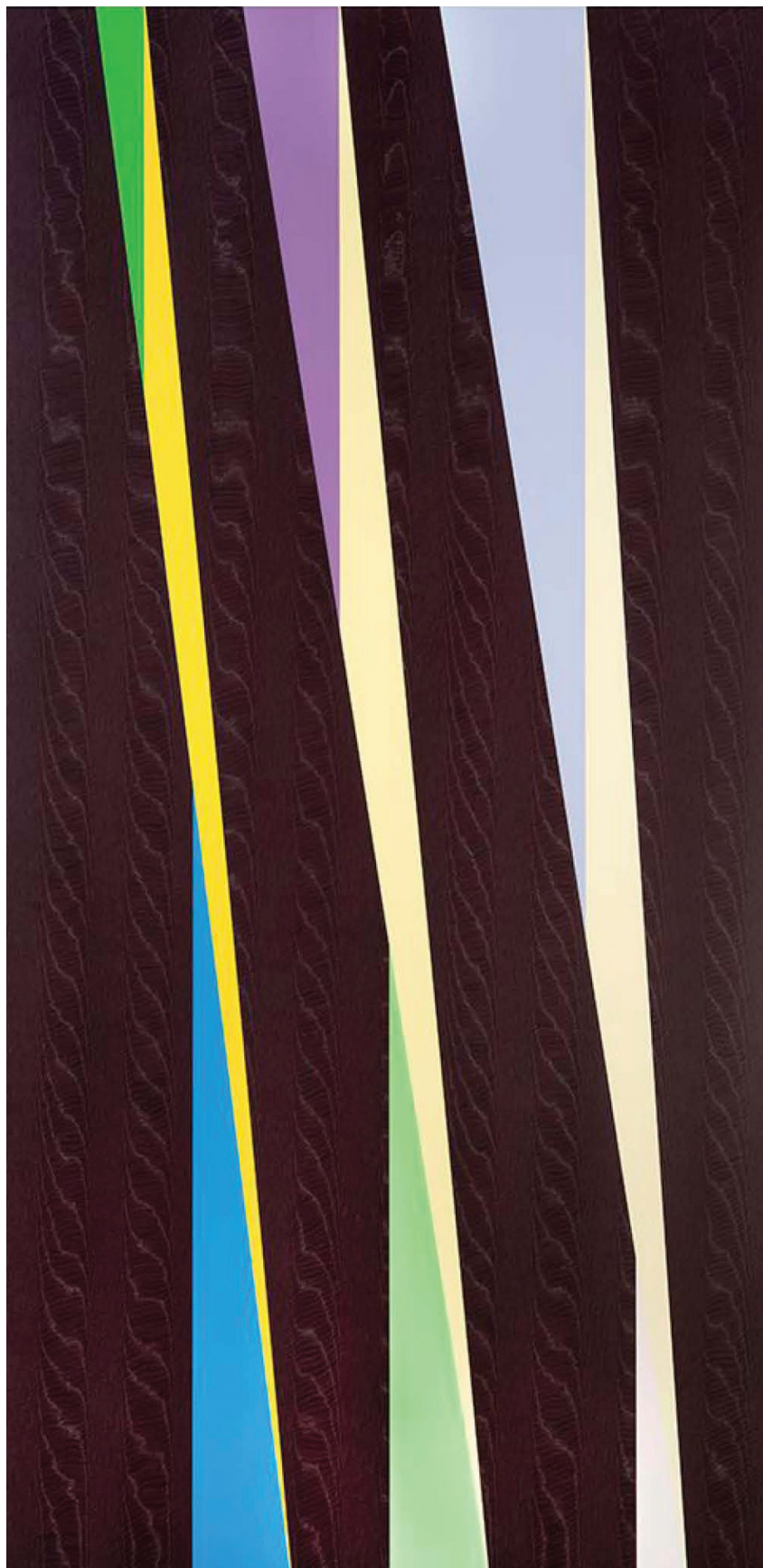
## BARBARA KASTEN

*Diptych Composition 1T-1E*, 2017  
Digital chromogenic print  
63 x 48 inches each  
Edition AP1 of 1 + 2AP  
Courtesy of the artist and Bortolami, New York









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## ANNE LINDBERG

*the small hours, 2017*

Graphite and colored pencil on mat board

59 x 102 inches

Courtesy of the artist, Hudson Valley, New York

*as though air could turn to honey, 2017*

Graphite and colored pencil on mat board

59 x 102 inches

Courtesy of the artist, Hudson Valley, New York

## ODILI DONALD ODITA

*Van Gogh's Trees, 2016*

Acrylic latex on laminated panel

96 x 48 x ¾ inches

© Odili Donald Odita. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

**Claire Ashley** received her MFA in 1995 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her BA in 1993 from Grays School of Art, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland. She has exhibited her work widely nationally and internationally. Her recent exhibitions include: MOCA, Jacksonville; Boston Children's Museum; UB Anderson Gallery, Buffalo; gallerA1, Art in Architecture, Scotland; Devening Projects, Chicago; Spoke, Chicago; Rockford Art Museum, Rockford, IL; Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago; Brown Triangle Gallery, Chicago; Chicago Artists Coalition; Loveland Museum, Colorado; Muskegon Museum of Art, Michigan; Milwaukee Art Museum, among others. Ashley lives and works in Chicago and is an Adjunct Associate Professor in Contemporary Practices, Drawing and Painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

**Jedediah Caesar** received an MFA from the University of California Los Angeles in 2001 and a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1998. Caesar's work has been included in the exhibitions at the Fundament Foundation, Tilburg, Netherlands; the Saatchi Gallery, London; Dallas Contemporary; UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Oakland Museum of California; LAXART, Los Angeles; Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Culver City; De Cordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA; D'Amelio Gallery, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Bloomberg Space, London; Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin; Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA; Yamaguchi Institute of Art, Yamaguchi, Japan; Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York; Andrew Mummery Gallery, London. Caesar's work was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and the 2008 California Biennial, Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA. Caesar's work is in the collection of the Saatchi Gallery in London; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and the New Museum in New York. Caesar lives and works in Los Angeles.

**Jeffrey Gibson** earned his MA from the Royal College of Art in 1998 and his BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1995. In 2016 he received an Honorary Doctorate from Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA. Recent solo exhibitions include: Seattle Art Museum; Madison Museum of Art, Madison, WI; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin; SCAD Museum of Art (Savannah and Atlanta); Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS; Roberts & Tilton, Culver City, CA; Oklahoma Contemporary Art Center, Oklahoma City; Marc Straus Gallery, New York; the National Academy Museum in New York, The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, and the Cornell Museum of Fine Art. He has participated in Greater New York, Prospect New Orleans, the Everson Biennale, and Site Santa Fe. Gibson's artworks are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Smithsonian, the National Gallery of Canada, the Nasher, the Nerman, Crystal Bridges, and the Denver Art Museum. Gibson is a member of the faculty at Bard College and a past TED Foundation Fellow and Joan Mitchell Grant recipient. Gibson lives and works in New York.

**Barbara Kasten** earned her MFA from the California College of Arts & Crafts in 1970 and her BFA from the University of Arizona, Tucson in 1959. Recent solo exhibitions include: Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf; ARCOMadrid, Madrid; Bortolami Gallery, New York; Thomas Dane Gallery, London; Art Basel, Switzerland 2016; Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles; Kadel Willborn Gallery, Düsseldorf; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles; Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin; Fotografieprojekte Frankfurt / RheinMain; Museum of Modern Art; New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco. Her recent selected group exhibitions include: LWL- Museum für Kunst und Kultur, Münster, Germany; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany; Tate Modern, London; Sammlung Goetz, Munich; Tate St. Ives, St. Ives, England among many others. Kasten will be included in the 2019 Sharjah Biennial 14, Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE. She has won many awards, notably the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. Kasten lives and works in Chicago where she is Distinguished College Artist at Columbia College Chicago.

**Anne Lindberg** earned an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1988 and her BFA from Miami University in 1985. Her work has been exhibited widely both nationally and internationally. Her recent exhibitions include: Tegnerforbundet, Norway; SESC Bom Retiro Sao Paulo, Brazil; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; Detroit Institute of Art; Bemis Center for Contemporary Art; Cranbrook Art Museum; Spencer Museum of Art; and Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; Atlanta Contemporary Art Center; Carrie Secrist Gallery; Haw Contemporary, Kansas City; Museum of Fine Arts Boston; Contemporary Art Center Cincinnati and The Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh among others. Her work is held in collections of the Nevada Museum of Art, Detroit Institute of Art, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Spencer Museum of Art, Niwako Kimono Company, H&R Block, Missouri Bank & Trust, Hewlett Packard and the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City and others. Lindberg is the recipient of awards including a 2011 Painters & Sculptors Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, a Lighton International Artists Exchange grant and an American Institute of Architects Allied Arts and Crafts award. Lindberg lives and works in upstate New York.

Born in Enugu, Nigeria **Odili Donald Odita** earned his MFA in 1990 from Bennington College, Vermont and his BFA in 1988 from Ohio State University. He has exhibited extensively in the United States and internationally. Selected solo exhibitions include: Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; M77 Gallery, Milan, Italy; Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Michael Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa; Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA; Maus Contemporary Art, Birmingham, AL. Other recent exhibitions include: Savannah College of Art and Design; Newark Museum, New Jersey; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Contemporary Art Museum Houston; New Orleans Museum of Art; Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia; Virginia Tech Center for the Arts; University Art Galleries & The John Young Museum of Art, of Hawaii, Manoa and the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, as a part of the exhibition ARS 11. In 2007, Odita's commissioned projects include the 52nd Venice Biennale, Prospect.4, New Orleans, Newark Museum, and the Nasher Museum and Downtown Durham, NC. Odita lives and works in Philadelphia.

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ODILI DONALD ODITA

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Organized by Dana Turkovic, Curator

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Front: detail of *Catch (Hunny Bunny in a Pickle)*, 2015-19. Spray paint on  
PVC coated tarpaulin, latex enamel, rope and fan. Courtesy of the artist,  
Chicago. Photo credit: Chloe Smith.