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SHELDON ART GALLERIES FEATURES WINNERS OF 2018 CREATIVE STIMULUS AWARD

ST. LOUIS, MO — The Sheldon Art Galleries presents *Critical Mass: Creative Stimulus Award 2018*, June 1 – August 12, 2018 in the Nancy Spirtas Kranzberg Gallery. **A public opening reception on Friday, June 1, 2018 from 5-7 p.m.** Galleries open until 9 p.m. for First Fridays in Grand Center. Extended Summer gallery hours are Tuesday – Friday: 12 – 8 p.m.; Saturday: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.; Sunday: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. For more information visit TheSheldon.org.

This exhibition, curated by past Creative Stimulus Award-winner Mel Watkin, presents work by the 2018 winners of the Critical Mass Creative Stimulus Award, and includes Kahlil Robert Irving, Adrienne Outlaw and Sage Dawson. Winning artists receive an award of \$1,500 to use as creative operating capital, along with the opportunity to present their work in an exhibition, which this year is hosted by the Sheldon Art Galleries. Creative Stimulus awards unrestricted funding to support artists to pursue special projects, experiment with new techniques and deepen their understanding of their working processes. Critical Mass for the Visual Arts is a vital non-profit organization founded by St. Louis artists and arts administrators in 1995. More at criticalmassart.org.



Sage Dawson, an artist, curator and educator at Washington University, works in a number of different mediums including printmaking, artists' books, installation, drawing and sculpture. She is best known for her highly patterned fabric awnings, tents and large-scale wall pieces. She bases much of her work on the patterning found in historic, modernist and contemporary architectural design. To collect ideas for her dense patterning, Dawson conducts research at the National Building Arts Center in Sauget, Illinois, a repository for thousands of St. Louis-specific historic building materials. A torn photograph on the floor of an abandoned home or a decontextualized chunk of patterned tiling lend her work a sense of loss that Dawson calls “vanishing narratives.” In addition to her flag-based gallery project STNDRD in Granite City, Illinois, she also bases much of her more recent work on the powerful icons of historic and contemporary protest movements.

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Kahlil Robert Irving uses both formal and conceptual strategies to create works from materials ranging from ceramics to printmaking, installation and performance art. His installation, entitled *Cortège (Malcolm, Martin)* refers to the horrific assassinations and funeral cortèges of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1965 and 1968 respectively. The bullet-ridden stars in Irving's "re-makes" of the American flag reflect America's disregard for the African-Americans who sacrifice daily for the country which they call home. The ten-foot tall flags loom ominously over viewers in larger-than-life-scale with the cheap quality copy paper reminding us of the lack of deference offered to the many who play an important role in building this country. While Irving's flags are based on the American flag, he emphasizes that the flags are "re-made" simulacra of the original. Viewers see the familiar repeated stripes and stars, but need to look closely to see the black holes in each star. In Irving's words, "Repetition is an

important part of this installation due to the many layered and complicated issues within."



Social practice artist Adrienne Outlaw, who moved to St. Louis from Nashville in 2015, has pursued an interest in individual and communal health for years. Outlaw's work has been shown internationally and in museums and galleries nationwide. As an artist, she often creates work to support her socially engaged projects. Most often, Outlaw's work involves many different people and mediums. She might invite you to participate in a video performance, join her to learn capoeira, build a shelter out of recycled food boxes, or enjoy a shared meal. Outlaw's first St. Louis-based project was to invite people to play a game of human

chess. Placed on a crowded board and given umbrellas to hold aloft, players "...helped each other navigate moves and die with dignity." This summer Outlaw is leading a disparate group of people to create pattern-based drawings that they will then give away. For this exhibition, she offers *SoundShape*, for which participants are invited to listen to a guided meditation as they make drawings, which they then may keep or add to the installation.

Gallery Talk: Critical Mass Creative Stimulus Award Winners, date TBD. Visit TheSheldon.org for updates.

Join curator Mel Watkin and some of the artists for an informal talk about their work. Admission free, but reservations are encouraged. Contact Paula Lincoln at plincolin@thesheldon.org or 314-533-9900 x37.

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Image captions:

1. Kahlil Robert Irving, 2018, *Cortège (Malcolm, Martin)*, dimensions variable, photocopy. Courtesy of the artist and Callicoon Fine Arts (New York).
2. Adrienne Outlaw, *SoundShape*, 2018, 64 x 59 x 40 inches. Vintage drafting table, flat screen monitors, headphones, paper, pencils, people. Courtesy of the artist. Photo credit: Dave Moore Photography
3. Sage Dawson, (*untitled*), 2018, 10 x 10 x 4," lithography