

# MMFA

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## THE MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS PRESENTS EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY WORKS WITH A TWIST ON ART HISTORICAL TRADITIONS

On view through January 7, 2024, the artists of *Present Tense* reveal new directions in portraiture and still life through photography and paint.



E2: Kleinveld & Julien (Elizabeth Kleinveld, American, born 1967; Epaul Julien, American, born 1972), *Ode to Van Eyck's Arnolfini Marriage*, 2023, archival pigment print, Lent by the artist

**Montgomery, AL, October 24, 2023** – The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts proudly presents *Present Tense*, an innovative art exhibition that delves into the ever-evolving relationship between history and contemporary art. On view at the Museum through January 7, 2024, *Present Tense* explores how all art is a reflection of the present, revealing its deep connection to the cultural zeitgeist of its time.

The exhibition features the works of three contemporary artists, David Crismon (American, born 1964); E2, the collaborative team of Elizabeth Kleinveld (American, born 1967) and Epaul Julien (American, born 1972); and Kira Nam Greene (American, born South Korea). Each of these artists embraces historical, iconic imagery as inspiration for their contemporary creations, offering a thought-provoking glimpse into the transformative power of art.

### David Crismon

Crismon takes a unique approach to reinterpret historical paintings, challenging the notion that the past is static. He combines 21st-century technology with centuries-old art to create captivating works of art. By splicing together

elements from small-scale, obscure seventeenth-century portraits, landscapes, and still lifes and embracing the resulting glitches, he breathes new life into these works. The result is a metaphorical excavation of time, exemplified by the layers of oil and acrylic paint that he layered on and sanded away, revealing our fragmented grasp of the past and the power it continues to convey onto our present and future.

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

One Museum Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117

334.625.4333 | @MontgomeryMFA | mma.org

## **E2: Kleinveld and Julien**

The collaborative duo, E2, believe in the power of empathy and images to transform perceptions. Their series, *In Empathy We Trust*, reinvents iconic paintings from a 21st-century perspective. E2 meticulously recreates historical masterpieces, adjusting elements such as gender and race to reflect a more diverse and inclusive world. Their work challenges viewers to reevaluate their beliefs, interrogate history, and question the structures of authority.

## **Kira Nam Greene**

Greene explores materialism, femininity, and cultural exchange through a fusion of watercolor, gouache, ink, acrylic, and oil paint. She collaborates closely with her subjects, often fellow creatives and friends, incorporating elements of their cultural heritage and personal stories into her portraits. In her colorful works, Greene melds realism and abstraction to investigate ideas of duality.

“*Present Tense* provides a fresh perspective on the dynamic interplay between history and contemporary art,” says guest curator Jennifer Jankauskas. “Each of these artists pays homage to the past while simultaneously questioning historical narratives—challenging our understanding of the past and demonstrating its enduring impact.”

Senior Curator at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Margaret Lynne Ausfeld adds, “the theme, content, and creative impetus for *Present Tense* is quite literally found in the art historical traditions of Western Europe. We are honored to show this exhibition at the same time as another exhibition, *European Splendors: Old Master Paintings from the Kress Collection*, which offers visitors the opportunity to see a selection of representative works providing visual reference and context for the art of *Present Tense*. This combination creates a ‘visual conversation’ that reveals how artists of today explore subject matter that is timeless, and universal in their own unique terms.”



David Crismon (American, born 1964), *Countess with Double Circle*, 2022, oil and acrylic on metal, Lent by Craighead Green Gallery, Dallas, Texas



Kira Nam Greene (American, born South Korea), *Pamela's Cabinet of Luminosity*, 2023, oil, acrylic, gouache and watercolor on canvas, Collection of Pamela Rausch and David Hottenroth, New York, New York

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Left to Right: David Crismon (Image courtesy of Craighead Green Gallery), E2: Kleinveld and Julien (Image courtesy of JONATHAN FERRA GALLERY, New Orleans), and Kira Nam Greene (Image courtesy of Kira Nam Greene)

### **David Crismon**

Painter David Crismon lives and works in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He received his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute, MO, and his MFA from the University of Oklahoma, OK. Crimon has participated in solo and group exhibitions at various venues including City Arts Center, Oklahoma City, OK; Massman Gallery at Rockhurst College, Kansas City, MO; and the Governors Gallery, Oklahoma Capitol Building, Oklahoma City, OK.

### **E2: Kleinveld and Julien**

Elizabeth Kleinveld is an artist and photographer originally from New Orleans and now based in Amsterdam. Epaul Julien is an artist from New Orleans. The two artists began collaborating in 2010, and E2's work has been exhibited internationally in institutions such as: Royal Academy of Art, London, UK; Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Netherlands; Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, Italy; Museum Castelvechio Verona, Italy; Galerie SIRIUS, Tokyo, Japan; and the New Orleans Museum of Art and Ogden Museum of Southern Art both in New Orleans, LA. The duo's work appears in numerous public and private collections, including: Benetton Collection, Treviso, Italy, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Trento, Italy; Hilliard University Art Museum, Lafayette, LA; and The Marks Collection, Houston, TX.

### **Kira Nam Greene**

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Kira Nam Greene lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Greene holds a BFA from San Francisco Art Institute, an MFA from School of Visual Arts, and a BA in International Relations from Seoul National University. Before her artistic career, she earned a Ph.D. in Political Science from Stanford University, specializing in Political Economy in East Asia. Her work has been featured at notable venues like Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE; Brown University, Providence, RI; and the Bronx Museum of Art, NY. In 2019, she was a finalist for the Bennett Prize, and in 2022, she was also a finalist in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery sixth triennial Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition. Greene is currently part-time faculty at Parsons School of Design in New York.

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## RELATED PROGRAMS

### **Last Call: *Present Tense***

Friday, January 5, 2024; 5:30-7:30 PM

Free | Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Join us for a fun-filled event that celebrates the closing weekend of the Present Tense exhibition. Kira Nam Greene, featured artist in Present Tense, will discuss her artwork in the galleries and attendees will enjoy creating their own unique portrait in a photo booth. The event will also include snacks and a specialty cocktail inspired by the art at the cash bar.

### **Self-Portrait Workshop with Kira Nam Greene**

Saturday, January 6, 2024; 10:30-2PM

Free, Registration Required | Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Take a closer look at yourself with Present Tense artist Kira Nam Greene. In this conceptual self-portrait class, participants will be encouraged to explore their own identity and experiences through artmaking. This mixed media workshop is limited to 15 students and advance registration is required.

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## PUBLICATION

Accompanying the exhibition is a 28-page fully illustrated catalogue featuring a foreword by senior curator Margaret Lynne Ausfeld, an essay by guest curator Jennifer Jankauskas, artist biographies, and exhibition checklist. The catalogue is available for purchase at the Museum Shop or via print on demand through Reischling Press, Inc via Blurb.com. Learn more at [mmfa.org](http://mmfa.org).

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## SUPPORT + ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition is funded, in part, by a grant from Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama, LLC. Generous support for programs and events is provided by Art Bridges Foundation's Access for All program.

Annual support for exhibitions is made possible by the following sponsors and grantors. Lead sponsors and grantors Alabama Power Foundation, Alabama State Council on the Arts, Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC, The Ford Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Barrie H. Harmon, III, Lamar, Medical Properties Trust, Inc., Poarch Band of Creek Indians and Mrs. Helen Till with additional support from sponsors Mr. Owen Aronov, Mr. and Mrs. C. Lee Ellis, III, Mr. and Mrs. John E. Ives, Dr. and Mrs. Mark H. LeQuire, PowerSouth, Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Runkle, Sabel Steel, The S. Adam Schloss Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Weil, III, Laurie J. Weil, D.V.M. and Dr. Tommy Wool, Ms. Helen Wells, and Mr. and Mrs. Ken Williams, and co-sponsors Mr. and Mrs. Sam Adams, Alabama Weddings, AmeriFirst Bank, Captrust, Dr. Robert Combs, Dr. and Mrs. Stephen L. Davidson, Nick Drollette Photography, Harmon, Dennis, Bradshaw, Inc., Ms. Camille Elebash-Hill, Mrs. Ann Hubbert, Jernigan & Jernigan, LLC., Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, Mr. and Mrs. L. Daniel Morris, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Mussafer, Dr. and Mrs. Alfred J. Newman, Jr., River Bank & Trust, Russell Construction of Alabama, Inc., Ms. Leslie Sanders, Ms. Micki Beth Stiller, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Taylor, Thompson Insurance, Inc., Valley Bank, and Warren Averett, LLC.

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## **MMFA BACKGROUND**

The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1930 by a group of local artists as a place for both exhibiting art and space for art education. The original intentions of our founders—to exhibit and teach—continue to inspire and inform every action and activity here at the Museum which, since 1988, has shared the 277-acre Blount Cultural Park with our partners across the lake at the celebrated Alabama Shakespeare Festival.

Today’s MMFA visitors stroll through art-studded grounds and permanent collection galleries. They see compelling changing exhibitions and learn about art by playing in our interactive gallery, ArtWorks, making art in its bustling studios, or by participating in other engaging events and programs. And, as of late September 2018, MMFA visitors can now relax and recharge in the serenity of our stunning new three-acre sculpture garden.

While the Museum’s collection is still home to the art of many of the regional artists who first established it, over time it has become known for its strength in American art and Old Master Prints. Recent, important acquisitions of art made by African American and Asian artists and works inspired by images and themes related to the experiences of these groups represent the breadth and depth of the lives and concerns of those who now call Montgomery and the River Region home. Through the exhibition of this work as well as the programs and events that help connect our communities with it, the MMFA is recognized as a leading arts and cultural resource here in the state and Southeastern region.

The MMFA is a department of the City of Montgomery and is supported by funds from the City of Montgomery, with additional funds from the Montgomery County Commission and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Association. Programs are made possible, in part, by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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| <b>WHAT:</b>  | <i>Present Tense</i>   |
| <b>WHEN:</b>  | October 13, 2023 through January 7, 2024                                   |
| <b>WHERE:</b> | Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts<br>One Museum Drive<br>Montgomery, AL 36117 |

**INFORMATION:** mmfa.org  
334.625.4333  
@MontgomeryMFA

**HOURS:** Galleries, ArtWorks, Sculpture Garden, Terrace, and Shop  
Mondays, Closed  
Tuesdays–Sunday, 10 AM–5 PM  
Last entry at 4:45 PM

**ADMISSION:** Free! With ample, free parking.

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**MEDIA CONTACT**

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