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THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN ANNOUNCES ARTISTS SELECTED FOR THE 2019 CRIT GROUP

DECEMBER 20, 2018 – AUSTIN, TEXAS – Louis Grachos, the Ernest & Sarah Butler Executive Director and CEO of The Contemporary Austin, is pleased to announce the newest class of its Crit Group, an annual program that aims to build a network of critical support for working artists dedicated to growing their artistic practices. The 2019 class includes artists working in diverse two-and three-dimensional media, including painting, sculpture, installation, printmaking, video, and experimental media. More information about the program can be found at thecontemporaryaustin.org/critgroup.

Selected artists for the 2019 Crit Group are:

- Veronica Ceci: veronicaceci.com
- Madeline Irvine: madelineirvine.com
- Paloma Mayorga: www.palomamayorga.com
- Virginia Lee Montgomery: virginialeemontgomery.com
- Michael Muelhaupt
- Manik Raj Nakra: manikrajnakra.com
- Matthew Steinke: matthewsteinke.com
- Jen Wilson: jennwilsonpaintings.com

These eight local artists were selected by Crit Group co-leaders Sterling Allen, Annette DiMeo Carlozzi, and Andrea Mellard from more than eighty applicants who submitted portfolios and written statements about their work. Crit Group 2019 will meet monthly beginning in January 2019, for sessions that include traditional group art critique to provide peer feedback for a new body of work and current work in progress. Participating artists participate in two group critiques, receive one-on-one studio visits with Crit Group co-leaders and a gallerist for further professional feedback, and attend monthly sessions with invited guests, discussing the work that artists do when they are not making art. Topics addressed include writing an effective artist's bio and statement, applying for grants and residencies, public speaking, sustaining a holistic creative life, relevant topics in the larger art world, and more.

The 2019 Crit Group will culminate in a group exhibition at Austin's grayDUCK Gallery opening on July 27 and on view through August 25, 2019.

"I am incredibly proud of all of the ways in which The Contemporary Austin supports our community of local artists, from the more than seventy-five working artists we employ at the Art School to the numerous musicians, dancers, visual artists and more who participate in specific works of art, exhibitions, public programs, and performances," Louis Grachos said. "Crit Group enriches these opportunities for local artists, as a celebrated peer mentorship program that brings artists together in support of the creative process. I congratulate the 2019 Crit Group class and look forward to getting to know them and their work in the coming months."

In its five-year history, The Contemporary Austin's Crit Group has served more than forty local artists.

CRIT GROUP 2018 CO-LEADERS

Sterling Allen holds an MFA in Sculpture from the Milton Avery Graduate School of Arts at Bard College. He is a co-founder and co-director of Okay Mountain, an artist collective and former gallery based in Austin. As a solo artist and in collaboration with Okay Mountain, he has exhibited, organized, and completed projects at venues throughout the United States and received several residencies, including the Artpace International Artist-in-Residence Program in San Antonio. He is currently an Assistant Professor in Studio Art at Texas State University, where he teaches professional practice, 3D Foundations, and Sculpture.

Annette DiMeo Carlozzi, a champion of local artist communities who stays abreast of international developments, has a keen eye for emerging talent and a steadfast commitment to looking beyond labels. Building an expansive practice as a curator of modern and contemporary art—most recently as Curator at Large at the Blanton Museum of Art—Carlozzi has created seminal exhibitions, produced important commissions, and acquired major works by a wide range of artists. She has been a consultant/advisor/board member/panelist for over 50 national and regional organizations including Creative Capital, Artpace, and UT's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement. Named to the Austin Arts Hall of Fame in 2013, Carlozzi is now an independent curator and arts writer.

Andrea Mellard is Director of Public Programs and Community Engagement for The Contemporary Austin and founder of Crit Group. She curates programming that takes advantage of the museum's two distinct sites—one urban and the other natural—and provides platforms for audiences to come together, investigate art, and create new experiences. In addition to film series and artist talks, Mellard has curated recent projects with Janine Antoni, Sanford Biggers, Nick Cave, Lucky Dragons, Ragnar Kjartansson, and Mark Mothersbaugh. She has worked with a multitude of emerging Texas artists for the *New Art in Austin, Texas Prize* and *New Works* exhibition programs (both at the formerly named Austin Museum of Art and AMOA-Arthouse). As a curator, programmer, and educator, she aims to present cultural opportunities for people of all ages that reflect the eclectic and collaborative spirit of Austin. She has over sixteen years of museum experience, and an MA in American Studies from The University of Texas at Austin inflects her interdisciplinary approach to contemporary culture.

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