THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN PRESENTS A GROUP EXHIBITION EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS TO LAND AND PLACE


*This Land*

**September 28, 2023 – January 28, 2024**
The Contemporary Austin - Jones Center
700 Congress Avenue / Austin, Texas

_AUSTIN, TEXAS, June 21, 2023_ – This fall, The Contemporary Austin presents *This Land*, a group exhibition exploring the social and ecological effects of colonialism and capitalism on people’s relationships to land and place, while also speaking to the changing landscape of Austin. *This Land* features dynamic, multidisciplinary artworks in a range of media by five artists in their Austin debuts: Vivian Caccuri, Raven Chacon, Minerva Cuevas, Danielle Dean, and Jamilah Sabur. Located at the Jones Center, the exhibition will be on view from September 28, 2023, through January 28, 2024.

*This Land* brings together artists from regions across the Americas whose works address topics including histories and mythologies of place, migration and displacement, and exploitations of
labor and resources while encouraging reflection on how the past, present, and future are intertwined.

**Vivian Caccuri** (b. 1986, São Paulo, Brazil) will contribute tapestries outlining colonial history through the mosquito; as a common nuisance in the Americas, the insect was originally an invasive species introduced to the region via ships that carried enslaved peoples. In addition, Caccuri’s sound installation *Bass Mass* (2021) will be installed on the Jones Center’s rooftop and visible from the street below. Previously exhibited on the High Line in New York, the Texas installation will debut a new sound composition by Caccuri, commissioned by The Contemporary, referencing music cultures of Austin that are threatened with displacement due to gentrification; Caccuri will compose the work in conversation and collaboration with local communities.

**Raven Chacon** (b. 1977, Fort Defiance, Navajo Nation) will showcase two iterations of his ambitious, multi-instrumental composition and performance, *Tremble Staves*, a work reflecting on histories of place and the sanctity and scarcity of water. A video installation based on a 2019 performance of the work will be on view in the group exhibition, while a site-specific adaptation of the work, featuring a newly commissioned narrative reflecting on the history of the site, will be performed along the shoreline at Laguna Gloria. Presented by The Contemporary Austin in partnership with Texas Performing Arts, Fusebox, and The University of Texas at Austin's Butler School of Music Percussion Ensemble on October 13, 2023, the Laguna Gloria performance will feature San Francisco-based musicians The Living Earth Show alongside local musicians and performers.

**Minerva Cuevas’** (b. 1975, Mexico City, Mexico) research-based practice delves into the systems that have created and enforced capitalism, oftentimes through text-based works and politicized interventions. She will present works that continue to interrogate the social consequences of these systems through sculptural installations that speak to the harm done by the petroleum industry to the lands people inhabit. Through the installation *Crossing of the Rio Bravo*, Cuevas reflects on the politicized and mediatized violence of migration across the U.S.-Mexico border by crossing the river herself and documenting the process of painting a bridge across the riverbed.

Commissioned by Tate Britain, **Danielle Dean’s** (b. 1982, Huntsville, Alabama) immersive five-channel video installation, *Amazon*, will make its US premiere at The Contemporary. The work explores how the exploitation of human capital is intertwined with commercial land use – pulling historic and contemporary examples including Henry Ford’s “Fordlandia,” an early 20th-century settlement and rubber plantation in the Amazon rainforest, alongside the present-day 24-hour remote labor policies of Amazon, Inc. Also on view by the artist, is a series of large-scale watercolor paintings of wild landscapes that move from dusk to dawn. Based on vintage Ford Motor Company advertisements in which the people have been digitally removed and only detritus remains, the scenes of nature take on an eerie, post-apocalyptic feel. Installed in chronological order, it requires viewers to move in a manner that is reminiscent of an assembly line and also reverberates with Austin’s present-day site as the headquarters of Tesla.
**Jamilah Sabur** (b. 1987, St. Andrew Parish, Jamaica) will present a film titled *The Harvesters*, which takes its name from a Pieter Bruegel painting and addresses the effects of offshore mining on the fragile oceanic ecosystem. In the film, the artist appears in a cricket uniform as a symbol of exploration and colonization, cricket being a sport that found its way to Jamaica and other countries in the 17th century as an acculturation tool of the British Empire. Alongside the film, in a work from her *Mnemonic Alphabet* series, which uses neon, Sabur explores relationships between image and text and alludes to indigenous languages.

Sharon Maidenberg, Executive Director / CEO of The Contemporary Austin, shared on the exhibition, “This is a wonderful example of the kind of projects we’re proud to present at The Contemporary in that the topics explored are so relevant to the moment we’re living in; the artists included are working at the leading edge of creative practice and bring a breadth of disciplines and points of view and the project itself includes several meaningful collaborations and partnerships.”

With Greater Austin ranking among the fastest growing and most expensive metropolitan areas in the U.S., this exhibition seeks to increase awareness about how the rapid growth of urban environments affects our communities and ecological systems. The exhibiting artists illustrate land as a constructed system by addressing relationships between people, places, and resources. Each project establishes a framework for acknowledging the structural foundations that alter past and present conditions both inside and outside of Austin, helping us to better understand how economic endeavors affect land use and habitation.

“The artists in this exhibition approach the broad topic of ‘land,’ or landscape, as a system, through their integrated inquiries into the political, economic, and social conditions shaping our world in this era of global capitalism and demonstrating how our past, present, and future are intertwined,” says Robin K. Williams. “My hope is that the exhibition and related programs will tell a larger story about this land we inhabit, to help us all consider how political and corporate policies as well as our everyday actions affect people and the planet.”

*This Land* is curated by Robin K. Williams, Curator, The Contemporary Austin. Accompanying the exhibition and ambitious performance from Chacon will be a robust series of programming to be announced.

**THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN**

As Austin’s only museum solely focused on contemporary artists and their work, The Contemporary Austin offers exhibitions, educational opportunities, and events that start conversations and fuel the city’s creative spirit. Known for artist-centric exhibitions and collaborations, The Contemporary invites exploration at both its urban and natural settings—downtown at the Jones Center (700 Congress Avenue) and lakeside at the Laguna Gloria campus (3809 West 35th Street), which includes the museum’s Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park, with a growing program of commissions, temporary projects, and a permanent collection of outdoor sculptures by artists including Ai Weiwei, Terry Allen, Carol Bove, Sarah Crowner, Tom Friedman, Anya Gallaccio, Ryan Gander, Liam Gillick, Nancy Holt,

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