

The Contemporary Austin

JONES CENTER
700 Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701

LAGUNA GLORIA
3809 W. 35th St., Austin, TX 78703

The Contemporary Austin Announces 2026 Programming



Austin, Texas (January 8, 2026)—The Contemporary Austin announces highlights of its 2026 program. Opening in Spring 2026, *Sable Elyse Smith: Clockwork*, the first Texas museum exhibition of the 2026 recipient of the Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize, marks the first solo museum show to consider Smith’s robust practice from the last five years; and *HOST: Laura Lit*, the first solo museum exhibition of the Austin-based artist, expands the *HOST* series into the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria for the first time with newly commissioned evocative sculptures by Lit. This season’s programming continues the museum’s inquiry into sculpture’s relationship to the body: from Lit’s imaginative, surreal forms to Smith’s conceptual architectures that trace the body within systems of power.

Highlights of the Fall 2026 program include the Texas debut of *The Living Temple: The World of Moki Cherry*, the largest U.S. retrospective of Swedish visual artist and designer Moki Cherry (1943–2009). The exhibition brings together textiles, tapestries, paintings and drawings, concert posters, clothing, ceramics, sculpture, music, video, and archival materials to explore her omnivorous and omnipresent creativity. Alongside this presentation, The Contemporary Austin will unveil the second and final part of *HOST: Laura Lit* featuring Lit’s colorful pencil drawings and select sculptures in the Jones Center’s HOST gallery.

Carl Cheng: Nature Never Loses is the most comprehensive publication to date of artist Carl Cheng's genre-defying work. This definitive guide to Cheng's career surveys over six decades of work and includes an abundance of never-before-seen materials from the artist's archive, new scholarship, and interviews with the artist. The publication will be available in the U.S. beginning in early spring 2026 and accompanies the 2024 traveling exhibition organized by The Contemporary Austin. The show is currently on view at Museum Tinguely, Switzerland and will conclude at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. The catalog is edited by Alex Klein, Head Curator & Director of Curatorial Affairs and Rachel Eboh, Curatorial Assistant, The Contemporary Austin, with additional contributions from Carl Cheng, Joel Ferree, Celien Govaerts, Andres Pardey, Amanda Sroka, and Gloria Sutton.

OPENING IN SPRING 2026

***Sable Elyse Smith: Clockwork* | March 6, 2026 – August 2, 2026**

Clockwork, a solo exhibition by the 2026 recipient of the Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize, Sable Elyse Smith, marks Smith's most robust institutional exhibition to date and her first solo show in Texas. A New York-based interdisciplinary artist, Sable Elyse Smith (b. 1986, Los Angeles) employs sculpture, photography, and text to examine systems of language, power, and visibility that shape daily life. Her work has been presented at MoMA PS1, the New Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, among others.

Clockwork brings together key series across Smith's oeuvre, including sculpture, video, text, and images, with a commissioned neon alongside a new body of two-dimensional works and a never-before-seen video.

Smith's conceptually driven practice examines systems of power, tracing how they operate not only as infrastructure but as psychological and cultural conditions that are often hiding in plain sight.



Following its debut in Austin, the exhibition will travel to The FLAG Art Foundation in New York in September 2026. Alongside the exhibition, Smith's first institutional monograph illustrating the themes in her work will be co-published by Dancing Foxes Press in early 2027, with contributions by curator Adrienne Edwards and scholar Rizvana Bradley.

Sable Elyse Smith: Clockwork is co-curated by Alex Klein, Head Curator & Director of Curatorial Affairs, and Julie Le, Assistant Curator, The Contemporary Austin. The presentation at The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, will be curated by Jonathan Rider, Director.

Additional Programming

In Conversation: Sable Elyse Smith, Boots Riley & Rizvana Bradley | Wednesday, March 25 | 6:30-8 PM | The Moody Rooftop at the Jones Center

Images: Sable Elyse Smith, *A Clockwork*, 2021. Aluminum, steel, motor. 175 ½ x 165 x 98 inches. Installation view, *Whitney Biennial 2022: Quiet As It's Kept*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2022. Image courtesy the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles. Photograph by Charles Benton.; Sable Elyse Smith, *Coloring Book 123*, 2023. Screen printing ink, oil pastel and oil stick on paper. 60 x 50 inches. Artwork © Sable Elyse Smith. Image courtesy the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles.

HOST: Laura Lit | April 23, 2026 – January 17, 2027

HOST: Laura Lit, the first solo museum exhibition and debut outdoor installation by Austin-based artist Laura Lit, inaugurates a new chapter for The Contemporary Austin's HOST series, extending the program outdoors for the first time at the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria. Known for her vivid, polymorphic forms that hover between the surreal and the corporeal, Lit (b. 1979, Dallas) draws on a multidisciplinary background encompassing figurative painting, special-effects makeup, architectural restoration, and medical prosthetics. Since shifting toward non-figurative work in 2020, Lit's imaginative and materially inventive works situate her practice within contemporary conversations on abstraction, material hybridity, and the evolution of sculptural language.

For this iteration of HOST, Lit will present her *Impossible Beings*, a constellation of recent works and three newly commissioned outdoor sculptures sited across Laguna Gloria's upper grounds. This installation embraces the notion of infinite pathways, an essential part of the visualization process Lit uses to procure her "beings". Crafted from materials such as wood, Styrofoam, cardboard, Pal Tiya clay, resin, and paint, Lit's sculptures emerge as tactile presences inviting viewers into a world shaped by the artist's expansive engagement with material.



HOST: Laura Lit is curated by Julie Le, Assistant Curator, and Rachel Eboh, Curatorial Assistant, The Contemporary Austin.

Image: Laura Lit, *Gush*, 2024. Wood, foam board, concrete clay, and acrylic. 62 x 33 x 33 inches. Image courtesy the artist. Artwork © Laura Lit. Photograph by Laura Lit.

OPENING IN FALL 2026

***The Living Temple: The World of Moki Cherry* | September 18, 2026 - January 17, 2027**

The Living Temple: The World of Moki Cherry is the largest U.S. retrospective of Swedish interdisciplinary artist Moki Cherry (1943–2009), whose practice fused textiles, painting, performance, and domestic space into a unified artistic vision. Curated by Ars Nova Workshop in partnership with The Fabric Workshop and Museum and organized at the Jones Center by Julie Le, Assistant Curator, The Contemporary Austin, the exhibition brings together textiles, ceramics, posters, video, sound, and archival materials, offering Austin audiences a rare introduction to Cherry’s community-centered approach to art and life.

Moki Cherry began her decades-long career as a practicing artist in the mid-1960s, living and working between Sweden and New York until her death in 2009. Moki’s collaborations with her partner, the legendary jazz trumpeter Don Cherry, turned ordinary spaces into joyful happenings—art that moved, sang, and celebrated life as a creative act. Beginning in the 1960s, and continuing for nearly two decades, their alliance entwined music, theater, performance, and art in experimental ways, forging hybrid audiovisual spectacles brimming with life and social consciousness. They worked under the banners of “Movement Incorporated” and “Organic Music,” concepts that evoked both new experiences and their roots in the natural world. Together, they challenged hierarchies embedded within contemporary music and art and created a total experience that defied genre.



Shaped by an itinerant life, Moki’s work integrated global artistic traditions without being confined to a singular cultural lineage. Explore Moki’s radical vision through tapestries, paintings and drawings, concert posters, clothing and costumes, sculpture, music, video, and archival materials. Discover how the artist’s collaborative and disruptive model of working fluidly across materials and sensibilities transformed unremarkable spaces into extraordinary settings. This experiential fluidity between art, life, and music, finds its roots in Austin, the self-described live music capital of the world, and will be further contextualized by performances by local talent.

The Living Temple: The World of Moki Cherry is organized by Ars Nova Workshop in partnership with The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia. The exhibition is curated by Mark Christman, Executive and Artistic Director, Ars Nova Workshop. The presentation at The Contemporary Austin is organized by Julie Le, Assistant Curator.

Title Images: Moki Cherry, *Title Unknown (Dragon)*, 1975. Textile appliqué tapestry (silk, cotton, and mixed fabrics). 78 ¾ x 137 ¾ inches. Artwork © Moki Cherry. Image courtesy The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia and Ars Nova Workshop, Philadelphia. Photograph by Anders Sun Berg, Galleri Nicolai Wallner.

HOST: Laura Lit | Jones Center | September 18, 2026 - January 17, 2027

Alongside *The Living Temple: The World of Moki Cherry*, The Contemporary Austin will debut the second and final part of *HOST: Laura Lit*. The presentation extends into the Jones Center's *HOST* gallery highlighting a suite of Lit's new and existing drawings and select sculptures, complementing the artist's outdoor sculptures on view at Laguna Gloria. Lit's intensive colored-pencil drawings represent the initial step in her process of pulling enigmatic 'thought-forms' from her subconscious into reality. Rounded out with a newly commissioned bench and small-scale sculptures, *HOST: Laura Lit* at Jones Center exhibits the artist's practice within an intimate and contemplative context, deepening our understanding of her unique language of abstraction. The two presentations of *HOST* provide visitors with an expanded view of Lit's diverse material and creative practice and exhibits the evolution of her abstractions from paper into sculpture.

HOST: Laura Lit is curated by Julie Le, Assistant Curator, and Rachel Eboh, Curatorial Assistant, The Contemporary Austin.

ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN

As Austin's only museum solely focused on contemporary artists and their work, The Contemporary Austin presents exhibitions, educational programs, and events that spark conversations and fuel the city's creative spirit. With artist-focused exhibitions and collaborations, the museum invites exploration at both its urban and natural settings. The Jones Center (700 Congress Avenue) is a historic building located just blocks away from the Texas State Capitol with two floors of exhibition space and the Moody Rooftop. Through the ongoing mural program and Jim Hodges' *With Liberty and Justice For All (A Work in Progress)*, the building's facade has been transformed into a highly visible public art experience in the heart of downtown.

Laguna Gloria (3809 West 35th Street) is a 14-acre lakeside campus that includes the historic Driscoll Villa, The Art School at The Contemporary, and the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park, featuring a growing program of commissions, temporary projects, and a permanent collection of outdoor sculptures by artists Ai Weiwei, Terry Allen, Carol Bove, Sarah Crowner, Tom Friedman, Anya Gallaccio, Ryan Gander, Liam Gillick, Nancy Holt, Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler, Paul McCarthy, Wangechi Mutu, Clare Rojas, Tom Sachs, Monika Sosnowska, Jessica Stockholder, SUPERFLEX, Marianne Vitale, and Ursula von Rydingsvard.

Lead Images (L - R): Sable Elyse Smith, *Coloring Book 130*, 2023. Screen printing ink, oil pastel and oil stick on paper. 60 ½ x 50 ½ inches. Artwork © Sable Elyse Smith. Image courtesy the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles.; Laura Lit, *Crumbcatcher*, 2022. Wood, foam, paper, cardboard, Paperclay, resin, acrylic, and oil. 60 x 48 x 6 inches. Image courtesy the artist. Artwork © Laura Lit. Photograph by Laura Lit.; Moki Cherry, *Title Unknown*, 1971. Silk, satin, polystyrene balls, 84 5/8 x 23 ¾ inches. Photo credit: Anders Sune Berg, Galleri Nicolai Wallner.

Media Contacts

For all U.S. and International press-related inquiries, please contact:

Emma Thorup | Sutton

emmat@suttoncomms.com, +1 413 588 6662