



INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles Announces Its Spring 2022 Exhibitions

Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning

Sara Cwynar: Apple Red/Grass Green/Sky Blue

February 5–May 29, 2021

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LOS ANGELES (January 14, 2022) — The Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) announces its spring season, opening February 5, 2022: *Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning*, the first museum survey of Houston multidisciplinary artist **Jamal Cyrus**, and *Apple Red/Grass Green/Sky Blue*, the first solo institutional presentation of the New York-based, Canadian artist **Sara Cwynar** on the West coast. “We are very much looking forward to presenting the work of these two exceptional artists,” says Good Works Executive Director Anne Ellegood, “Working in different media with distinct sensibilities, Cyrus and Cwynar each encourage us to carefully consider how images and visual culture are integral to both our everyday experiences and our understandings of history and the overlapping influences that inform our perceptions of reality.”

Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning

February 5 – May 29, 2021



Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning is the first museum survey of Houston-based multidisciplinary artist **Jamal Cyrus** (b. 1973), and the artist’s first presentation in Los Angeles. Spanning nearly two decades, the exhibition provides an unparalleled opportunity to trace the trajectory of Cyrus’s practice, following his work as a founding member of the pioneering collective Otabenga Jones & Associates to the present. *The End of My Beginning* includes approximately 50 works in assemblage, textiles, sculpture, and installation by Cyrus,

including mixed media works using an eclectic array of materials such as paper, graphite, papyrus, and denim, produced over the past sixteen years.



Cyrus's expansive practice explores the evolution of African American identity within Black political movements and the African diaspora. He is especially attuned to the cultural cross-pollination and hybridity that emerged from cross-border interactions in historical eras — from Ancient Egypt and the sixteenth century transatlantic slave trade to the Jazz Age of the Harlem Renaissance and the civil rights movements of the 1960s. His aesthetic combines an enduring interest in music and record shops with an expansive array of materials—from drum kits, vinyl records, and conch shells to muslin, wax, papyrus, denim, and Kente cloth. In doing so, Cyrus's vexing contemporary artifacts commemorate and question iconic figures and the understanding of historical events. The ensuing objects, installations, and actions cobble a patchwork lineage where the cumulative historical acts of silencing through edits, redactions,

assassinations, and omissions become hauntingly and urgently present, forging a chronicle of histories lost and found.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated color catalogue designed and co-published by Inventory Press, featuring essays by the exhibition's curator, Steven Matijcio, Director and Chief Curator, Blaffer Art Museum; Grace Deveney, Associate Curator of Photography, Art Institute of Chicago; writer and editor Ciarán Finlayson; Jamillah James, Senior Curator, ICA LA; writer and independent curator Ana Tuazon; and an interview with the artist conducted by Dr. Alvia Wardlaw, Director and Curator, University Museum at Texas Southern University, Houston.

About the artist

Jamal Cyrus (b. 1973, Houston, TX) graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Houston in 2004 and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Pennsylvania in 2008. He has participated in national and international exhibitions, including *Direct Message: Art, Language and Power*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2019); *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (traveled to the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia [2016]); *Arresting Patterns*, Artspace, New Haven, Connecticut, (traveled to the African American Museum, Philadelphia [2016]); *Fore*, the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2013); *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* (Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; traveled to the Studio Museum in Harlem; Grey Art Gallery at New York University; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis [2012–13]); *Museum as Hub: Steffani Jemison and Jamal Cyrus: Alpha's Bet is Not Over Yet*, New Museum, New York (2011); *Jamal Cyrus: Winners Have Yet to Be Announced*, The Kitchen, New York (2009); and *Landfall*, Museum of London Docklands, London (2009).

As a member of the artist collective Otabenga Jones and Associates, Cyrus has exhibited at the High Museum, Atlanta (2008); Lawndale Art Center, Houston (2014); Project Row Houses, Houston (2014); the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC (2008); the California African American Museum, Los Angeles (2008); the Menil Collection, Houston (2007); and Clementine Gallery, New York (2006). Cyrus is the recipient of the High Museum's David C. Driskell Prize (2020), the Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant (2019), the BMW Art Journey Award (2017), the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship (2009), the Artadia Houston Award (2006), and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (2005). His work is in the collections of the Menil Collection, Houston; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and the Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA. He is represented by Inman Gallery, Houston and PATRON Gallery, Chicago.



Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning is curated by Steven Matijcio, Jane Dale Owen Director and Chief Curator, Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston, with special contributions by Dr. Alvia Wardlaw, Director and Curator, University Museum at Texas Southern University.

Lead support for *Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning* is provided by The Ford Foundation. Major support for the exhibition and publication is provided by The Brown Foundation, Inc. and Leah Bennett. Generous support is provided by Inman Gallery, Houston; Judy & Scott Nyquist; and Dr. Shirley Rose.

The presentation at ICA LA is organized by Jamillah James, Senior Curator, with Caroline Ellen Liou, Curatorial Assistant.

Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning is supported by The Angeles Art Fund. Additional support is provided by Kerry Inman/Inman Gallery, Houston.

ICA LA is supported by its Curator's Council, Fieldwork, and 1717 Collective.

Sara Cwynar: Apple Red/Grass Green/Sky Blue
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Soft Film (2016) begins with the motif of a velveteen jewelry box and unfolds as a relentless presentation of used, discarded, and thrifted objects to reveal how the relationship between people and objects becomes increasingly flattened and transactional under a consumerist lens.

The exhibition's daily screening schedule will be available on the museum's website at theicala.org. Cwynar's most recent publication, *Glass Life*, will be available in the ICA LA Museum Shop. Published by Aperture Foundation in 2021, the 200-page book features full-color portraits and stills from *Soft Film* (2016), *Rose Gold* (2017), and *Red Film* (2018); texts by writer Sheila Heti; Legacy Russell, Executive Director and Chief Curator, The Kitchen, New York; and an interview with the artist by Rose Bouthillier, Curator of Exhibitions, Remail Modern, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

About the artist

Sara Cwynar (b. 1985, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She holds an MFA from Yale University, New Haven, CT; a Bachelor of Design from York University, Toronto; and studied English Literature at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Selected solo exhibitions include *Sara Cwynar: Gilded Age*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT (2019); *Image Model Muse*, Milwaukee Museum of Art, WI, and Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN (2018-2019); *Tracy*, Oakville Galleries, Oakville, ON, Canada; and *Soft Film*, MMKMuseum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany (2018). She has participated in group exhibitions including the 33rd Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2018); *Subjektiv*, Malmö Konsthall, Sweden; *You Are Looking at Something That Never Occurred*, Zabłudowicz Collection, London, UK (both 2017); and *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1, Queens, NY (2015). In 2019, the Museum of Modern Art, New York commissioned Cwynar to make a series of films to stream on the museum's website and social media platforms. Cwynar's works are in the permanent collections of the Guggenheim Museum, New York; MoMA, New York; MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Minneapolis Institute of Art; Dallas Museum of Art; Milwaukee Art Museum; Fondazione Prada, Milan; Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco; Zabłudowicz Collection, London; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; and FOAM Photography Museum, Amsterdam. Cwynar is represented by The Approach, London; Cooper Cole, Toronto; and Foxy Production, New York.

Sara Cwynar: Apple Red/Grass Green/Sky Blue is organized by Jamillah James, Senior Curator, with Caroline Ellen Liou, Curatorial Assistant.

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About the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA)

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) is an epicenter of artistic experimentation and incubator of new ideas.

Founded in 1984 as the Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMoA) and reestablished in 2017 with a new identity and home in Downtown Los Angeles, ICA LA builds upon a distinguished history of bold curatorial vision and innovative programming to illuminate the important untold stories and emerging voices in contemporary art and culture. The museum's 12,700 square-foot renovated industrial building — designed by WHY Architecture under the leadership of Kulapat Yantrasast — features ample space for exhibitions, public programs, retail pop-ups, integrated offices, and special projects.

ICA LA's mission is to support art that sparks the pleasure of discovery and challenges the way we see and experience the world, ourselves, and each other. ICA LA is committed to upending hierarchies of race, class, gender, and culture. Through exhibitions, education programs, and community partnerships, ICA LA fosters critique of the familiar and empathy with the different. ICA LA is committed to making contemporary art relevant and accessible for all. Admission is free.

Museum Hours: Wednesday–Sunday 12-5pm

Address: 1717 E. 7th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90021

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Image captions: Jamal Cyrus, *Lights from the Garden*, 2019. Bentwood chairs, stainless steel rods, and oak flooring. 74 × 87 ½ × 31 ¾ in. (188 × 222.3 × 80.6 cm). Private collection, Houston; image courtesy the artist and Inman Gallery, Houston. *Pride Frieze—Jerry White’s Record Shop, Central Avenue, Los Angeles*, 2005–2017. Collage on album cover, acrylic paint, plywood, wax, Plexiglas. 121 ¼ × 126 ½ × 12 in. (308 × 321.3 × 30.5 cm). Courtesy the artist and Inman Gallery, Houston. *Kennedy King Kennedy*, 2015. Laser cut papyrus. Triptych, 27 × 16 ¾ in. each; overall installation dimensions variable. Photos: Jessi Bowman. Courtesy the artist and PATRON Gallery, Chicago. Sara Cwynar, *Glass Life*, 2021. Six channel 2K video with sound, TRT 19:02 min; installation dimensions variable. Edition of 3 + 2 AP. Installation view, Foxy Production, New York, September 1–October 23, 2021. Photo: Charles Benton; Sara Cwynar, *Rose Gold* (video still), 2017. 16 mm film transferred to video, TRT 8:00 min. Both works are courtesy the artist; The Approach, London; Cooper Cole, Toronto; and Foxy Production, New York. All works © Sara Cwynar