



MEDIA CONTACT

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The Contemporary Dayton presents Three New Exhibitions Featuring Three Women Artists Who Challenge Traditions of American Idealism

DAYTON (July 28, 2021) – The Contemporary Dayton (The Co), has organized three exhibitions of work by three women artists to present in its new galleries at the historic Dayton Arcade. This powerhouse trio features some of the most provocative and iconoclastic artists working today: Chicago-born, New Jersey-based painter, Nina Chanel Abney, Dayton-based fiber artist and painter, Mychaelyn Michalec, and Brooklyn-based artist and filmmaker, Sara Cwynar. The three exhibitions will open the night of Friday, August 6, 2021 and be on view through October 24, 2021.

“With our vigorous strides to present the ideas and expressions of artists whose work emanates from Dayton and Ohio, nationally and internationally, and whose practice speaks to prominent issues of our time,” The Co’s Executive Director, Eva Buttacavoli, states, *“we are excited to exhibit three women artists whose work is charged with commentary on social attitudes and inequities.”*

Nina Chanel Abney

The Dr. Robert L. Brandt, Jr. Gallery and the T. Chase Hale and Jonathan A. Hale Gallery

At the forefront of a generation of artists that are unapologetically revitalizing traditional narrative figurative painting is New Jersey-based painter, Nina Chanel Abney. As a skillful storyteller, Abney visually articulates the complex social dynamics of contemporary life. Her works are informed as much by mainstream news media as they are by animated cartoons, video games, hip-hop culture, celebrity websites, and tabloid magazines. She draws on these sources to make paintings that appear to have tumbled onto the canvas with the stream-of-consciousness immediacy of text messages, pop-up windows, a Twitter feed, or the scrolling headlines of an incessant twenty-four-hour news cycle. By engaging loaded topics and controversial issues with irreverence and lampooning satire, Abney’s works are both pointed to contemporary genre scenes as well as scathing commentaries on social attitudes and inequities. *“Abney is among a handful of contemporary artists making work that speaks directly to the tremendous flux occurring now in American culture and, to a degree, around the world,”* states The Co’s Curator, Michael Goodson. *“The more fascinating part of this accomplishment is that she is doing this in a manner that feels extremely egalitarian. These works speak immediately to just about everyone while managing to be smart, elegant, funny, powerful, and beautiful.”*

The exhibition will also be complemented by an artist book as part of The Co's new Primer series.

Mychaelyn Michalec: From A Basement On A Hill

The Ira H. & Susan P. Thomsen Family Gallery

This project was supported by an Artist Opportunity Grant funded by the Montgomery County Arts & Cultural District and administered by Culture Works.

Dayton-based artist and Oakwood resident, Mychaelyn Michalec, will premier her newest body of work in Gallery B and the Ira H. and Susan P. Thomsen Family Gallery. The exhibition will consist of embroidered "drawings" and deeply textured tufted rug "paintings." The Co's Curator, Michael Goodson describes that "*Michalec's transition from painting, which was never really about paint or an obsession with painting technique, to these new tufted rug 'paintings,' serves to place the viewer's focus on the real concern of these works: the challenge, struggle, joy, and ultimately, the truth about contemporary family life and the fact that a world full of choices and distractions can't quite diminish that which binds us.*"

Michalec's practice seemingly resides between what might be thought of as conflicting worlds: artist and mother. In reaction, she creates images that mirror this tension by illustrating moments of simultaneous connection and disconnection, choosing to focus on how those choices shape the contours of our lives. Using her own family as her primary subject, she depicts those closest to her in a shared space preoccupied by different things. Ironically, they are often distracted by electronic devices and smartphones, the primary tool she uses to capture the images from which the finished works are culled. She couples these images with awkward selfies taken during routine household chores, other daily tasks, and activities.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an original short film as part of The Co's new *In Studio* series produced by The Co and Columbus-based videographer, Phil Garrett, screened exclusively online at thecontemporarydayton.org. The exhibition will also be complemented by an artist book as part of The Co's new Primer series and include an essay by Dr. Jordan Amirkhani, a Professorial Lecturer in Art History at American University in Washington, D.C. and a regular contributor to [Daily Serving](#), [Artforum](#), and [Burnaway](#). Dr. Amirkhani's research and writing focus on intersectional feminist critique and the contextualization of issues regarding gender, class, and race within the development of European and American art from the nineteenth century to the present.

Sara Cwynar: Soft Film

The Jack W. and Sally D. Eichelberger Foundation Video Gallery

Combining elements of composite photography, experimental film, and performance video, Brooklyn-based artist, Sara Cwynar, is interested in how objects circulate via the internet by entering and exiting various lives. In 2016's *Soft Film*, she collects, arranges, and archives her eBay purchases of dated objects according to a logic-based upon color, material, vintage, and use. This film is the recipient of the 2016 Baloise Art Prize at the Basel Art Fair in Basel, Switzerland.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

PRESS PREVIEW:

Thursday, August 5, 2021

8:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m.

Pastries and coffee provided

OPENING NIGHT

Friday, August 6, 2021

Members Preview: 5:30 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

Open exclusively to current \$100 members and above

Public Reception: 7:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.

Free admission. Donation bar and light bites.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

CURATOR'S TOUR

Once a month on Saturdays, August 14, September 11, and October 9, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. in The Co's galleries. *Free admission.*

ARTIST TALKS

NINA CHANEL ABNEY

Saturday, September 18, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Online event at thecontemporarydayton.org

MYCHAELYN MICHALEC

Friday, October 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in The Co's galleries

SARA CWYNAR:

Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Online event at thecontemporarydayton.org

EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE

In Studio: Mychaelyn Michalec

Thursday, August 5, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Next in The Co's new short film series, an in-depth look at the artist and her practice. More information at thecontemporarydayton.org

ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY DAYTON

Mission: To provide art for the community and a community for artists.

Overview: The Contemporary Dayton (The Co) is the region's contemporary art center. Established in 1991 as The Dayton Visual Arts Center, a 501c3, The Co produces and presents 8-12 original exhibitions and 12-15 programs, events, community partnerships, and artist opportunities each year. Exhibitions and education programs feature the most exciting and meaningful work of our time created by artists living and working today, with an emphasis on the artists of Ohio, women artists,

and artists of color. The Co is led by Executive Director, Eva Buttacavoli, a 30-year museum administrator, curator and educator who previously served as curator and director of exhibitions and education at the Austin Museum of Art (TX, now The Contemporary Austin) and the Miami Art Museum (FL, now the Perez Art Museum Miami); and Curator Michael Goodson, who previously served as Senior Curator at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus; Director and Curator at the Columbus College of Art and Design's Beeler Gallery; and as Director at James Cohan Gallery, NY.

ABOUT THE DAYTON ARCADE

Cross Street Partners, Model Group, and McCormack Baron Salazar are redeveloping the historic Dayton Arcade, a collection of nine buildings totaling over 500,000 SF in the heart of downtown Dayton's central business district. The full development plan will recast the Arcade in much the same way it was initially developed in the first decade of the 20th century—with a mix of retail, offices, event space and housing. The first phase of the project, the South Arcade, will consist of an innovation center with the University of Dayton as a higher education partner. Included in the South Arcade are 110-unit residential LIHTC and market rate development for artists and creative entrepreneurs, a shared commercial kitchen program, multiple event spaces, and food and beverage-focused retail. The second phase, the North Arcade, will include a marketplace retail and restaurant environment as well as a boutique hotel.