



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ArtNow Showcases State's Creativity, Supports Arts Accessibility**

Co-curators Kelsey Karper and Jennifer Scanlan considered dozens of artists for ArtNow 2017. They queried colleagues, reviewed websites and spent months making studio visits all across the state.

The ArtNow exhibition, featuring 24 artists, highlights the diversity of Oklahoma art today. The show's closing event is an art sale — the first big party of the year with cocktails, tastemakers and the opportunity to purchase one-of-a-kind works. Proceeds help keep Oklahoma Contemporary exhibitions open free of charge, year-round.

The public can get a sneak peek Jan. 9-20, and more than 200 works will go on sale at the party on Friday, Jan. 20. The evening begins with a VIP reception at 6:30, and the main event kicks off at 8 p.m. Tickets sold out in 2016, so buy yours quickly at [www.oklahomacontemporary.org](http://www.oklahomacontemporary.org). Young Patron tickets begin at \$50.

In order to more fully reflect Oklahoma Contemporary's mission to encourage artistic expression in all its forms, Karper and Scanlan chose artworks across many media, from paintings, photography and sculpture to jewelry, furniture, tableware and (an ArtNow first) fashion design. There's even an "olfactory artwork" -- a scent that aims to create an aromatic landscape of the photograph Cathleen Faubert has paired it with. Some of the selected artists are early in their careers; others are established, with well-known names.

The Jan. 20 event will add a layer of interactivity to this exploration of Oklahoma creativity: Fashion designer Sarah Nsikak will demonstrate printmaking on site (and sell those brand-new works), and models will wear the *Organza Overcoat* from the exhibition. Short Order Poems crafts verse on demand, written on vintage typewriters, with guests in the role of muse. David Webber's video installation uses the 16mm celluloid surface as a canvas.

Scanlan, curatorial and exhibitions director for Oklahoma Contemporary, said, "It's really exciting to see what Oklahoma artists are doing and how much talent and creativity there is in our state.

"Art of course inspires a range of emotions. But the variety in ArtNow lets visitors experience excitement, wonder, serenity, humor -- and it's unusual to find all of that in a single show."

The artists' stories are as varied as the artworks. For example:

- Crystal Z Campbell explores the evolution of the fingerprint, used for more than a century to identify persons of interest. Today, the fingertip is a portal between our physical and digital worlds. Crystal uses the fingerprint as both a “face” and interface, where patterns and information generated from our bodies become the medium for her works in paint and collage.
- Jim Polan was born in the same hospital as Frank Kline, and Polan’s father studied under Arshile Gorky. These artists are still strong influences on his work. After a car accident left him paralyzed, Polan left painting to focus on health, family and law school. He eventually returned to painting, working in a combination of action-painting and reductive/additive editing.
- Using techniques learned in Osaka, Lawrence Naff combines his childhood crystal fascination with the Japanese art of decoden. Placing each jewel one by one, his work fuses natural minerals with the glimmer of manmade crystal.
- Jessica Sanchez enjoys painting and sculpting things that make others queasy. It is human nature to look, even stare at things that make us uncomfortable. The initial reaction of disgust is almost always followed by an interest and fascination. Sanchez's work (in ArtNow, acrylic lollipops filled with unexpected objects) allows us to do something that is usually discouraged: stare.

Guests will also find a variety of price points, with artworks starting as low as \$100. Explore the complete list of artists: [bit.ly/ArtNow17artists](http://bit.ly/ArtNow17artists). Learn more and purchase tickets: [bit.ly/ArtNowOKC](http://bit.ly/ArtNowOKC). Follow (or join!) the conversation: #ArtNowOKC

ArtNow 2017's Major Sponsors include Kim and Jon Shirley, St. Anthony's Hospital and Glenna and Dick Tanenbaum. Sponsors include Bancfirst, Prodigal and Oklahoma Gazette.

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A media kit, including this release and high-resolution photos of ArtNow works, artists and curators and from the 2016 event, is at [bit.ly/ArtNow17Drop](http://bit.ly/ArtNow17Drop). Interviews with artists, the show's curators and other staff can be organized through Director of Communications Lori Brooks ([lbrooks@okcontemp.org](mailto:lbrooks@okcontemp.org)). Past press releases and additional information are archived at [oklahomacontemporary.org/about/media](http://oklahomacontemporary.org/about/media).

#### **About Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center**

Currently located at State Fair Park, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center aims to encourage artistic expression in all its forms through education and exhibitions. We endeavor to instill in the public a lifetime appreciation of the arts and enthusiasm for creative practice through a broad range of educational programs, exhibitions and cultural offerings, including:

- Youth art camps that help students begin a lifetime relationship with art and creativity.
- Art classes and workshops where students of all ages find the chance to learn and grow.
- Exhibitions that feature the work of emerging and mid-career artists.
- Free public lectures, artist talks and events that enrich Oklahoma City’s cultural offerings.

Oklahoma Contemporary is in the midst of a capital campaign to create a spectacular new arts education and cultural resource on a 4.6-acre site at NW 11th and Broadway in Oklahoma City. The arts education campus will include:

A four-story, 50,000-square-foot building with classrooms, galleries, a dance studio and a black-box theater to promote learning about the artists of our time and educating those to come. Expanded classes in ceramics, fiber, painting, sculpture, drawing and dance, plus a new media curriculum with programs in filmmaking, animation, photography, web design and 3-D printing. A remodeled 10,000-square-foot building will house an Industrial Arts program, focusing on wood, ceramics, metal and jewelry. Grounds with space for outdoor sculpture exhibits, children's art education activities and outdoor music, movie and drama productions.

Oklahoma Contemporary is a regional 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization founded in 1989 by businessman and philanthropist Christian Keesee and Kirkpatrick Foundation Director Marilyn Myers. Marfa Contemporary is the organization's first regional extension.