



# Mesh

Contemporary Art  
Museum St. Louis  
Magazine 2017–18



Mickalene Thomas, *Angelitos Negros #1*, 2016. 2-channel HD video, 23:09 minutes. 48 x 54 inches. Courtesy the artist; Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong; and Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Fall 2017  
Sep 8–Dec 31

## Mickalene Thomas: Mentors, Muses, and Celebrities

Known for her expressive paintings and collages, New York-based artist Mickalene Thomas builds upon previous explorations into portraiture to create expanded narratives for *Mentors, Muses, and Celebrities*. Through film, photography, video, and installation, Thomas focuses on black women who inspire, represent, and express a wide range of possibilities and desires. Her large-scale, two channel video, *Do I Look Like a Lady?*, presents a chorus of powerful female icons—including Jackie “Moms” Mabley, Wanda Sykes, Whitney Houston, and Eartha Kitt—their images woven together, reflecting an interplay of power through gender and language. Likewise, the principal female figures in the 1985 film *The Color Purple*—Shug, Sofia, and Celie, the latter portrayed by Whoopi Goldberg—are central. The film deeply affected Thomas when she was a young woman, and in the context of the exhibition the three characters embody qualities of fortitude, power, vulnerability, creativity, and perseverance. Also relating to *The Color Purple*, Thomas created *No Good is Going to Come to You Until You Do Right by Me*, a vinyl print consisting of collaged photos and found film footage, a major new work that covers the entirety of CAM’s 60 foot-long Project Wall.



Hayv Kahraman, *Bab el Sheikh*, 2013. Oil on wood, 111 x 142 inches. © Hayv Kahraman. Courtesy the artist and Jack Shatman Gallery, New York.

## Hayv Kahraman: Acts of Reparation

Often appearing in transitional states, Hayv Kahraman’s women exist within physical and conceptual frames. Both objects and subjects, their bodies address such fundamental issues as gender politics, migrant consciousness, decolonization, and collective memory. Punctured or shredded, the canvas they inhabit supplements the notion of violent uprooting. *Acts of Reparation* highlights the evolution of the artist’s practice, where the protagonist female body is pictured in various sequences and activities on canvas and panel. Fueled by her experience as an Iraqi immigrant, Kahraman says of her protagonist, “She is one who dwells in the margins, surviving and navigating a life of spatial and temporal displacement.”



Hedge. Installation view. Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 2017.

## Hedge

Built from recycled materials taken from industrial sites, *Hedge* experiments with light and reflection, with material and ephemera, and with changes in the weather. The design team of Jason Foster Butz, Nathaniel Elberfeld, and Lavender Tessmer investigate modular forms, with the repetition of smaller units reconceived to create a large-scale holistic material system. The completed form maintains a subtle yet profound influence on the outdoor space, a surprise to the eye activated by cloud, sun, moon, and slant of light. Prior to *Hedge*, Butz and Tessmer led graduate architecture students from the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis in the creation of the site-specific installation *Accumulus*, which shimmered above CAM’s front entrance in 2015. Returning to CAM with their colleague Nathaniel Elberfeld, Butz and Tessmer bring their iterative design practice to an outdoor space. This hedge of scrap materials is a gentle intervention in the courtyard, a delicate formal system that transforms in the moment and through the seasons.



Zlatko Ćosić, *A Murmuration*. Installation view. Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 2017.

## Street Views Zlatko Ćosić: A Murmuration

For CAM’s Street Views series, Zlatko Ćosić’s *A Murmuration* is projected on the Museum’s facade from dusk to midnight this fall. A native of the former Yugoslavia, Ćosić’s experience of war and displacement has consequently shaped the content of his artistic practice. His “motion painting” begins with the play of light on water, a natural image that Ćosić manipulates by intensifying colors, varying speed and direction, to mimic the patterns of a flock of birds. The artist has said that nature was a source of solace when he was driven into forced labor during the war. With *A Murmuration*, Ćosić expresses nature’s liberating imaginative power. His work relates to issues of identity, immigration, and the complexities of living in unfamiliar cultural environments. By capturing the visuals and sounds of real subject matter and transforming and presenting them as abstract materials, Ćosić re-frames content to encourage viewers to reconsider their own contexts in nature and in society, an invitation to imagine the changeable nature of reality.

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CAM is grateful for the many donors who provided support this year.



*Hedge*, 2017, installed in CAM's courtyard. Photo: Abby Gillardi.

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Audience at Artist Talk: Trenton Doyle Hancock, 2018. Photo: Virginia Harold.

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Hayv Kahraman and Chief Curator Wassan Al-Khudhairi, 2017. Photo: Abby Gillardi.

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*Jacob Stanley: TIME*, installation view, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, May 11–August 19, 2018. Photo: Dusty Kessler.

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*Zlatko Čosić: A Murmuration*, installation view, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, September 8–December 31, 2017. Photo: Zlatko Čosić.

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