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For Immediate Release

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ISU professor Olivia Valentine featured in Des Moines Art Center Iowa Artists exhibition series

DES MOINES, IA (February 2021) – On March 12, the Des Moines Art Center will open *Iowa Artists 2021: Olivia Valentine*, featuring two bodies of work by the artist and Iowa State University professor.

The exhibition, organized by Art Center Associate Curator Jared Ledesma, will run through May 16, 2021. Valentine is recognized for her work in textile construction, drawing and sculpture, as well as textile installations that interface with architecture. For this project—the artist’s first solo museum exhibition—Valentine presents *Mediate/Equivocate* and *The shadow is my body*.

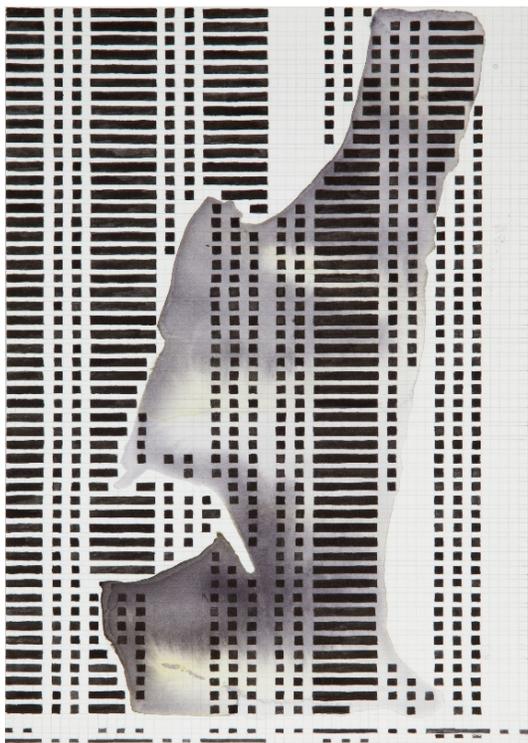
The Richard Meier building will feature *Mediate/Equivocate*, a large-scale installation generated in response to Meier’s deliberate, gridded design. Embedded within the three-story wall in the building’s atrium are a series of ropes. Viewed from a distance, the ropes appear to be woven into the wall, in a pattern that is responsive to its surroundings.

Additionally, the ropes drape over the top of the third story wall, cascade into the atrium space, and collect on the ground floor. This entanglement suggests the transformation of the wall from an indiscernible architectural element to an active, three-dimensional component of the building. Joining the site-responsive installation will be four watercolor drawings on paper, installed in discreet locations.



Artist rendering of *Mediate/Equivocate* in the Richard Meier building

Across the museum in the I. M. Pei building's lower gallery, *The shadow is my body* consists of low, small-scale plaster sculptures whose flat surfaces support watercolor drawings that resemble spilt liquid. Together, *Mediate/Equivocate* and *The shadow is my body* emphasize overlooked elements of the Des Moines Art Center's architecture: the verticality of the Meier building and horizontality of the I. M. Pei wing. In addition, they initiate relationships between architecture and textile structures—two traditionally gendered modes of spatial production.



Interruptions (Shadow Study), 2020
Graphite and watercolor on paper
10 x 7 in.
Photo: Olivia Valentine
© Olivia Valentine

“Valentine is one of the most innovative artists working in Iowa today. I recall meeting her when I moved to Des Moines in 2017 and being immediately blown away by her intelligent approach to textiles, craft and design. This past December I was given a sneak peek at her ambitious plans for the Meier atrium. Viewers are promised a beautiful and eloquent intervention of the Des Moines Art Center’s architecture,” Ledesma said.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a unique postcard book featuring an essay by Shannon Rae Stratton, executive director of Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists’ Residency.

Valentine is Assistant Professor of Art and Visual Culture in the College of Design at Iowa State University. She is the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship for Installation Art in Turkey and the Brandford/Elliott Award for Excellence in Fiber Arts. Recently, Valentine was awarded the 2020 Iowa Arts Fellowship. Past exhibitions include Museum of Arts and Design (New York), the Danish Royal Academy (Copenhagen) and The American Academy in Rome (Italy). Valentine received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design.



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Visit desmoinesartcenter.org to explore exhibition-related programming, including virtual lectures and events. Support for *Iowa Artists 2021: Olivia Valentine* is provided by EMC Insurance Companies.

For further information, interviews/quotes or exhibition images, please contact Director of External Affairs Jordan Powers at 630.470.5136 or jpowers@desmoinesartcenter.org.

About the Des Moines Art Center + John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park

Recognized by international art critics as a world-class museum in the heart of the Midwest, the Des Moines Art Center, an AAM-accredited institution, has amassed an important collection of art from the 19th century to the present, with a major emphasis on contemporary art. Focused on quality and global in scope, it includes major works by Henry Ossawa Tanner, Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe, Francis Bacon, Andy Goldsworthy, Henri Matisse, Wangechi Mutu, Ai Wei Wei and Kara Walker, among hundreds of others. The collection is housed in three major buildings, each designed by a renowned architect—Eliel Saarinen, I. M. Pei and Richard Meier. With the exception of special events, admission to the museum is free.

In September 2009, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park opened in Des Moines' Western Gateway Park. Philanthropists John and Mary Pappajohn provided funding for and donated 31 sculptures by internationally acclaimed contemporary artists to the Des Moines Art Center. The collection of sculptures by such artists as Martin Puryear, Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Willem de Kooning, Mark di Suvero, Olafur Eliasson, Keith Haring, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Yayoi Kusama, Jaume Plensa, Richard Serra and Joel Shapiro is the most significant donation of artwork to the Art Center in a single gift in the museum's history. The Pappajohn Sculpture Park is a collaboration of the Pappajohns, the City of Des Moines, the Des Moines Art Center and numerous corporate and private donors.

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