

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

## Atlanta Contemporary announces Winter solo exhibition artists and curators

Genevieve Gaignard

*This Is America: The Unsettling Contradictions in American Identity*

Curated by Karen Comer Loew

Craig Drennen

*First Acts*

Curated by Brigitte Mulholland

**On View:** Saturday, February 12, 2022 – May 15, 2022

**Public Opening:** Thursday, February 10, 2022\*

**ATLANTA** —November 17, 2021 —Atlanta Contemporary Art Center (Atlanta Contemporary) announces exhibitions for Winter 2022: Genevieve Gaignard, *This Is America: The Unsettling Contradictions in American Identity* curated by Karen Comer Loew (Gallery 3); and Craig Drennen, *First Acts*, curated by Brigitte Mulholland (Gallery 4). Project Spaces will be curated by Lauren Jackson Harris, details forthcoming.

Atlanta Contemporary affirms our mission and vision by inviting renowned local, national, and regional curators to present exhibitions that champion artists, center equity, and expand the practice of contemporary art.

Tue–Sat 12pm—5pm  
Thurs 12pm—8pm  
Sun 12pm—4pm  
Mon Closed

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Genevieve Gagnard

*This Is America: The Unsettling Contradictions in American Identity*

Curated by Karen Comer Loew

The COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement, along with the insurrection of the Capital on January 6, 2021, have affected the way Americans relate to and communicate with one another.

Genevieve Gagnard's work addresses the inequities of racial perceptions. At first deceptive, cozy collages and heavily nostalgic-filled installation of domestic interiors and photographic portraiture draw the viewer in, belying her willingness to confront the sensitive issues of race, stereotypes, beauty standards, consumption, and identity.

Gagnard picks up the deep theme of identity again in her photographs which invite the viewer to look beyond the surface and consider who the subject might really be. She

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strives to imbue these photographs with greater significance, inserting subtle references to the media and politics, often with a sarcastic edge.

## **About Genevieve Gaignard**

Genevieve Gaignard is a Los Angeles-based, multidisciplinary artist whose body of work incorporates installation, sculpture, collage, and photographic self-portraiture to explore race, femininity, and class. As a biracial woman in America, Gaignard investigates the aesthetic and cultural divide between Black and White, a chasm as palpable as it is “invisible”. She interrogates notions of “passing” by positioning her own female body as the chief site of exploration - challenging viewers to navigate the powers and anxieties of intersectional identity.

Gaignard's work has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions including: The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, D.C.; Crystal Bridges Museum of Art, AR; The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY; California African American Museum, CA; Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, MA; and Prospect.4, LA. Gaignard received her BFA in Photography from Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and her MFA in Photography from Yale University.

## **About Karen Comer Loew**

Karen Comer Loew is Executive Director and Chief Curator of Hammonds House Museum in Atlanta. Previously she worked as Manager and Curator of the Chastain Arts Center for 12 years. She has a passion for the arts and has experience in museums, galleries, and arts institutions for over twenty years which includes positions at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery, the Tubman African American Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. She has also worked as an independent art advisor, appraiser, lecturer, and curator working with acclaimed artists such as Amy Sherald, Rashid Johnson, Carrie Mae Weems, and Elizabeth Catlett among many others.

Most recently and during the pandemic, Loew worked with internationally known artist Hank Willis Thomas in placing the sculpture *All Power to All People* in Atlanta as a stop on its tour across the US. Loew also developed *Creative Conversations*, a conversation series hosted on Instagram with artists and professional arts workers working within the African Diaspora. Conversations include Hank Willis Thomas, Sanford Biggers, Sheila Pree Bright, Halima Taha and others.

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Craig Drennen

*First Acts*

Curated by Brigitte Mulholland

*First Acts*, a solo exhibition of Craig Drennen's work, marks the artist's return to Atlanta Contemporary. In 2010, Drennen began a three-year residency that coincided with the start of his now signature body of work based on *Timon of Athens*. Developing distinct bodies of work out of each character, Drennen has spent the past decade mining this long-form studio practice based on William Shakespeare's most problematic play.

*First Acts* unites the early works first conceived at Atlanta Contemporary with new works that demonstrate the artist's fastidious focus and long-term devotion to developing this unique form. Drennen's *Timon of Athens* project includes painting, sculpture, installation, performance, and video, prompted by what it means to create art in the context of, and based on, the worst work by the (arguably) best and most influential Western playwright. The early characters allowed Drennen a platform to question the inherited canon while expanding his vocabulary within contemporary art. The exhibition features new combinations of characters exhibited together for the first time, demonstrating Drennen's simultaneously historic and yet utterly contemporary take on the act of art-making.

The opening reception will include a performance and an exhibition catalog will be produced in conjunction with the exhibition.

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## About Craig Drennen

Craig Drennen is a painter and a 2018 Guggenheim Fellow. He was a participant in Atlanta Contemporary's studio program from 2010 through 2013 and was included in *Painters Panting* at Atlanta Contemporary in 2012. His MOCA GA Working Artist Project exhibition took place in 2017. His recent solo exhibitions include *Old Athenian &* at Stove Works in Chattanooga, TN, and *Merchants, Bandits, and Certain Senators* at Laney Contemporary in Savannah, GA. He has been an artist-in-residence at Yaddo, MacDowell, the Triangle Arts Foundation, and Skowhegan. His work has been reviewed in *Art in America*, *Artforum*, the *New York Times*, and the *Boston Globe*. Drennen served as Dean at Skowhegan, teaches at Georgia State University, and manages THE END Project Space in Atlanta. Since 2008, he has organized his studio practice around Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*.

## About Brigitte Mulholland

Brigitte Mulholland is a Director at Anton Kern Gallery, as well as an independent curator with projects staged at Spring/Break, Cuchifritos Gallery, and the W Hotel Downtown, among others. Her shows have received reviews from Artsy, Artnet, Artforum, Hyperallergic, and Artcritical. Mulholland has been working in New York in the art world since 2006, and holds a Master's degree in Art History from Hunter College. This is her first curatorial project in Atlanta.

## About Atlanta Contemporary

Atlanta Contemporary engages the public through the creation, presentation and advancement of contemporary art. Founded in 1973 as Nexus, a grassroots artists' cooperative, Atlanta Contemporary has since become one of the Southeast's leading contemporary art centers. We play a vital role in Atlanta's cultural landscape by presenting over 45 exhibitions throughout the year, featuring consequential artists from the local, national, and international art scenes. We are one of the few local institutions that commissions new works by artists, paying particular attention to artists of note who have not had a significant exhibition in the Southeast. We organize 90+ diverse educational offerings annually, unrivaled by other local organizations of our size. We are the only local organization to provide on-site subsidized studio space to working artists through our Studio Artist Program, removing cost as a barrier to the creative process. Visit [atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org) to learn more.

## All press inquiries, contact:

Veronica Kessenich, Executive Director  
[veronica@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:veronica@atlantacontemporary.org)

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## Images:

Genevieve Gagnard, *I Wear A Thousand Faces, All To Hide My Own*, 2018, chromogenic print, 26 x 18 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles.

Craig Drennen, *Timon of Athens 1 (DETAIL)*, 2009, oil & alkyd on canvas, 90 x 72 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

*\*Details TBD based on COVID-19*

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