

Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize

THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN

THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN PRESENTS NEW AND RECENT WORK BY NICOLE EISENMAN

The 2020 Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize exhibition explores Eisenman's work across two and three dimensions, featuring paintings, drawings, reliefs, sculptures, and videos

2020 Advisory Committee

Ian Berry
Lauren Haynes
Eungie Joo
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Heather Pesanti
Chief Curator & Director
of Curatorial Affairs,
The Contemporary Austin

Stephanie Roach
Director, The FLAG Art
Foundation



Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize

Nicole Eisenman: Sturm und Drang
February 27 – August 16, 2020
The Contemporary Austin – Jones Center
on Congress Avenue and Laguna Gloria,
Austin, Texas

Nicole Eisenman with Keith Boadwee
October 3, 2020 – January 23, 2021
The FLAG Art Foundation
New York, New York

DECEMBER 1, 2019 – AUSTIN, TEXAS – As the recipient of the 2020 Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize, New York-based artist **Nicole Eisenman** (American, born 1965 in Verdun, France) will present an exhibition at The Contemporary Austin's downtown venue, the Jones Center (700 Congress Avenue), with an outdoor sculpture to be installed at the museum's fourteen-acre sculpture park at Laguna Gloria (3809 West 35th Street). Encompassing drawing, painting, sculpture, and video, this exhibition explores the artist's two- and three-dimensional works of the past three decades and includes a presentation of her recent large-scale, anti-monumental sculptures. *Nicole Eisenman: Sturm und Drang* is the artist's first full-scale, solo exhibition in Texas, and the first-ever presentation of her work in Austin.

In fall 2018, Eisenman was selected for the 2020 Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize by an independent advisory committee composed of renowned curators and art historians from across the US, led by **Heather Pesanti**, Chief Curator & Director of Curatorial Affairs at The Contemporary Austin. As the 2020 recipient, Eisenman receives a \$200,000 unrestricted award along with a solo exhibition, related public programming, and a scholarly catalogue. The exhibition will be on view at The Contemporary Austin from February 27 through August 16, 2020, and a related exhibition will travel to The FLAG Art Foundation in New York, opening October 3, 2020, and closing September 23, 2021. More information about the exhibition, public programs, and the prize is available at thecontemporaryaustin.org.

“This exhibition provides an opportunity for our public to discover the impressive scope and breadth of Eisenman’s work over the past three decades, and to trace the development of the artist’s more recent focus on three-dimensional work,” noted Pesanti. “Eisenman’s subversive, humorous, and visually arresting sculptures powerfully express the artist’s ideas around community, labor, activism, and protest, while the paintings, busts, and reliefs in the exhibition focus on ideas around bodies moving through space. These concepts are increasingly relevant today, in particular within the context of the museum’s location on Congress Avenue, a few blocks from the Texas State Capitol building, a site of government, demonstration, and public assembly. I am thrilled for these remarkable works to be part of the dialogue and energy here in Austin.”

Eisenman’s practice blends an awareness of Western art history and traditional figuration with elements of humor, feminism, sexuality, queer identity, and punk aesthetics to create profoundly unique works. Eisenman emerged in the early 1990s in New York City as a painter, and the bulk of her creative output for nearly three decades has been in the form of two-dimensional work, including paintings, drawings, and occasionally collages and photographs. More recently, the artist has begun making three-dimensional, figurative work: indoor and outdoor sculptures that both reference and depart from conventional forms and narratives, often combined in allegorical multiples or compositions akin to those in her paintings.

Visitors to The Contemporary Austin’s downtown Jones Center building will encounter some of these critically acclaimed, three-dimensional works in Eisenman’s anti-monumental sculptural tableau, *Procession*, 2019, which will occupy the museum’s ground floor. Recently exhibited as part of the *Whitney Biennial* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, *Procession* comprises eleven larger-than-life, gender-nonconforming figures, complete with kinetic components and surprising, playful elements. Leading the riotous assembly is *Perpetual Motion Machine*, 2019, a nine-foot-high bronze figure with bubblegum stuck to its foot. Affixed to a cumbersome pole-and-pulley system, this figure appears to lug another sculpture, *Museum Piece Con Gas*, 2019, in which a large plaster figure, covered in lumpy wax and sheep’s wool, crouches on all fours atop a motionless cart and periodically emits a visible cloud of “gas.” Nearby, in *Man at the Center of Men*, 2019, one figure, holding two metal garbage can lids near its face as if sunbathing, sits on the back of another figure, kneeling down on hands and knees. Eisenman’s idiosyncratic and grotesque figures undermine the idealized forms of classical sculpture while suggesting the subversive potential of collective protest and labor. Several busts on pedestals (including one that operates as a fountain), smaller stick-like walking figures, and a live video feed, showing museum visitors with “gaseous emissions,” complete the installation.

The Contemporary Austin’s installation of *Procession* will also include a new element, *Eagle*, 2018, not previously exhibited as part of the work. A whimsical bust of an eagle made from cast aluminum, clay, and a Cuckoo clock, *Eagle* joins other imagery of eagles and flag poles in *Procession* as satirical, wayward symbols of American patriotism and power.

On the second floor of the Jones Center, visitors will encounter a variety of works from the 1990s to the present day, including sculptures, reliefs, paintings, drawings, and a video. Together, these works trace the recent shift in Eisenman’s practice from two into three dimensions through a specific focus on the artist’s treatment of figuration

and portraiture. At the same time, in combining recent three-dimensional works with earlier paintings, drawings, and reliefs touching on related themes, the exhibition illuminates the fact that the sculptural impulse was always present in her work.

Works in the second-floor galleries also demonstrate Eisenman's astute reinterpretations of art history and broad range of stylistic approaches. In her *Sleeping Frat Guy* series, for example, a mundane subject—the collegiate frat guy of the title—appears in the guise of a classical sculptural bust, a venerated form that Eisenman defiles through her use of ordinary materials and depiction of gross details. *Sleeping Frat Guy*, 2013, a bust made from white plaster, ceramic, and leather string, depicts a head thrown back at a nearly 90-degree angle with facial features indistinct but for a bulbous nose, gaping eye sockets, a five-o'clock shadow, and tangled strands of wispy hair. Similarly, the large canvas *Heading Down River on the USS J-Bone of an Ass*, 2017, which measures more than ten feet high, presents a stark allegory of current American society in the vein of monumental historical paintings, such as those by French painters Géricault and Delacroix.

As a complement to the exhibition at the Jones Center, The Contemporary Austin has commissioned a new iteration of Eisenman's sculpture *Man at the Center of Men*, 2019, from *Procession*, for display at its lakeside sculpture park at Laguna Gloria. Originally constructed from plaster, foam, fiberglass, and other materials (including actual trash can lids), the work will be newly fabricated in bronze for the first time. The commission and fabrication of this sculpture reflects the core of the museum's mission to support artists in the creation of new work. The installation date of *Man at the Center of Men* will be announced soon.

A related exhibition will travel to The FLAG Art Foundation in New York, opening October 3, 2020, through January 23, 2021. Here, the artist's sculptures, drawings, and paintings will be joined, at Eisenman's invitation, by a selection of works on paper by the artist **Keith Boadwee** (American, born 1961 in Meridian, Mississippi). Boadwee, who lives and works in Emeryville, California, is known for his works that explore sexuality and carnality with humor and a satirical, transgressive bent. For updated information about works on view in this iteration of the exhibition, visit flagartfoundation.org.

Nicole Eisenman: Sturm und Drang is curated by Heather Pesanti, Chief Curator & Director of Curatorial Affairs at The Contemporary Austin, and will be accompanied by a full-color catalogue, co-published by The Contemporary Austin, The FLAG Art Foundation, and Radius Books. The related exhibition of Nicole Eisenman and Keith Boadwee at The FLAG Art Foundation will be organized by Stephanie Roach, Director, and Jonathan Rider, Associate Director, The FLAG Art Foundation. The catalogue will be released in fall 2020 and will include a curatorial essay by Heather Pesanti, contributions by writers Alhena Katsof and Litia Perta, a collaborative essay by Stephanie Roach and Jonathan Rider, and a conversation between artists Nicole Eisenman and Keith Boadwee.

"The Contemporary Austin is an artist-centric institution, and as one of the largest and most ambitious art prizes globally, the Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize demonstrates our commitment to allowing contemporary artists to explore new directions in their work, to experiment with ideas and format, and to reflect upon their practice," said Margie Rine, Interim Director, Deputy Director & Chief Development Officer of The Contemporary Austin. "We are incredibly grateful to Suzanne Deal Booth, Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman, and The FLAG Art Foundation for their vision for this significant prize. I am also grateful to our Advisory Committee for their rigorous process in selecting Nicole Eisenman, whose compelling and forceful works perfectly encapsulate the exhilaration and anxieties of our times."

EXHIBITION SUPPORT AND SUZANNE DEAL BOOTH / FLAG ART FOUNDATION PRIZE

Nicole Eisenman: Sturm und Drang is made possible through the support of the Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize at The Contemporary Austin. Eisenman was selected for the 2020 prize by an independent advisory committee composed of renowned curators and art historians from across the US, led by **Heather Pesanti**,

Chief Curator & Director of Curatorial Affairs at The Contemporary Austin. The advisory committee for the 2020 prize included **Ian Berry**, Dayton Director of The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery and Professor of Liberal Arts at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY; **Lauren Haynes**, Curator, Contemporary Art at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; **Eungie Joo**, Curator of Contemporary Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; **Helen Molesworth**, critic; and **Lilian Tone**, Assistant Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; along with institutional advisor **Stephanie Roach**, Director of The FLAG Art Foundation.

The Suzanne Deal Booth Art Prize, founded by The Contemporary Austin trustee Suzanne Deal Booth and administered by The Contemporary Austin, was announced in summer 2016 as an unrestricted award to be given every two years to an artist selected by a rotating, independent advisory committee made up of renowned curators and art historians of contemporary art. In May 2018, The Contemporary Austin and The FLAG Art Foundation announced the expansion and renaming of the award to the Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize. The current iteration of the prize includes a \$200,000 award to an artist, all production expenses for a solo exhibition that premieres at The Contemporary Austin and travels to The FLAG Art Foundation in New York, an accompanying scholarly publication, and related public programming.

The mission of the prize remains the same: each recipient is selected based on his or her outstanding merit and strong record of international museum and gallery exhibitions and is an individual whom the Advisory Committee deems deserving of increased recognition, and for whom the award and exhibition would be transformative. Emerging from Suzanne Deal Booth's initial vision for the art prize she launched with The Contemporary Austin, the Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize has doubled in monetary value thanks to the generous support of The FLAG Art Foundation, becoming one of the largest awards presented to an artist and one of the most ambitious art prizes globally.

NICOLE EISENMAN

Nicole Eisenman lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She is a MacArthur Foundation fellow and was nominated into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2018. Eisenman's work was included in the 2019 *Whitney Biennial* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and a solo exhibition opened at the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Baden-Baden, Germany, in fall 2018. Other recent solo exhibitions include *Dark Light*, Vielmetter Los Angeles; *Dark Light*, Secession, Vienna, Austria; *Al-ugh-ories*, New Museum, New York; and *Magnificent Delusion*, Anton Kern Gallery, New York. Having established herself as a painter, Eisenman has, for the last six years, expanded her practice into the third dimension. This will be the artist's first exhibition in Austin, and her first full-scale solo museum exhibition in Texas.

THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN

As Austin's only museum solely focused on contemporary artists and their work, The Contemporary Austin offers exhibitions, educational opportunities, and events that start conversations and fuel the city's creative spirit. Known for artist-centric projects and collaborations, The Contemporary invites exploration in its urban and natural settings—downtown at the Jones Center on Congress Avenue, lakeside at the Laguna Gloria Campus (including the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park, the Moody Pavilions, the Art School, and the historic Driscoll Villa), and around Austin through the Museum Without Walls program.

THE FLAG ART FOUNDATION

The FLAG Art Foundation, founded in 2008 by art patron Glenn Fuhrman, is a nonprofit exhibition space that encourages the appreciation of contemporary art among a diverse audience. FLAG presents four to six exhibitions a year that include artworks by international established and emerging artists, borrowed from a variety of sources. FLAG invites a broad range of creative individuals to curate exhibitions and works in-depth with artists to provide curatorial support and a platform to realize their own solo exhibitions. FLAG's innovative approach to foster

dialogue around contemporary art includes producing artist talks, artist-led workshops, and exhibition tours for school and museum groups. Based in the heart of Manhattan's Chelsea art district, FLAG's exhibitions and related programs are free and open to the public.

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IMAGE CAPTION

Nicole Eisenman, *Procession*, 2019. Installation view, *Whitney Biennial 2019*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2019. Artwork © Nicole Eisenman. Courtesy the artist; Vielmetter Los Angeles; Anton Kern Gallery, New York; and Hauser & Wirth. Image courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Photograph by Object Studies.

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