

For Immediate Release

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LAUMEIER SCULPTURE PARK ANNOUNCES FALL 2022 EXHIBITION, *FOREST THROUGH THE TREES*

At a Glance

WHAT: A group exhibition that pulls together artists from St. Louis and around the world whose observations range from representation through landscape to conceptual experimentation where the tree is treated as both subject and object.

WHO: Artists: Zadok Ben-David, Benjamin Butler, Charles Gaines, Lena Henke, Katie Holten, Miler Lagos, Jason Middlebrook, Andy Millner, Katie Paterson, Julius von Bismarck, and Rachel Youn

WHEN: On view August 27 – December 11, 2022.

WHERE: Laumeier Sculpture Park, 12580 Rott Road, St. Louis, MO 63127. Inside the Aronson Fine Arts Center's Whitaker Foundation Gallery and outside in the Museum Circle and Northern Grove.

WHY: While trees have long inspired artists with their wonder and natural beauty, *Forest Through the Trees* takes a new look at this familiar subject matter. As a park and a collecting museum, Laumeier explores a wealth of concepts around art and nature. This exhibition and the related programming asks visitors to look at Laumeier and their own environment differently, pointing directly to the physical relationship and conversation created between ourselves, the artworks, and the trees that populate the landscape.



Benjamin Butler, *Autumn Forest*, 2016. Oil on linen. Courtesy of the artist and Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, New York.

Detailed release follows



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Laumeier Sculpture Park Explores the Importance of Trees with Fall Exhibition, *Forest Through the Trees*

St. Louis, MO – In the Fall of 2022, Laumeier Sculpture Park will explore the beauty and power of trees as an alluring subject matter for artists through its exhibition *Forest Through the Trees*, on view August 27 – December 11, 2022 in the Aronson Fine Arts Center’s Whitaker Foundation Gallery and Laumeier’s Outdoor Galleries. This group exhibition presents a selection of artists from St. Louis and around the world whose observations range from representation through landscape to conceptual experimentation where the tree is treated as both subject and object.

As a sculpture park focused on the conversation between art and nature, the works on view operate in harmony with and in reference to Laumeier’s natural landscape, both organic and manicured. Rather than viewed as a backdrop, the tree as a symbol of nature is respected and revered. Each of the artists in the exhibition approach this philosophy with wildly different interpretations. Whether literally carved from a tree trunk, laser cut in miniature, abstracted through painting or recreated with computer data, the artwork celebrates and, in some cases, further complicates our relationship to nature.

Forest Through the Trees explores themes and topics from the tragedy of massive deforestation to the admiration of a tree’s individual power and magnificence. The exhibition will include sculpture, photography, video, drawings, and performance. It will also incorporate works from Laumeier’s permanent collection.

The exhibition artists:

- London-based artist **Zadok Ben-David** explores the relationship between humanity and the natural world, blending the miniature and the monumental with his hand carved, micro-scaled silhouetted tree branches.
- Vienna-based painter **Benjamin Butler** uses trees, forests, and landscapes in his paintings, repeating this motif with varying levels of abstraction. Recognizing their pictorial properties, Butler employs the forest as a conceptual and visual device, coupled with his simple but unique paint applications.

- For Los Angeles-based artist **Charles Gaines**, the image of the tree has been a prominent feature of his work since the mid-1970s. His *Numbers and Trees* series disputes equally the objective character of the trees represented and the subjective natural and sometime aggressive material human actions that surround them in the environment.
- Berlin-based artist **Lena Henke** often relies on familiar forms as subject matter, combining them with defined space within a given architecture to invert the inside/outside relationship. Her series of wall sculptures are cast from the trees outside of her studio. Stacked vertically, Henke's arboreal fragments resemble a tree's trunk, advancing her interest in the relationship between architecture and the natural world.
- Irish born, New York-based artist **Katie Holten's** artistic oeuvre is devoted almost entirely to trees. Holten developed a downloadable free font called *Tree Alphabet*, where each letter is represented by a tree drawing. At Laumeier, Holten will create a free waving flag featuring a text by St. Louis poet and writer Carl Phillips that has been translated into the *Tree Alphabet* font.
- Colombian artist **Miler Lagos** re-creates the tree's concentric rings by unfolding, stacking and layering thousands of newspaper pages to create the cross-section of a tree and examine the relationship between business and nature, commodities and culture.
- New York-based artist **Jason Middlebrook** draws attention to the tree and its form in his large paintings on planks of wood. In his work he combines colorful geometric patterns with natural forms, balancing between what is artificial and what is natural.
- St. Louis-based artist **Andy Millner** catalogues actual plants and trees by meticulously recreating them digitally. In his work, he builds fantastical environments comprised of individual drawings from his digital and photographic archive of plants, flowers and trees to create monumental digital prints on paper.
- Scottish artist **Katie Paterson** has created a one-hundred-year artwork titled *Future Library* for the city of Oslo. In 2014, one thousand trees were planted in a Norwegian forest, which will supply paper for a special anthology of books to be printed in one hundred years' time. Between now and then, one writer every year will contribute a text to the anthology. Laumeier will exhibit *Future Library (certificate)*, 2014, an artwork that supports this project and also secures the owner a copy of the anthology.



- Berlin-based artist **Julius von Bismarck** explores the interplay between perception and reality, building up a portfolio of work focusing on trees or forests where he seeks to challenge us as viewers to contemplate how we perceive nature versus how we experience it.
- Local St. Louis artist **Rachel Youn** transforms materials and objects into kinetic pieces that balance the absurd with the sometimes ironic beauty of manufactured goods. *Parade Paradis* is a decorative, monumental prefab palm tree with a top that twirls on a motor and gently sways in the wind. The piece teeters between the humor of its context in a suburban Midwestern landscape and the grace and beauty of nature.

Connecting to Laumeier’s 2022 focus on health and wellness, *Forest Through the Trees* invites visitors to appreciate the important role trees play in green therapy, providing clean water and food, and helping to improve the health of all flora and fauna.

This exhibition is curated by Laumeier’s Curator Dana Turkovic. She states, “Upon first glance, the exhibition may look like a landscape show, or simply about an artist’s interest in trees as a subject. However, my hope is that this grouping of artists will peel away and reveal a more complex set of layers, associations, and conceptual preoccupations with trees. This focus on trees through art highlights their beauty and diversity but also brings to light their importance to our health and wellbeing. Spending time in and amongst trees and immersing ourselves in forest spaces can improve our mood and reduce daily stress.”

Public Programs

Multiple exhibition-related public programs—many free of charge—will be presented.

EXHIBITION OPENING

Saturday, August 27 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

INTRODUCTION / 11 a.m. / FREE

Join Curator Dana Turkovic for a brief introduction of *Forest Through the Trees*.

PERFORMANCE / Katie Paterson, *To Burn, Forest, Fire* / 11:30 a.m. First Forest, 11:45 a.m. Last Forest / All ages / FREE

Experience the scent of the world’s first forest 385 million years ago and the scent of the last forest in the age of the climate crisis with an incense burning ceremony. *Artist will not be present.



CONVERSATION SERIES / Virtual Artist Talk with Rachel Youn

Thursday, September 8 / 6:30 p.m. via Zoom / All Ages / FREE

Join Laumeier's 2022 Kranzberg Exhibition and *Forest Through the Trees* artist Rachel Youn for an online talk about their artistic practice and outdoor commission, *Parade Paradis*.

PLEIN AIR / Landscape Through Trees

Saturday, September 10 / 10 a.m.–2 p.m. / \$65

Immerse yourself in nature and let the Park spark your joy as you join others in an afternoon art installation and painting workshop. Forget the canvas and easel and paint the landscape directly on a (wrapped) tree. Bring a sack lunch and enjoy sharing with other community artists.

FAMILY WORKSHOP / Round + Rustic: Wooden Wall Art

Saturday, September 10 / 1–3 p.m. / Ages 4 to 12, with a favorite grownup / \$35

Let the beauty of wood be inspiration for your next masterpiece. Work alongside a family member to create a one-of-a-kind wooden wall hanging. Learn how to transfer images or patterns onto a wooden surface and use painting techniques to achieve the ultimate fall aesthetic. Experiment with shape and composition with your family member while working outdoors on a beautiful fall day.

SUNDAY TOUR / Trees: Concept and Contemplation (Trees in Art)

Sunday, October 9 / 11 a.m. / All Ages / FREE

Join Curator Dana Turkovic and Curator of Education Karen Mullen for a tour of the artworks in Laumeier's outdoor galleries by artists who utilize trees in a variety of ways, ranging from topiary to a giant redwood. Tour participants will learn about how trees have inspired many of the works on view in the Park.

FALL COLOR HIKE

Saturday, October 15 / 1–3 p.m. / All Ages / \$10 per person

Spend the afternoon at the Park on a fall hike through Laumeier's trails. Gather newly fallen leaves and classify them using their shape and color, and practice examining different types of bark and limbs to master your tree identification skills. End the hike with a quick leaf printing activity to remember the day.

SUNDAY TOUR / Trees: Essential + Sustaining (Trees in the Park)

Sunday, October 23 / 11 a.m. / All Ages / FREE

Learn about the many tree species in the Park, their benefits to our eco-system, and tips on how to manage and maintain your own trees.



CONVERSATION SERIES / Campfire chat with Artist Andy Millner

Thursday, October 20 / 6:30 p.m. / All Ages / FREE

Enjoy hot cocoa and s'mores around the campfire with *Forest Through the Trees* artist Andy Millner and learn about his artistic practice and artwork in the current exhibition.

NIGHT OUT / Mud + Merlot: Ceramic Trees

Friday, November 18 / 6:30–9:30 p.m. / Ages 21 + / \$54

A bottle of wine and some clay make for a great night out at Laumeier Sculpture Park! Learn slab construction and coiling to build a decorative, ceramic tree. Once glazed and fired, your new and unique holiday decoration is ready to adorn your home during the holiday season. Join us for a fun and relaxed, adults-only evening in which to try your hand at working with clay. Bring your own wine; light snacks are provided.

CAMPFIRE CHAT / Performance of Katie Paterson, *To Burn, Forest, Fire*

Thursday, December 8 / 6 p.m. First Forest, 6:15 p.m. Last Forest / All Ages / FREE

Experience the scent of the world's first forest 385 million years ago and the scent of the last forest in the age of the climate crisis with an incense burning ceremony. *Artist will not be present.

FAMILY WORKSHOP / Sprucing It Up!

Saturday, December 17 / 1–3 p.m. / Ages 4 to 12, with a favorite grownup / \$35

It's time for a new holiday tree this season! Get in touch with your contemporary side and spend the afternoon at Laumeier constructing a unique tree sculpture. Learn how to attach, twist and alter upcycled and found materials into a festive, fabulous masterpiece to admire for holiday seasons to come.

Visit laumeier.org for the most up-to-date information on exhibition-related programming.

About Laumeier Sculpture Park

Founded in 1976, Laumeier Sculpture Park is one of the first and largest sculpture parks in the country. Laumeier presents more than 70 works of large-scale outdoor sculpture throughout its 105-acre campus. It serves 300,000 visitors of all ages each year, with a world-class art collection, indoor and outdoor temporary exhibitions, education programs and public events. Laumeier is an internationally recognized museum, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The 501(c)3 nonprofit organization operates in partnership with St. Louis County Parks.

LAUMEIER

Laumeier Sculpture Park's ongoing operations and programs are generously supported by St. Louis County Parks; Regional Arts Commission; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; among other corporations, foundations, individual donors and members.

Additional funding related to COVID-19 relief has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Windgate Foundation, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and the St. Louis County Small Business Relief Program.

2022 Exhibitions are supported by Ken and Nancy Kranzberg, Joan and Mitchell Markow and Two Sister's Foundation, Emily Rauh Pulitzer, Mary Ann and Andy Srenco.

Forest Through the Trees is supported by the Whitaker Foundation. Rachel Youn is one of two 2022 Kranzberg Artists. This fund, generously provided by Ken and Nancy Kranzberg, supports the presentation of new work by one or more St. Louis area artists per year.

For more about Laumeier Sculpture Park, please visit www.laumeier.org.

Images

High-resolution images available upon request.



Jason Middlebrook

Blue Cornflower on Walnut, 2019

Acrylic on walnut

100 x 15 x 1 inches

Courtesy of the artist and Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY



Katie Paterson

Future Library (certificate), 2014

Two-sided foil block print on paper

16 1/2 x 11 11/16 in.

Courtesy of James Cohan Gallery, New York



Andy Millner

Floating World (The Tree of the Holly Hocks), 2022

Pigment print, mulberry paper, on linen

82" x 78" inches

Courtesy of the artist, St. Louis



Lena Henke

Die Baumwurzel I, 2019

Forton and pigment

23 1/2 x 16 x 6 inches

Courtesy of Bortolami Gallery, New York