



John Michael Kohler Arts Center

For Immediate Release

IN THE ADJACENT POSSIBLE APRIL 5, 2022–March 26, 2023



SHEBOYGAN, WI – Can art be a portal to conjure a world of possibilities? A new exhibition at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center ([JMKAC](#)) presents the work of five contemporary artists who were invited to imagine a better place, an assignment that seems quite timely. The exhibition, titled *In the Adjacent Possible*, will be on view April 5, 2022 through March 26, 2023.

Artists in the exhibition are Jessica Campbell, Yasmine K. Kasem, Suchitra Mattai, Haleigh Nickerson, and Nyugen E. Smith. The title of the exhibition was inspired by sociologist Ruha Benjamin’s suggestion to “imagine and craft the worlds you cannot live without, just as you dismantle the ones you cannot live within.” Benjamin is a professor of African American studies at Princeton University.

“Each of the five artists’ installations provides a vantage point for viewing ideas that lie just beyond what we know,” says JMKAC Senior Curator Kaytie Johnson, who co-curated the exhibition with JMKAC Curator Laura Bickford. “They conjure worlds that are not quite here, yet are within our grasp. They place us in the adjacent possible, a space where we can dream of alternative ways of being in the world.”

The exhibition forms a speculative framework that explores myriad approaches to proposed and promised strategies of living. These artists offer prospective blueprints of other worlds, often constructed from the remnants of our current one. Engaging issues of colonialism, feminism, queerness, identity, and stereotypes, *In the Adjacent Possible* suggests ways we can reimagine the present and explore the infinite horizon of opportunities at the boundaries of our reach.



ABOUT JESSICA CAMPBELL

Jessica Campbell is a cartoonist, visual artist, and writer interested in combining seemingly disparate media, subject matter, and tone as a tool for research and the production of knowledge. She earned a BFA from Concordia University and an MFA from School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Campbell's work has been exhibited at museums and galleries throughout North America, including Western Exhibitions, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Institute of Contemporary Art, Baltimore; Monique Meloche, Chicago; Field Projects, New York; and the Art Galley of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She is the author of three graphic novels, and her comics have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Hyperallergic*, and *The Nib*. She lives and works in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

ABOUT YASMINE K. KASEM

Yasmine K. Kasem's art focuses on the precariousness of identity and manifests what it means to be Egyptian-American, Muslim, and queer. She earned a BFA from Herron School of Art + Design and an MFA from University of California, San Diego. Kasem's work has been exhibited at Grand Central Art Center, Santa Ana, California; Lux Art Institute, Encinitas, California; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; Harrison Center for the Arts, Indianapolis; Simon Subal Gallery, New York; and the Crypt Gallery, London. She has been a resident artist at Bread and Salt and 1805 Gallery in San Diego, and her work has been featured in *Here/In Journal* and *Art and Cake*. She lives and works in San Diego.

ABOUT SUCHITRA MATTAI

Suchitra Mattai's mixed-media works explore how memory and myth can unravel and reimagine historical narratives. She received a BA from Rutgers University and an MA and MFA from University of Pennsylvania. Mattai has exhibited widely at venues including Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada; Boise Museum of Art, Boise, Idaho; Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago; San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, Texas; The Momentary, Bentonville, Arkansas; Art Museum of the Americas, Washington, D.C.; Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado; Hollis

Taggart, New York; and Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Her work has been featured in *The Guardian*, *The Boston Globe*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Widewalls*. Mattai lives and works in Denver, Colorado.

ABOUT HALEIGH NICKERSON

Haleigh Nickerson explores the complexities and slippages of identity through real and imagined worlds in her multidisciplinary practice. Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, she currently lives and works in Los Angeles. She earned an MFA from Parsons: The New School for Design and a BA from the University of California, Berkeley in art practice with a minor in ethnic studies. Nickerson's work has been shown at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Kopeikin Gallery, Los Angeles; The Growlerly, San Francisco; Phillips, New York; and Superposition Gallery, Amagansett, New York and Los Angeles. She was named one of *Cultured Magazine's* 30 Under 35 Young Artists List in 2021.

ABOUT NYUGEN E. SMITH

Nyugen E. Smith is an interdisciplinary artist whose performances, found-object sculptures, mixed-media drawings, paintings, videos, photos, and writing deepen his knowledge of historical and present-day conditions of Black African descendants in the diaspora. Smith holds a BA in fine art from Seton Hall University and an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His work has been presented at the Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Nordic Black Theater, Oslo, Norway; Newark Museum of Art, Newark, New Jersey; and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library. Smith is the recipient of the Leonore Annenberg Performing and Visual Arts Fund, Franklin Furnace Fund, Dr. Doris Derby Award, a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant, and a 2022 Creative Capital Award. He lives in Jersey City, New Jersey.

ABOUT THE JOHN MICHAEL KOHLER ARTS CENTER

The [John Michael Kohler Arts Center](#) (JMKAC), located north of Milwaukee in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, is known for promoting the understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through exhibitions and commissioned works of art. Founded in 1967, JMKAC has preserved, studied, and exhibited artist-built environments, earning a worldwide reputation. Art environments involve an individual significantly transforming their surroundings into an exceptional, multifaceted work of art.

The Arts Center's downtown Sheboygan facility includes eight galleries, two performance spaces, a café, a museum shop, and a drop-in art-making studio. Among its program offerings are community arts projects; artist residencies; presentations of dance, film, and music; a free weekly summer concert series; classes and workshops; an onsite arts-based preschool; and approximately twelve original exhibitions of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists annually. JMKAC also administers the renowned Arts/Industry residency program, which is hosted by Kohler Co.

ABOUT THE ART PRESERVE

In 2021, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center opened the [Art Preserve](#), the world's first museum to focus entirely on work from art environments. Located three miles from JMKAC, the 56,000-sq.-ft., three-level building holds more than 25,000 works in the Arts Center's world-renowned collection, which includes complete and partial environments by more than 30 vernacular, self-taught, and academically-trained artists. Visitors experience unprecedented access and insight into the display, preservation, conservation, and interpretation of the Arts Center's premier collection through tableaux as well as a unique system of curated, visible storage of the works of art.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center (608 New York Avenue) and the Art Preserve (3636 Lower Falls Road) are located in Sheboygan, WI. Admission is always free. For information, call 920.458.6144, or visit jmkac.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#).

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In the Adjacent Possible installation view at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 2022; works by Suchitra Mattai. Courtesy of the artist and Kavi Gupta Gallery. Photo courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

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In the Adjacent Possible installation view at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 2022; works by Nyugen E. Smith. Photo courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center.