



John Michael Kohler Arts Center

For Immediate Release

LEE HUNTER: COSMOGENESIS JOHN MICHAEL KOHLER ARTS CENTER JANUARY 25 – AUGUST 8, 2022



Sheboygan, WI—An installation by multidisciplinary artist Lee Hunter explores the narrowing gap between apocalyptic fiction and the reality of climate change, while creating space for dreaming of new, viable futures. [Lee Hunter: Cosmogenesis](#) at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center ([JMKAC](#)) in Sheboygan, WI, will be on view from January 25 – August 8, 2022. Using sculpture, photography, textiles and a range of other media, the exhibition presents a collection of objects focused on a futuristic narrative developed by the artist.

Set in the near future, *Cosmogenesis* is an ongoing world-building project told through the perspective of an archivist sifting through the ephemera and material culture of legendary twenty-first century transdimensional travel cults, hoping to find a key to a new cosmos. The archive comprises

photographs, ceramic figures and vessels, carved stone sculptures, handmade mirrors, needlepoint, and found objects, each part of coded systems that reveal secret methods of travel through parallel universes.

Hunter expanded the material language for this current iteration of the project, which began in 2014. As the project took shape, Hunter asked, “What will cities be like? What will humans be like? What technologies will be common? What will the climate be like?” They spent time at the Metropolitan Museum of Art looking at global material culture and researched ancient artifacts. *Cosmogogenesis* includes work made during the spring of 2019, when Hunter was an artist-in-residence at Palazzo Monti, Brescia, Italy. Hunter’s imaginative thinking is also the basis of a short novel currently in progress.

In a recent conversation with curator Kaytie Johnson, Hunter noted “I am concerned about the future of the planet. From people to nonhumans to ecosystems, there are many troubling issues happening now. I wanted to think about changing some of the major systems Western cultures consider to be normal and required. I think many of those systems are exploitive and are fueling the present crises facing the planet.”



WAYS OF BEING AT JMKAC

Cosmogogenesis is part of JMKAC’s *Ways of Being*, a series of exhibitions, programs, and performances from January 2022 through fall 2023 exploring artists as world-builders, helping us navigate the present, re-orient the past, and project new, viable futures. Among the upcoming exhibitions are: *Sarah Zapata: a resilience of things not seen* (March 1–August 28, 2022); *In the Adjacent Possible* (April 5, 2022–March 26, 2023); *Creative! Growth!* (May 22, 2022–April 2023); *Lydia Ricci & Sarah McEaney* (August 2022–early 2023); and *Dan Friedman: Radical Optimism* (September 20, 2022–February 2023). In addition, the Arts Center will be screening the following film and video works: *Factitious Imprints* by Eva Papamargariti (January 29–May 15, 2022), *Void Vision* by Alexander Stewart (May 22–October 2, 2022), and *I’ll Remember You as You Were, not as What You’ll Become* by Sky Hopinka (October 8, 2022–February 2023).

ABOUT LEE HUNTER

Lee Hunter (born 1978) is a Champaign, Illinois-based artist born in Charleston, South Carolina. Hunter is a multi-disciplinary artist interested in the built environment, landscape, and perception. Their recent exhibitions include *Cosmogogenesis* at Doppelganger Projects, Queens, and Sweet Lorraine Gallery, Brooklyn. In 2018, Hunter was a visiting artist at Illinois State University, Normal, and part of a public design team at Leroy Street Studio Architecture that completed a project at the Sunset Park Interim Library, Brooklyn Public Library. In 2019, they were an artist in residence at Palazzo Monti, Italy. Hunter received a BS from Portland State University and an MFA from San Francisco Art Institute.

ABOUT THE JOHN MICHAEL KOHLER ARTS CENTER

The [John Michael Kohler Arts Center](#) located north of Milwaukee in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, was founded in 1967. It is dedicated to making innovative arts programming accessible to a broad audience that ranges from artists and academics to families and youth of all ages. Central to its mission is promoting understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through original exhibitions, commissioned works of art, performing arts programs, and community arts initiatives. Since the 1970s, JMKAC has preserved, studied, and exhibited works by art-environment builders and has earned a worldwide reputation for its work in this area. Artist-built environments involve an individual significantly transforming their surroundings—for example, their home or yard—into an exceptional, multifaceted work of art.

The Arts Center's downtown Sheboygan facility includes eight galleries, two performance spaces, a café, a retail 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 program; and approximately twelve originally curated exhibitions of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists annually. The John Michael Kohler Arts Center 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 Art 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 Ave.) and the Art Preserve (3636 Lower Falls Rd.) 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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Press Contact:

Nicole Straus Public Relations

Nicole Straus, 631-369-2188, 917-744-1040, nicole@nicolestraspr.com

Margery Newman, 212-475-0252, MargeryNewman@gmail.com

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Lee Hunter: Cosmogenesis installation view at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 2022. Photo courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

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Lee Hunter: Cosmogenesis installation view at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 2022. Lee Hunter, (from top) *Acolyte Mirror; Made by Elder Alchemists during the Wolf Moon; Used for meditation training; E00032*, 2022; hand poured mirror on reclaimed glass. *Mountain Spirit; Attributed to Lapis angui or Stone Snake Group; E00032*, 2021; ceramic, stone, and wood; 30 x 26 x 18 1/2 in. Courtesy of the artist. Photo courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center.