



# John Michael Kohler Arts Center

For Immediate Release

**SARAH ZAPATA: *a resilience of things not seen***  
**JOHN MICHAEL KOHLER ARTS CENTER**  
**MARCH 1 – AUGUST 28, 2022**



Sheboygan, WI—A new immersive site-specific installation by fiber artist Sarah Zapata will be on view at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center ([JMKAC](#)) from March 1 – August 28, 2022. *Sarah Zapata: a resilience of things not seen* utilizes intricate pre-Hispanic textile practices and traditional Peruvian feminine crafts combined with modern and industrial carpet manufacturing techniques to create a hand-woven abstract fantasy world, replete with riotous color.

Zapata produces familiar, yet disorienting spaces that ask viewers to suspend their assumptions of time, gender, definitions, and expectations. Imbued with a variety of meanings, the textiles—at once

luxury objects, symbols of oppression and colonialism, and expressions of power—are deployed in large-scale, architectural installations that impact and inhibit the visitor’s movement. Her enchanting environments explore such themes as gender, ethnicity, colonialism, and performativity.

Interested in color’s emotional saliency and its ability to convey meanings across time and regions, Zapata chooses her tonal schemes with intent. For the commission at JMKAC, the artist reflects on the *Book of Revelation*, working in a combination of neutral colors strikingly paired with the boldness of purples and reds. Drawing on the apocalyptic nature of the Biblical text, Zapata uses the installation to engage her relationship to fear— particularly as stoked by the pandemic and other events of the past year. Ultimately, the work is her vision of an undetermined, but optimistic, in-between space: *a resilience of things not seen*.

“We as queer people are never to settle for the pleasures of the here and now; rather, we are constantly working toward a new reality,” states Zapata. “That is why I’m so attracted to working in installations: it employs the use of fantasy. I create these otherworldly experiences in order for the viewer to access ideas of potential and futurity.”

From the striped gallery walls to plush and inviting latch-hooked sculptures that suggest warmth and domesticity, Zapata employs symbolic elements to create her world. The striped gallery contrasts red, signifying blood and war, with purple, illustrative of wealth and status. Woven panels, suggestive of gargoyles, guard the edges of the gallery. The installation, *a resilience of things not seen*, offers an opportunity to dwell in the unknown. It belies a reliance on trust and faith—confirming a commitment to pushing through, to reveling in the not-quite-there. It asks for hope.

### **WAYS OF BEING AT JMKAC**

*Sarah Zapata: a resilience of things not seen* 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 series exhibitions are: [Lee Hunter: Cosmogogenesis](#) (January 25–August 8, 2022); *In the Adjacent Possible* (April 5, 2022–March 26, 2023); *Creative! Growth!* (May 22, 2022–April 2023); *Lydia Ricci & Sarah McEaney: The Extra Ordinary* (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 SARAH ZAPATA**

Born in Corpus Christi, Texas, Sarah Zapata is an artist and writer based in Brooklyn, New York. She received a BFA in Studio Art from the University of North Texas. Her work has been exhibited in galleries and museums including EFA Project Space, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, El Museo del Barrio, Museum of Arts and Design, New Museum, Paul Kasmin Gallery, and Performance Space New York, all in New York, NY; Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center, Kingston, NY; Boston University; and LAXART, Los Angeles. Zapata has also completed residencies at the Museum of Arts and Design and Wave Hill, New York; MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA; and A-Z West, Joshua Tree, CA.

## **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 program; 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 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 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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Image: Sarah Zapata. Photo courtesy of the artist.