



# LAUMEYER

SCULPTURE PARK

2017 KRANZBERG EXHIBITION SERIES:

**YVONNE OSEI:**

# TAILORED LANDSCAPES

NOVEMBER 4, 2017–MARCH 4, 2018

Whitaker Foundation Gallery,  
Adam Aronson Fine Arts Center



MTLEF



UMSL

This series is generously supported by Nancy and Ken Kranzberg.

## PUT YOURSELF IN PLACE

Laumeier Sculpture Park's landscape has become a rich text in Yvonne Osei's *Tailored Landscapes* installation. If color is inherent in everything, it is best to pick things which relate to your circumstances—and Osei chooses colors, shapes and forms that are easy to find at Laumeier. If memory is created not by repetition but by new experiences, Osei has compiled a group of artworks for this exhibition that are drawn from a year of her own unique interactions with the Park. Documenting what she calls the "physical and metaphorical" landscapes inherent in this space, her inventions were revealed to her not only from visitors' interactions with and use of the Park, but also through the language of "abstract art" that populates the grounds at Laumeier.

Osei's portfolio explores both urban sites and suburban settings in St. Louis and around the world. Using cloth and public sculpture, she created new monuments through the process of clothing and unclothing nude female figurative sculptures in her series *Africa Clothe Me Bare*, 2016. As subject and object, Osei photographed and videotaped herself dressing these sculptures, found in public gardens, in a manner that was both reverent and critical. Her interest in clothing as a second skin allows for a temporary camouflage, or reveal, of human form—concepts that she expands upon at Laumeier. In another series, *From Utopia with Love*, 2016, she photographed and scanned skin tones and body parts to formulate bold, graphic designs for elegantly formed dresses and elaborate headdresses. Set within the urban landscape and "ruin porn" of St. Louis city, Osei hybridizes color and complexion into the politics of high fashion streetwear.

For the gallery at Laumeier, and in areas expanding outside of the space, Osei creates a large-scale, photography-based installation occupying the walls, floors and ceilings, fashioning an environment where textile creates landscape and photography creates sculpture. Inspired by both the physical and cultural landscape of the Park, she has woven design motifs from West Africa, and more specifically her home country of Ghana, into her photographic and videographic documentation of the Park, to create fresh, flamboyant patterns drawn from both the art and nature at Laumeier. Using her textural understanding of fashion design, Osei creates an environment here that uses the architecture of the gallery as figure and form "wrapped" with both adhesive and cloth fabric. She first confronts, and then invites, a particular experience beginning at the entrance to the Whitaker Foundation Gallery.

The work points to the transitional architecture of the entryway, inviting the outside in, leading directly to perceptions of shifting scale, our relationship to nature and the buildings we inhabit. Textile and wallpaper designs of the Arts and Crafts Movement founder William Morris transformed the interiors of middle-class houses in England and America. Organic, floral shapes arranged as repeated patterns printed onto luxe, heavyweight

papers made the exotic affordable to the masses. Later on, in the age of mechanical reproduction, Andy Warhol's screen prints exploited repetition and wallpaper-type layouts to make the mundane and common into something special. Transforming the very ordinary into the extraordinary, like the drab grey of a parking lot surface, is "job one" for any artist.

Presented as exotic patterns and screen printed as textiles, both adhesive and cloth, the motifs which build Osei's artworks *Pepper Them*, 2017, and *Seeing Double Double*, 2017, carefully submerge the vernacular of Laumeier's parking lot with the shapes of Beverly Pepper's *Alpha*, 1974, or layer wayfinding signage with a veiny detail of Tony Tasset's oracular spectacular *Eye*, 2007. While at first it is hard to see through the "after" image of these dazzling combinations, Osei's gathered designs point not only to her African identity, but also to her blend of modernist and conceptual interests in special projects that span the design gap between infrastructure and sculpture, interior and exterior. The Vorticists and Futurists in the early 20th century designed dazzling patterns based on color theory and shape to conceal buildings, warships and armies as part of a war effort; here, Osei uses the dazzle to show off the volumes and lines. Intermixed with captive moments of family picnics under a tree and the strange, unnoticed elements in nature—accented by the shocking, lime green sweatshirt of a visitor viewing the Donald Judd sculpture—perspective is used in both its literal and figurative senses. In both the patterns and their arrangement as wallpaper and tile, it is important to move around to notice how one's perception and perspective changes. These shifts in perspective bring awareness to the visitor and also serve as confirmation of a momentary cultural and phenomenological experience.

Again, drawing from the pattern and repetition in nature and extracting elements of sculpture and the built environment at Laumeier, Osei presents three garments to be worn and experienced inside based on eight distinct textile designs including *Mighty Pawns*, *Forever Yoked* and *Recline Liberman Recline*, 2017. Arranged as three open-air fitting rooms wrapped and fitted, Osei invites the viewer to try them on and encourages a collective and participatory encounter designed to alter one's experience of time, space and landscape by inverting the interior and exterior.

Also included is a series of photographs entitled *Africa Clothe Me Bare, St. Louis IV*, 2017, documenting a series of performances that utilize cloth as a medium to explore diversity in culture and in nature. In these pieces, Osei literally connects herself to the works in the Park and creates a tapestry that intertwines figure with form and the historic with the contemporary.

Dana Turkovic, *Curator*

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Yvonne Osei was born in Germany to Ghanaian parents. She received her M.F.A. in 2016 from Washington University in St. Louis, where she was a Chancellors Graduate Fellow, Mr. and Mrs. Spencer T. Olin Fellow and Danforth Scholar. She received her B.F.A. from Webster University, St. Louis, in 2013. Selected exhibitions and performances include the University of Houston, Texas; Overland Park Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, Kansas; Provincetown Art Association and Museum, Massachusetts; Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden; Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University, St. Louis; Saint Louis Art Museum; Bruno David Gallery, St. Louis; Bijlmermeer, Amsterdam, Netherlands; Ariana Park, Geneva, Switzerland; Giardini della Biennale, Venice, Italy; PLUG Projects, Kansas City; Lone Star Art District, San Antonio; Des Lee Gallery, St. Louis; and the Regional Arts Commission, St. Louis. Osei is the 2016–17 Romare Bearden Graduate Minority Fellow at the Saint Louis Art Museum; she is currently the inaugural Curator-In-Residence at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA) and an Adjunct Professor at Webster University.

## YVONNE OSEI: TAILORED LANDSCAPES PUBLIC PROGRAMS

### COFFEE + CONVERSATION

Saturday, January 13 / 11:00 a.m. / Free, adult audiences  
Adam Aronson Fine Art Center

Join Laumeier's 2017 Kranzberg Exhibition Series artist Yvonne Osei and Curator Dana Turkovic for coffee and a casual tour of *Yvonne Osei: Tailored Landscapes*. Laumeier's *Conversation Series* events provide informal, discussion-based learning opportunities for adult audiences about new commissions, temporary exhibitions and legacy artworks in the Permanent Collection. Refreshments are provided.

### ART WORKSHOP: LANDSCAPED PHOTO COLLAGE

Saturday, February 17 / 12:00–3:00 p.m. / \$60, ages 16 and up  
Kranzberg Education Lab

Join Laumeier's 2017 Kranzberg Exhibition Series artist Yvonne Osei for an afternoon of creative expression in the Park AND in the studio! Learn the art of collage using cell phone photography to create a visual narrative of Laumeier's landscape. Explore techniques and strategies to combine collage with photographic imagery, including creative destruction, subtraction and addition, layering, transparency, symbolism and hidden messages. Photography skills not required—just bring your cell phone and a willingness to see the Park in a different light!

## LAUMEIER STAFF

Rick Fouts, *Controller*  
Sarah Harford, *Recreation Facility Coordinator*  
Serena Herman, *Visitor Services*  
Lauren Kistner, *Marketing & Communications Manager*  
Scott Layne, *Special Events Manager*  
Martin Linson, *Chief Preparator*  
Karen Mullen, *Curator of Education*  
Julia Norton, *Administrative & Volunteer Coordinator*  
Tori Reid, *Visitor Services*  
Stephanie Riven, *Interim Director*  
Michelle Siegel, *Development Officer*  
Carla Steppan, *Office Services Representative*  
Dana Turkovic, *Curator*  
Jamie Vishwanat, *Graphic Designer*

Nick Lang, *Operations Supervisor*  
Yvette Luedde, *Maintenance Lead*  
Sharon Brown, John Dudley, Steve Lamping, Dave Miller

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ramsey Maune, *Board Chair*  
Alison Ferring, *Vice Chair*  
William Bolster, *Secretary*  
Gary Hoemann, *Treasurer*  
David Schlafly, *Immediate Past Chair*

Jonathan Aronson	Kenneth Kranzberg
Carmon Colangelo	Nancy Kranzberg
Ellen Curlee	Helen Lee
Adrienne D. Davis	Kiku Obata
Scott Evans	Suzanne Sierra Sewell
William Fiala	Mary Ann Srenco
Matthew Harvey	Timothy Trotter
Stephen Hubbard	Susan Werremeyer
James Kolker	Gary Wolff

### EX-OFFICIO BOARD

Gary Bess, *Director, St. Louis County Parks*  
Mary Devine, *Docent Co-Chair, Laumeier Sculpture Park*  
Barb Flunker, *Docent Co-Chair, Laumeier Sculpture Park*  
Stephanie Riven, *Interim Director, Laumeier Sculpture Park*  
Patricia Zahn, *Des Lee Collaborative Vision,  
University of Missouri-St. Louis*

Barbara Eagleton, *Emerita*  
Barbara Gervais, *Emerita*  
Lawrence Mooney, *Emeritus*  
Kenneth Steinback, *Emeritus*  
Sissy Thomas, *Emerita*  
John Wuest, *Emeritus*

