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Erica Silverman, "Derek Fordjour Opens a Radiant Spa for Contemporary Arts Memphis,"
Whitewall, December 11, 2024.

whitewall



Derek Fordjour Opens a Radiant Space for Contemporary Arts Memphis

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ERICA SILVERMAN
DECEMBER 11, 2024



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This festive winter season, New York-based and Memphis-born artist **Derek Fordjour** brings further into the light **Contemporary Arts Memphis**, a groundbreaking nonprofit endeavor which champions emerging creatives of underserved communities. Looking ahead towards a deeply enriched Memphis art landscape, CAM will work diligently to spark diverse cultural and social transformation. The project's dynamic, new headquarters were radiantly unveiled, situated ideally within the spirited Edge District.



Courtesy Of Derek Fordjour And Contemporary Arts Memphis.

Fordjour Grows the Innovative Programs of Contemporary Arts Memphis

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The pioneering Fordjour founded CAM in 2021 as a summer fellowship, offering rising junior and senior students a meaningful four-week program at no cost. The venture included comprehensive visits to local museums and galleries, profound university caliber art instruction, as well as a thrilling week-long journey to New York City to explore its art institutions and to connect with creative leaders such as **Aliza Nisenbaum** and Lorna Simpson.

Currently in an even more expansive endeavor, the fellowship also includes alumni programming throughout the year with critical portfolio building and college preparation. In addition, in-school programming has been introduced, as well as **Teen ART Lab** which focuses on the building of creative skills for high school students.



Courtesy Of Derek Fordjour And Contemporary Arts Memphis.

Fordjour Returns to His Roots in Support of the Young Artists of Memphis

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“With the opening of our new space, Contemporary Arts Memphis is now able to serve more young artists more consistently,” said **Fordjour**. “Our goal was always to be widely accessible to young people in Memphis committed to the visual arts.”

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Fordjour here returns to his roots with a parade of illustrious artistic accomplishments. The premier creative received commissions for the **Whitney Museum of American Art Billboard Project** and the MTA Arts & Design Program in 2018, as well as was the first artist within the **Building Art Series** for **MOCA Grand Avenue**, Los Angeles.

His dazzling work resides in the collections of **The Studio Museum of Harlem, Guggenheim Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, SFMOMA, Brooklyn Museum, The Whitney Museum**, and **LACMA**.

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A Visionary Headquarters Designed by Lester Ferdinand, Avni Pathak, and Desmond Lewis

Skillfully designed by architect **Lester Ferdinand** alongside masterful interior designer **Avni Pathak** and perceptive artist **Desmond Lewis**, the debut facility intermingles a computer lab, painting and sculpture studios, art storage, and exhibition space. Equal access to art education lies at the heart of CAM, which will invite the entire community to participate in its thoughtful creative workshops and exhibitions, bringing together artists and art lovers of all ages.

“Because of the rising costs of education, the barriers of entry to study art are becoming more prohibitive” said Fordjour. “CAM seeks to level the uneven field of access to quality art education. Our new space radically expands our capacity to achieve that goal.”

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Meaningful Partnerships Support CAM's Constant Evolution

In significant partnership with the **University of Memphis Department of Art and Design**, CAM will provide six credit hours to Fellows. Additional, vivid collaboration unfolds with the **Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Dixon Gallery & Gardens, and Metal Museum.**

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Hearty philanthropic support abounds within CAM, with robust partners including **Hyde Family Foundation, Tennessee Arts Commission, ARTSmemphis, Ruth Foundation for the Arts, Shelby County Commission, Memphis City Council, Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, First Horizon Foundation, and Memphis Medical District Collaborative.**



Courtesy Of Derek Fordjour And Contemporary Arts Memphis.

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