



Chiffon THOMAS

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The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum will receive a \$25K grant in support of its new exhibition, "Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous."



The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum has been approved for a \$25,000 Grant for Arts Projects award from the National Endowment for the Arts to support the exhibition "Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous." (The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum)

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum has been approved for a \$25,000 Grant for Arts Projects award from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to support the exhibition "Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous," on view at the Museum September 15, 2023 to March 3, 2024. The Aldrich's project is among 1,130 projects across the country, totaling more than \$31 million, that were selected during this second round of Grants for Arts Projects fiscal year 2023 funding.

"The National Endowment for the Arts is pleased to support a wide range of projects, including The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum's forthcoming exhibition 'Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous,' demonstrating the many ways the arts enrich our lives and contribute to healthy and thriving communities," said NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson,

PhD. “These organizations play an important role in advancing the creative vitality of our nation and helping to ensure that all people can benefit from arts, culture, and design.”

Executive Director Cybele Maylone shared: “The Aldrich is thrilled to present 'The Cavernous,' artist Chiffon Thomas' first museum exhibition, later this year. Featuring a new body of work and the artist's first outdoor sculpture, this ambitious exhibition will also be accompanied by Thomas' first museum publication. We are incredibly grateful to the NEA for this generous grant, which is helping make all of these firsts possible.”

'Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous' will be the artist's solo museum debut unveiling a new body of work. Spanning embroidery, collage, sculpture, drawing, and installation, Thomas examines the ruptures that exist where race, gender expression, and biography interconnect. Taking inspiration from artists David Hammond, Noah Purifoy, Faith Ringgold, Louise Nevelson, and Lee Bontecou, as well as a childhood steeped in religion, he joins reclaimed materials recovered from abandoned colonial architecture—columns, windows, doorways, wooden spindles, and ceiling tin—with cast fragments of his body, split and fractured, in urethane and foam, as well as plaster and leather, sometimes combined with sections of the Bible. Interrogating a legacy of colonialization and the Black diaspora in the US, Thomas interweaves materials resonant with personal and collective histories of trauma and repair as well as resilience and transformation. Thomas' work oscillates between figuration and abstraction, underscoring society's binary opposition, finding agency and care within the fissures that exist in life.

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Thomas will create a new series of sculptures for the exhibition that will feature the human body fused with the geodesic dome, exploring the connections in the efficiency of their structural design. Developed in the 1950s by twentieth-century American architect, engineer, and futurist Buckminster Fuller, its triangular facets make its construction extremely well-ordered with the strength to sustain sizable weight. The exhibition will also include the artist's public sculpture debut, sited on the Museum's grounds along Main Street. It will be accompanied by a publication, featuring an essay by Chief Curator Amy Smith-Stewart.

For more information on other projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit www.arts.gov/news.

Major support for 'Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous' is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Significant support is provided by Derek Fordjour and Michael Sherman and Carrie Tivador. Additional support is provided by Diana Bowes and Jim Torrey, The Cowles Charitable Trust, and Leslie and Michael Weissman. The catalogue is supported by the Eric Diefenbach and James-Keith Brown Publications Fund. Production support is provided by the Diana Bowes and Jim Torrey Commissions Fund.