

Press Release

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Announcement

## Houston First, CAMH Partnership Aims to Bring Art to New Spaces



Installation view of *Rio Chiquito* at Houston First Corporation's Partnership Tower, 2024. Photo by Corey Hanks.

#HoustonFirstxCAMH  
#AroundHouston

### Press Contact

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HOUSTON (July 22, 2024) – Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH) and Houston First Corporation (HFC) have formed a new partnership, titled Houston First x CAMH, designed to bring art into highly trafficked public spaces in Downtown Houston.

Officially launched earlier this year with the debut of two art presentations. Houston First x CAMH engages artists to exhibit existing or new site-specific work in HFC's Partnership Tower office building and the George R. Brown Convention Center. Both spaces see significant foot traffic from both locals and visitors alike, fostering deeper connection between the public and the arts.

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Photo of Opening Reception for *Houston First x Contemporary Arts Museum Houston* featuring Gerardo Rosales and Kaneem Smith at Partnership Tower, 2024. Photo by Corey Hanks.

Presentations are curated by CAMH’s Senior Curator and Director of Public Initiatives Ryan N. Dennis and Curator Patricia Restrepo, centering local and regional artists with the goal of showcasing Houston’s diversity of artistic expression.

The inaugural installations on the first and second floors of Partnership Tower include work by two Houston-based artists: Kaneem Smith and Gerardo Rosales. Smith’s presentation is part of an ongoing series of fabric wall-based artworks entitled *Laborscapes*, imaging land-portraits through dyed cotton canvas that merge archeological and ancestral imaginations of space. Rosales’s large-scale mural titled *Rio Chiquito* spans three walls within Partnership Tower, intricately layered with personal symbolism and folk mythology that reflects the artist’s experience as an immigrant in Houston.

“This unique collaboration with CAMH enables us to bring a dynamic rotation of art into our facilities—adding a new dimension to these spaces and introducing the public to Houston area artists,” said Michael Heckman, President and CEO of Houston First.

“CAMH is committed to expanding artist’s impact outside of the traditional Museum gallery setting,” says CAMH Executive Director, Hesse McGraw. “We’re thrilled to partner with Houston First to connect Houston’s visitors and residents to the rich contemporary artistic landscape of our city, and amplify our city’s working artists to travelers from around the world.”

Kaneem Smith’s and Gerardo Rosales’s work will be on view through Sunday, August 4, 2024. The next round of artists to exhibit in the space will be announced shortly, with artwork on view in Fall 2024.

### **About Houston First Corporation**

Houston First Corporation (HFC) is a local government corporation and the official destination marketing organization for the country’s fourth largest city. In addition to serving as operator for the George R. Brown Convention Center and some of Houston’s most prominent art, entertainment, and event venues, HFC is focused on promoting the city’s vibrancy and rich tapestry of culture. By harnessing the city’s collective energy, ambition, and creativity, including its diverse culinary scene, world-renowned performing arts, medical and space innovation, and elite filming locations, HFC is solidifying Houston as a premier national and global destination.

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Photo of Kaneem Smith at Houston First Corporation's Partnership Tower, 2024. Photo by Corey Hanks.



Photo of Gerardo Rosales at Houston First Corporation's Partnership Tower, 2024. Photo by Corey Hanks.

### **About Contemporary Arts Museum Houston**

Established in 1948, CAMH is one of the oldest non-collecting contemporary art museums in the country, and is internationally known for presenting pivotal and landmark work by artists recognized as the most important of the 20th and 21st centuries. CAMH's mandate is to be present, to connect artists and audiences through the urgent issues of our time, and to adventurously promote the catalytic possibilities of contemporary art. CAMH's programming, both in and beyond the Museum, is presented free to the public, and advocates for artists' essential role in society.

### **About Kaneem Smith**

Kaneem Smith was born in Buffalo, New York, and raised and based in Houston, Texas where she is a practicing visual artist and fine arts educator. She studied at Rice University (Houston) and the Maryland Institute College of Art (Baltimore, Maryland) before receiving her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Sarah Lawrence College (Bronxville, New York), and then her Master of Fine Arts Degree from Syracuse University (New York). Her work has been included in numerous venues such as Artpace (San Antonio, Texas); the African American Museum in Dallas (Texas); Art League Houston, Station Museum of Contemporary Art (Houston), Grounds for Sculpture (Hamilton, New Jersey); Amarillo Museum of Art (Texas); National Art Gallery (Athens, Greece); Lima Art Museum (Peru); and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Among her many accomplishments, exhibitions, awards and residencies, Smith was the recipient of visual arts fellowships through the Edward F. Albee Foundation, the Vermont Studio Center, Atelierhaus Hilmsen Residency for Artists in Germany, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, Artadia, and the Creative Capital Foundation in New York. Kaneem Smith is represented by Nicole Longnecker Gallery (Houston, Texas).

### **About Gerardo Rosales**

Gerardo Rosales, born in Venezuela, is a multidisciplinary artist and educator who has been living and working in Houston, Texas, for 19 years. Rosales first started producing art as a self-taught artist, before attending the Armando Reveron Art Institute in Caracas, Venezuela, where he earned a B.A. in Fine Art. After graduating, he moved to London to study at Chelsea College of Art and Design, where he obtained an M.A. in Fine Art.

Achieving recognition for his distinct and original work in Latin America's best known art venues, Rosales has continued developing his art career in Houston. Rosales' art calls attention on issues of

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class, race, gender and sexuality, at time with biting humor, while other times with loaded, painful drama. Rosales was previously an artist-in-residence at The Lawndale Art Center in Houston. Rosales was the first artist to have an installation in Partnership Tower in 2021 on the 1st Floor Lobby, He is excited to have new art on view to the space with his site-specific work for the 2nd Floor.

## Support

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is funded in part by the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance and the Texas Commission on the Arts.



FUNDED IN PART BY  
THE CITY OF HOUSTON  
THROUGH  
HOUSTON ARTS ALLIANCE



## CAMH Mission

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston presents extraordinary, thought-provoking arts programming and exhibitions to educate and inspire audiences nationally and internationally.

## General Information

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, in the heart of Houston's Museum District. Partnership Tower is located 701 Avenida De Las Americas in Downtown Houston.

## Partnership Tower Hours

Mon 24 Hours  
Tues 24 Hours  
Wed 24 Hours  
Thu 24 Hours  
Fri 24 Hours  
Sat 24 Hours  
Sun 24 Hours

Admission is always free. For more information, visit [CAMH.ORG](http://CAMH.ORG) or call 713.284.8250.