

Images available upon request.

Denver Artist Jonathan Saiz to Debut More Than 10,000 Artworks in Denver Art Museum Contemporary Art Series *Eyes On*

Ten thousand artworks will be given away by the artist after the close of the exhibition

DENVER — April 19, 2018 — The Denver Art Museum (DAM) is pleased to announce its next installment of *Eyes On*, which will feature Denver artist Jonathan Saiz. Organized by the DAM, the *Eyes On* series is a focused multi-year contemporary art series, highlighting emerging contemporary artists in the Logan Gallery and Fuse Box on level 4 of the Hamilton Building through 2020. [Eyes On: Jonathan Saiz](#) will be presented in the Logan Gallery May 12–Nov. 17, 2019. He is the fifth artist to be on view as part of the series.

Curated by Rebecca Hart, Vicki and Kent Logan Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the DAM, this exhibition will feature an installation of more than 10,000 tiny paintings, drawings and relief sculptures, intended to inspire thoughts about a perfect world through the social media-driven prompt and title of the installation, [#WhatIsUtopia](#). Following the close of the exhibition at the DAM, the artist will give away 10,000 of the artworks in a process that will be announced at a later date.

“There is a sense for most that utopia is indefinable and, at worst, *always* beyond our reach,” Saiz said. “Depending on where and when you are from, utopia can mean something quite different. Let us imagine together that equality, love for nature and the expression of true beauty in art and in our shared economy are not fantastical



daydreams—that utopia and living happily is a reality here and now.”

The idea of utopia, a perfect world without chaos, violence or pain, transcends time and culture. Early Christians wrote about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, a place of purity. In China, the concept of datong or “Great Unity” was first recorded in the third century BCE. In 1516, Thomas More wrote his famous work *Utopia* and coined the word, which comes from the Greek language and literally means “no place,” an imaginary future vision, based on present and past realities, but one that is just beyond our reach.

For *#WhatisUtopia*, Saiz conflates references to classical Greek architecture with simple everyday imagery. Ten thousand small paintings, each no larger than two square inches, will cover the shaft of a truncated column at the center of the gallery. The individual artworks will feature imagery or relief sculpture in a specific color of the visible light spectrum. They will wrap around the column to appear as if light has just passed through a crystal and burst into a riotous rainbow, a longstanding symbol of bliss, satisfaction and happiness in many cultures. The tiny paintings will give a glimpse into Saiz's vision of utopia, while inviting visitors to consider how their ideas of paradise align with (or differ from) the artist's.

Saiz's particular spiritual vision of utopia speaks to the intertwined concepts of beauty, nature and the human spirit or soul, and how these are expressed through imagery. *#WhatisUtopia* also seeks to challenge the economic assumptions prevalent in much of the contemporary art market. Saiz questions how art is valued in today's consumer-driven society, and dreams of a time when artwork will be valued for its aesthetic and spiritual impact, rather than its monetary value.

For this reason, it is the wish of the artist that the 10,000 artworks be given away at the conclusion of this *Eyes On* installation. The artist will announce details about the giveaway at a later date. Those interested in this *Eyes On* presentation can register at whatisutopia@denverartmuseum.org to receive updates about the exhibition and the artwork giveaway.

With *#WhatisUtopia*, the artist invites visitors to engage with the conversation both inside the museum gallery and online via Instagram. Visitors will be encouraged to join Saiz's dialogue about utopia and engage online by posting photos of the installation on their public Instagram accounts with [#WhatisUtopia](https://twitter.com/WhatisUtopia), [#JonathanSaizatDAM](https://twitter.com/JonathanSaizatDAM) and [@utopia_is_free](https://twitter.com/utopia_is_free), describing their own definition of utopia. Many of these visitor photos also will be displayed on a digital screen inside the gallery.

"We join the artist in presenting a conversation not only about the topic of utopia, but the value of art," Hart said.

"We hope to spark an intriguing dialogue, and with the added component of social media, we hope to inspire people to connect both in the gallery and virtually, beyond the walls of the museum."

In conjunction with the exhibition, Jonathan Saiz will give a Logan Lecture at the DAM on Sept. 11, 2019.

Eyes On: Jonathan Saiz is included in general admission and is free for members and youth 18 and younger.

Exhibition Sponsors

Eyes On: Jonathan Saiz is organized by the Denver Art Museum. It is presented with the generous support of Vicki and Kent Logan, the donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign and the citizens who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine*, CBS4, Comcast Spotlight and *The Denver Post*.

Media Resources

Online Newsroom: www.denverartmuseum.org/press

Facebook: www.facebook.com/denverartmuseum

Twitter: www.twitter.com/denverartmuseum

Instagram: www.instagram.com/denverartmuseum/

The Denver Art Museum

The Denver Art Museum is an educational, nonprofit resource that sparks creative thinking and expression through transformative experiences with art. Its holdings reflect the city and region—and provide invaluable ways for the community to learn about cultures from around the world. Metro citizens support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), a unique funding source serving hundreds of metro Denver arts, culture and scientific organizations. For museum information, call 720-865-5000 or visit www.denverartmuseum.org.

###

Image credit: Jonathan Saiz, *Study for Utopia*, 2019. Mixed media; 2 x 2 in. Courtesy of the artist and K Contemporary. Photo by Wes Magyar. ©Jonathan Saiz