



Metropolitan State University of Denver

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Center for Visual Art Presents
Armor

DENVER, COLORADO – Knights of the Realm conducting medieval battles between kingdoms, Samurai warriors ruling pre-Modern Japan, and Turkish soldiers of the Ottoman Empire served their days covered in hand-formed sheets of metal made by the artists of their time. These warriors and their protective armor have drifted from memory into legends as the world's countries change from ruling to governing and adapt to new power structures. Even though the hand-to-hand battles of ancient times are rarely fought in this day, the need to protect oneself from harm persists. Without these protections, how do we face the daily assault of life as we currently know it?

Presented for public viewing from July 30 to October 16, 2021, at the

Metropolitan State University of Denver, Center for Visual Art, *Armor* is an exhibition of artwork that addresses different ways artists express concepts of bodily protection and the means by which we arm and mend ourselves physically, spiritually and emotionally. These explorations into armor uncover how structures or ideals can protect, but also fail us. CVA's Director & Curator Cecily Cullen says of the exhibition, "Art can be a solace, a form of protection in itself, but we also find commonalities and creativity, wisdom and innovation that remind us that anything is possible. Sometimes there are solutions as straightforward as joining together as a community. Other times an expression of absurdity is the only response that is fitting to the incomprehensible offenses perpetrated among us humans."

In *Armor*, CVA presents a contemporary take on battle armor and the protective power imbued into objects as the artists create and manipulate the materials in response to the different threats and attacks they face as individuals or within their communities. Merritt Johnson says of her work in the exhibition, "I weave, sew, cast, draw, sculpt and perform tools for surviving current conditions and envisioning regenerative, intersectional, connected ways of being. The mixed materials and processes I create with embody my mixed heritage; advocating allegiance to land, water, and marginalized bodies in the face of continued state violence and oppression." Additionally, the exhibition features a series of fashionable Kevlar vests created by Erika Diamond "in response to the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting, they are specifically tailored and designed to protect my queer-identifying friends, lovers, mentors, and artists I admire, reflecting their individual ideas around personal safety and style", says Diamond.



Artists in the Exhibition

Erika Diamond (Asheville, NC), Merritt Johnson (Sitka, AK), Sammy Seung-min Lee (Denver, CO), Skyler McGee (Jacksonville, IL), Jaime Molina (Denver, CO), Jennifer Pettus (Denver, CO), Frankie Toan & Steven Frost (Denver, CO), Ravi Zupa (Denver, CO)

Curated by Cecily Cullen

Exhibition Events

There will be an opening reception on Friday, July 30 with a member preview at 5:30pm and a public reception from 6-8pm. A complete listing of events will be announced on the website and through CVA's e-newsletter. www.msudenver.edu/cva

Image Credits: Header, Erika Diamond, *Eggshell Bodice* (detail), 2017; left, Merritt Johnson, *Border Breaker*, 2020; right, Sammy Seung-min Lee, *Mamabot - Ms. Daegu*, 2020

Also Opening in the 965 Project Gallery

The 965 Project Gallery presents *Magick Hospital*, featuring work from Hexus Collective. *Magick Hospital* is a sight-specific installation that explores ritualistic practices performed through modern medical intervention and how these

rituals become a protective armor. Contemplating their relationships to physicality, spirituality, and dimensionality in connection with the illnesses they live with every day, the artists use multi-media installation and performances to ask questions regarding the treatment of those with visible and invisible illnesses and disabilities, and whether these treatments serve to make the patient comfortable or to make able-bodied society feel at ease. *Magick Hospital* highlights medicine as a concealment from the constructed stigmas surrounding disability and as a spell of protection against bad spirits and health.

This exhibition was co-curated by MSU Denver Students Lizeth Hernandez and Shari Myers in collaboration with Hexus Collective.

The 965 Project Gallery is a student-led space that provides premiere professional development opportunities to students interested in fine art curation and arts administration.

About CVA

The Center for Visual Art (CVA) is the off-campus art gallery of Metropolitan State University of Denver. CVA provides diverse, high-quality art experiences that bring artists, MSU Denver students, and the broader community together to advance the global urban dialogue. CVA provides a year-round schedule of bold, contemporary exhibitions of both local significance and international reach, educational programming open to the community, and immersive workforce development for students in creative fields. CVA is free and open to everyone.

CVA is located at 965 Santa Fe Drive in Denver, Colorado. For gallery hours, full event listings, and visitor information, please visit www.msudenver.edu/cva.

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Images available on request.
