

## Nasher Sculpture Center Announces Next Nasher Public Exhibition Artist, Melanie Clemmons

*Dallas artist and SMU professor presents the Nasher's first New Media installation*

DALLAS, Texas (March 30, 2021)—The Nasher Sculpture Center announces the next exhibition for Nasher Public in the Nasher Store gallery, Nasher Public: Melanie Clemmons in an exhibition called *Likes Charge, Light Tear*, on view April 1–25, 2021.

*Likes Charge, Light Tear* is the Nasher's first New Media exhibition and will be a hybrid in-person/virtual installation. Noting that “[we] routinely discover that our experiences with the internet and digitality mask horrifying structures that exploit and divide us” even as we increasingly rely on digital connections and online platforms in our daily lives, Clemmons seeks to use this very technology toward more positive and constructive ends by making it a conduit for healing and care.

*Likes Charge, Light Tear* comprises four works, each of which reimagines digital technology via metaphysical or spiritual concepts and imagery:

- In *Magic Circle*, four flatscreens on the gallery walls facing Flora Street present videos dedicated to the four cardinal elements—earth, air, fire, and water. Created in CSS, a common markup language used in creating webpages, these videos conjure the four elements as they appear in magical or spiritual traditions to focus energy. In a melding of esoteric tradition and current technology, game studies also make reference to the magic circle as a place where players enjoy protection or learn new skills. In *Likes Charge, Light Tear*, *Magic Circle* becomes a site for the potential amplification of spiritual healing.
- In the center of the gallery, *Reflect* presents an interactive video sculpture in the form of a reflection pool, offering a quiet space for thought and meditation. Glass bricks encircle the screens, creating an area that can be slowly circled and contemplated. The invitation to reflect affords a respite from the constant demands of the attention economy and surveillance capitalism, in which companies track us online in order to sell products related to our searches, the websites we visit, and comments we post. The deceleration encouraged by *Reflect* proposes a break from, and an alternative to, the pressures of conventional online existence.
- *The Eye*, near the entrance to the space, is modeled as an altar featuring a rotating computer and webcam that provides livestreaming 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This gives access to the exhibition space for virtual visitors, allowing those who cannot be physically present to experience the installation nonetheless. The live video feed can be accessed on the artist's Twitch stream, at [twitch.com/melanieclemmons](https://www.twitch.com/melanieclemmons).
- At the end of the gallery near the Harwood Street windows, *Recharge* is a rotating disc populated with smart phones and 3D-printed healing crystals. The phones reference a phenomenon known as “click farms,” in which banks of phones are used illicitly to provide, at a price, false likes and followers for social media accounts and websites. Clemmons derails this practice: her phones instead display looping videos and metaphysically “charge” the crystals to promote the healing of

digital ills, allowing visitors themselves to recharge and perhaps safeguard against the manipulations and stress of technology's ever-present incursions into our lives.

Her interest in the spiritual and healing possibilities of New Media art has also led Clemmons to older forms of art, including esoteric traditions that exploit abstract forms and symmetrical arrangements of elements. Considering New Media art as sculpture encourages associations with such artists of the recent past as Nam June Paik and his use of television screens and monitors; the illuminated crystal cities of Mike Kelley's Kandor series; and Pipilotti Rist, Hito Steyerl, and other artists who use immersive installations of objects, environments, and video to explore technology's dangers as well as its healing potential.

An earlier version of *Likes Charge* was presented at Women & Their Work, Austin, in autumn 2020. According to the artist, "[The Austin presentation] responded to the grim tone of mid-2020, eschewing outside light in favor of projections, and overall deeply saturated colors. *Likes Charge*, *Light Tear*, conceived in early 2021, readily greets light and levity, offering an expansion to virtual healing."

**About Melanie Clemmons** | Melanie Clemmons (she/her) is a New Media artist interested in reimagining our use of digital technology toward a softer, calmer, and more careful future. She makes videos, net art, installations, 3D-printed sculpture, and VR (virtual reality) experiences and performances. Her work has been shown at HeK (House of Electronic Arts), Basel, Switzerland; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Echo Park Film Center, Los Angeles; UPFOR Digital, Portland; Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago; TRANSFER Gallery, Brooklyn; Denver Digerati; Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art; ATLAS Blackbox, Boulder, CO; and many other spaces and venues. In addition to exhibiting with galleries and museums nationally and internationally, Clemmons has toured with Pussy Riot, performing live video during their first North American tour, and has collaborated on several of their music videos. Along with Zak Loyd, she makes video performance and installation collaborations as Clemmons & Loyd, most recently in Dallas for Aurora's *Area 3*. Clemmons holds an MFA in digital art from the University of Colorado and a BFA from St. Edward's University. She is an assistant professor of Digital/Hybrid Media at Southern Methodist University, Dallas.

**About Nasher Public** | Nasher Public is an ongoing, two-pronged public art initiative which aims to generate access to public art by North Texas artists at the Nasher and throughout the greater Dallas community. The project will launch first at the Nasher in a newly formed gallery, presenting monthly exhibitions over the next year, followed by an ongoing series of off-site exhibitions in partnership with area businesses. The new gallery, formerly occupied by the Nasher Store, fronts Flora Street and is directly accessible from the Nasher's entrance foyer. For the duration of the project, the space will be open to the public free of charge during the museum's public hours, and viewable through the windows during off hours.

**About Nasher Sculpture Center** | Located in the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 300 masterpieces by Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Gormley, Hepworth, Kelly, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. The Nasher Sculpture Center is open Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for children 12 and under and members, and includes access to special exhibitions. Visitors must book a timed ticket in advance. For more information, visit [www.NasherSculptureCenter.org](http://www.NasherSculptureCenter.org).

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