

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2021  
Evanston Art Center  
Curatorial Fellowship

EXHIBITION DATES: July 9 – August 21, 2022  
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**EVANSTON ART CENTER ANNOUNCES 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CURATORIAL FELLOW:  
MELISSA RAMAN MOLITOR**

The Evanston Art Center (EAC), an artistic hub on the North Shore for over ninety years, believes that some communities are all too rarely represented in the curatorial world. To address this situation, the EAC has developed a recurrent, project-based position for a Black, Indigenous or Person of Color (BIPOC) curator with ties to Evanston and the Chicago Metro-area communities to develop an exhibition of their choosing. It is the EAC's intent that such an exhibit will both build new ties to historically underrepresented groups as well as introduce Evanston and the greater Chicago area to new curatorial and artistic perspectives.

**The Evanston Art Center is excited to announce the appointment of curator Melissa Raman Molitor as the 2021 / 2022 Curatorial Fellow.**

**Molitor's final exhibition, *The Kitchen Table Stories Project*, will be on display in the Evanston Art Center's First Floor Gallery from July 9 – August 21, 2022.**

In 2020, The Kitchen Table Stories Project began as a multimedia healing justice initiative centering the voices and narratives of local Asian and Pacific Islander diaspora. The goal of this project is to create collective power through art, and to claim space in the community with stories, traditional practices, and cultural wisdom. The Curatorial Fellowship at the Evanston Art Center is an opportunity to elevate the work of local artists who identify as South Asian, East Asian, Southeast Asian and/or Pacific Islander and engage the public in discourse that explores the intersections of race, country of origin, age, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, neurodiversity, and socioeconomics. The exhibit will center 'care' as an art form that draws on cultural wisdom, ancestral healing and collective power, and will involve outreach programming in physical and virtual community spaces.

The increase in racism and violence against people of Asian descent compounded by the surge of shuttered Asian-owned small businesses and family-owned restaurant closures due to the pandemic and economic downturn is contributing to the silencing and erasure of Asian, South Asian and Pacific Islander voices in our communities. Through a simple google search one will quickly recognize that stories from the Asian and Pacific Islander diaspora in the Evanston community and its surrounds are not being systematically collected. The history of these communities remaining on the fringes of traditional archives, museums, and cultural institutions reifies colonial approaches to art making, exhibition and arts engagement, and the absence of a collective resource in our community reinforces the perpetual foreigner narrative, not allowing for a sense of place or cultural permanence. This exhibition will help to amplify APIDA voices through art and be a step towards claiming creative space in the community.

**Melissa Raman Molitor**, ATR-BC, LCPC (she / her), is a socially engaged artist who creates liminal spaces in which art is a form of critical consciousness and healing justice. Her work involves the exploration of personal and collective identity through assemblage and multimedia narratives, and her

activism centers the power of art to foster human connection, community building, creative placemaking, and social awareness.

Melissa is an Associate Professor, Adj. at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and founding director of Kids Create Change, a non-profit organization that utilizes art to promote sociocultural awareness, build community, and engage young people in self-advocacy and creative action towards equity and justice. She is the former founding director of Connection Arts Chicago where she developed community art studios and therapeutic art programs with immigrant and refugee communities throughout the city, and previous owner of Art & Soul where she served as Director of Community Outreach and Programs. She is most recently a former founding board member of Evanston Made and currently serves on the Evanston Arts Council. Melissa holds a BA degree in Psychology and a BFA with a concentration in ceramics and photography from the University of Michigan. She received an MA in Art Therapy from SAIC and is a registered, board-certified art therapist and licensed clinical professional counselor.

The Curatorial Fellowship program serves as an extension of the Evanston Art Center's nonprofit mission to foster the appreciation and expression of the arts among diverse audiences. It also fulfills its vision to be widely recognized as a dynamic art education and exhibition center that encourages freedom of artistic expression and enriches cultural life. The EAC strives to be a hub of artistic endeavors, a passionate advocate for the arts, and a valuable partner for arts initiatives in the Evanston community.

The Curatorial Fellowship exhibition will be exhibited in the first floor gallery of the Evanston Art Center.

Learn more about the current and upcoming Curatorial Fellowship:

<https://www.evanstonartcenter.org/curatorial-fellow>

### **About the Evanston Art Center**

The Evanston Art Center (EAC) provides inspiring art education, exhibitions, and expression for all. The EAC is a non-profit that has supported the arts for more than 90 years.

For more information, please visit us online at [www.evanstonartcenter.org](http://www.evanstonartcenter.org) or contact Cara Feeney, Director of Exhibitions, at [cfeeney@evanstonartcenter.org](mailto:cfeeney@evanstonartcenter.org).

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