

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Multidisciplinary artist and Bemis alum Kambui Olujimi.
Photo: Jerome Elliott Brown Jr.

Brooklyn-Based Artist Kambui Olujimi Receives Bemis Center's Ree Kaneko Award

OMAHA, Neb. (February 18, 2026) — [Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts](#) is pleased to announce multidisciplinary artist [Kambui Olujimi](#) as the 2025 recipient of its annual **Ree Kaneko Award**. As part of Bemis Center's Alumni Program, this prestigious award provides \$25,000 in unrestricted financial support to increase the capacity of a Bemis alum's practice.

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Olujimi first joined the Bemis community as an artist-in-residence in 2009 and later returned as a participating artist in the group exhibitions *Time + Space: Futures* in 2016 and *All Together, Amongst Many: Reflections on Empathy* in 2021. Over the years, his interdisciplinary practice — spanning painting, sculpture, installation, photography, writing, video, and performance — has gained national and international recognition for its incisive examinations of history, myth, and the social conventions that shape collective memory.

Working across mediums, Olujimi excavates the language and aesthetics of cultural “inevitable,” rendering them visible and questioning their assumed permanence. His works have premiered at major institutions and festivals worldwide, and he has received numerous fellowships, grants, and residencies supporting his evolving practice.

Olujimi will return to Omaha to participate in a public artist talk on April 2, 2026.

Reflecting on his relationship with Bemis Center, he shared: “I loved my time at Bemis — the camaraderie, the conversations and space to play at a scale I couldn’t access in my hometown. One of the greatest gems from Bemis wasn’t the work I made for exhibitions, but the large-scale experiments and dialogues with curators and other fellows. And we have continued many of those conversations ‘til this day.”

“Kambui’s trajectory beautifully illustrates what sustained support can make possible,” said **Chris Cook**, Bemis Center **Executive Director**. “From his residency in 2009 to his exhibitions here and the remarkable body of work he’s developed since, Bemis has been one of many touchpoints in a practice that continues to challenge and expand how we understand history and power. His work is fearless, rigorous, and deeply human. We’re honored to recognize him with this year’s Ree Kaneko Award.”

The 2025 Ree Kaneko Award recipient was selected from a pool of nominated Bemis alumni by a distinguished panel: **Allison Glenn**, Curator of the 2026 Toronto Biennial of Art, and Artistic Director-at-Large of The Shepherd; **Marshall Price**, Chief Curator and Nancy A. Nasher and David J. Haemisegger Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University; **Arden Sherman**, Glenn W. & Cornelia T. Bailey, Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the Norton Museum of Art, and **Rachel Adams**, Chief Curator + Director of Programs, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha.

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SPECIAL EVENT

[In Conversation with Kambui Olujimi: 2025 Ree Kaneko Award Recipient](#)

Thursday, April 2, 2026 | 6 p.m. CT

Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts | 724 S 12th St, Omaha, Nebraska

Free admission

Olujimi will discuss his artistic practice and past and future projects through the lens of his time at Bemis Center.

A Meet + Greet with Olujimi exclusively for current Bemis Center members will take place at 5 p.m. before the public talk.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kambui Olujimi was born and raised in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. He received his MFA from Columbia University and attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. His work challenges established modes of thinking that commonly function as “inevitabilities.” By excavating the language and aesthetics of social, historical, and cultural conventions, he brings them out of the world of the implicit. Once given gravity, weight, and shape it becomes possible to reveal their incongruities and their illusory nature. This pursuit takes shape through interdisciplinary bodies of work spanning sculpture, installation, photography, writing, video and performance.

His works have premiered nationally and internationally at the Sundance Film Festival, Museum of Modern Art, LACMA, Sharjah Biennial 15, the 14th Dak’Art Biennale, and Kunstmuseum Basel, among others. Olujimi has been awarded grants, fellowships and residencies from Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Mellon Foundation, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, MacDowell, and Yaddo. His work has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *Vogue* and *CNN*. Olujimi’s work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums and public collections, including The Whitney Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum, The Cleveland Museum of Art, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA. Gregory R. Miller & co. has recently published a hardcover monograph on Olujimi’s work entitled *North Star*, and his upcoming permanent commission will be unveiled at JFK International Airport in 2026.

Learn more at kambuiolujimi.com.

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ABOUT THE AWARD

Granted to artists who have participated in Bemis Center's residency program or had a solo exhibition at the organization, this \$25,000 unrestricted annual award supports alumni artists in expanding their practice. It is made possible through the generous contributions of Bemis Center donors.

As part of Bemis Center's 40th anniversary in 2021, the award was increased and renamed in honor of **Ree Kaneko**, Bemis Center co-founder, first Executive Director, and Board Member Emerita. Her vision and passion embody the spirit of this award, which provides transformative support to artists. Funds may be used for any purpose and do not need to be tied to a specific project or body of work. The award is by nomination only and selected by a panel of curators and art historians.

Recent awardees include **Paula Wilson** (2024), **Tania Candiani** (2023), **Edra Soto** (2022), and **Raven Chacon** (2021).

Learn more at bemiscenter.org/alumni-program.

ABOUT BEMIS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts facilitates the creation, presentation, and understanding of contemporary art through an international residency program, exhibitions, and educational programs to inspire an open and diverse dialogue on the critical issues that give shape and meaning to the human condition.

Visit bemiscenter.org for more information.

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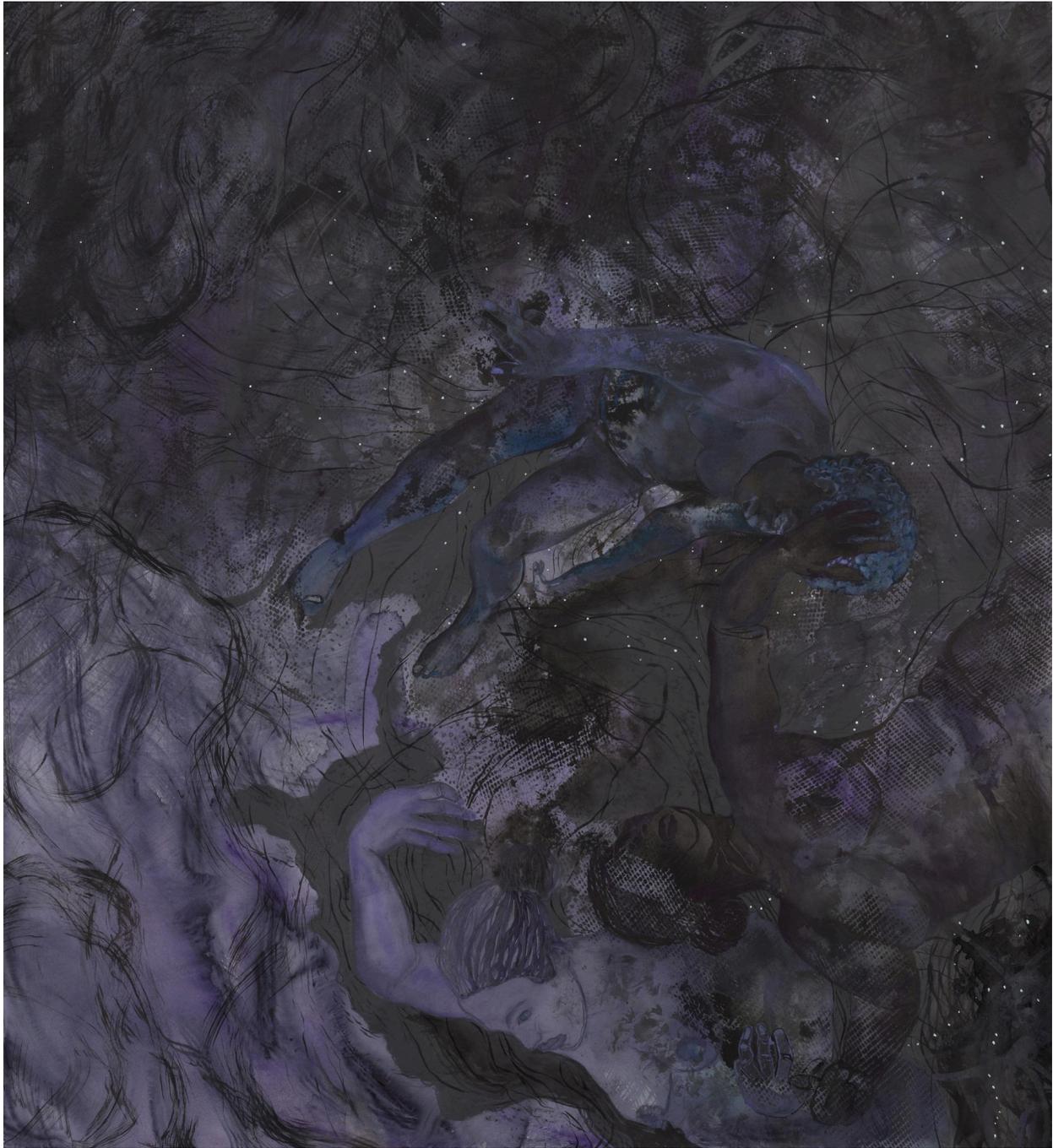


North Star

Exhibition view

San Jose Museum of Art

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Larevka, 2021

Watercolor, ink, and graphite on paper

52 x 52 inches



Land's End, 2020

Watercolor, ink, acrylic, and graphite on paper

94 x 79 inches