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Kansas City artist Calder Kamin first to take part in Beach Museum's new Open A.I.R. program

MANHATTAN — A new artist-in-residence program at Kansas State University's Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art lets museum visitors interact socially with art.

The Beach Museum of Art's Open A.I.R., or Artist-in-Residence, program is a three-day mini residency with a focus on interdisciplinary social engagement. During the museum's inaugural residency, Kansas City-based artist Calder Kamin will create work in-gallery related to prairie megafauna and manmade extinction.

"Open A.I.R. is an opportunity to interact with an artist and inspire creativity," said Adrienne Russell, public programs coordinator at the Beach Museum. "Through Calder's residency, we hope to demystify art and encourage people to engage in their own artistic practices."

Open A.I.R. will take place in the Vanier Gallery during museum hours July 8-10, culminating in a public program at 6 p.m. Thursday, July 10, in the UMB Theater.

As an artist, Kamin is drawn to the contradictory aspects of our relationships with animals and the built environment. Her sculpture and public projects provide education for audiences about how humans impact biodiversity. This interest dovetails with programming at the Beach Museum of Art, including the recently launched Prairie Studies Initiative, an interdisciplinary collaborative network working to develop programs that raise awareness of the value, importance, and challenges of the tallgrass prairies of Kansas, and The Meadow, a learning landscape of native prairie plants adjacent to the museum building.

In addition to leading all-ages, hands-on activities in the gallery, Kamin will answer questions and discuss her work as an artist as she creates digital drawings based on research of past and present ecology of the tallgrass prairie. She will project her digital imagery onto the gallery walls. Kamin also will interview the university's biology faculty and local ecologists about climate change and de-extinction.

"Calder's diverse, research-based practice aims to educate the public on how our actions both help and harm the animals around us," said Theresa Bembnister, the museum's associate curator. "Previously, her work has focused on urban areas. I'm excited to see her focus her attention on the tallgrass prairie ecosystem."

Kamin earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Kansas City Art Institute. She was a Charlotte Street Foundation Urban Culture Project Studio resident, and received an ArtsKC Inspiration Grant and a Bread KC award. Kamin is the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art's Art Truck Artist for the 2013-2014 school year. Her work will be included in the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's upcoming exhibition "State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now."

The Beach Museum of Art is on the southeast corner of the Kansas State University campus at 14th Street and Anderson Avenue. Admission is free and the museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday; and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. The museum is closed Mondays and holidays. Free parking is available adjacent to the building. For more information, call 785-532-7718 or visit <http://beach.k-state.edu>.

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