

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

ANISSA MACK: JUNK KALEIDOSCOPE **October 1, 2017, to April 22, 2018**

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present *Anissa Mack: Junk Kaleidoscope*, a reflection on Mack's *The Fair* project, realized in both 1996 and 2006, to be reimagined at the Museum from October 1, 2017, to April 22, 2018. Mack mines Americana, its artifacts, folklore, and rituals, and explores American vernacular traditions, examining their shifting role in a dialogue between the history of art making and the culture of collecting. Through all new objects, *Junk Kaleidoscope* will re-envision *The Fair* in a way that weaves together over two decades of work, sixty miles from the Durham Fair fairgrounds that inspired this project.

The Fair was first realized in 1996, when Mack entered all seventy-three craft categories at the Durham Fair, the largest agricultural fair in Connecticut; she had participated in the fair, located near her hometown of Guilford, CT, throughout her childhood. In 2006, she remade the project as *The Fair (10th Anniversary Edition)* by generating new entries for all of the craft categories available that year. On both occasions, the objects were displayed at the fairs and then (re)presented in a commercial gallery with their winning ribbons. At The Aldrich, Mack will create a layered exhibition that engages fairs in new ways. For *Junk Kaleidoscope*, she will utilize a self-generated list of seventy categories—comprising actual competition categories collected from various county and state fairs, as well as those of her own invention—to generate and support the works in the show. The list will serve as a catalyst for production and as a framework for understanding the shifting, participatory display that the objects will enjoy at The Aldrich.



Anissa Mack, *Junk*, 2017. Courtesy of the artist

For Mack, “fairs serve as fascinatingly complex archives that mirror both ‘America’ and the art world.” Repetition, displacement, and distortion are constant concerns and the act of revisiting is an ongoing theme. Mack attends county and state fairs nationwide, where her experiences fundamentally reshape her approach to the creation and staging of her work. The atmosphere of the local fair and the environment of the artist’s studio share similar outtakes, as both are equally concerned with narrative, arrangement, and (e)valuation. Her appropriation of the fair’s system of categorization attempts to undo or rewrite storylines embedded within local material culture. These objects are symbolic containers of a collective memory that can travel across time. Ultimately, Mack positions herself as both an artist and maker, placing herself inside a subculture and adopting its system of classification for her own (re)invention. This enables Mack to move seamlessly between two distinctive locales and contexts, each of which has its own structure, methodology, and currency. The objects embody these alternating experiences and distinguishing histories.

The artist and the Museum invite the public to play a crucial role in *Junk Kaleidoscope*, through the *All’s Fair* program. In *All’s Fair*, participants will work directly with the artist, share their voice and vision, and collaborate with one another to re-install the objects in Mack’s exhibition in the Museum’s galleries in January 2018.

Anissa Mack (b. 1970, Guilford, CT) received her BA from Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, in 1992 and her MFA from Temple University, Philadelphia, in 1996. Recent solo exhibitions include the Santa Barbara Contemporary Art Museum; Atlanta Contemporary Art Center; Josh Lilley Gallery, London; and Laurel Gitlen, New York. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Tanya Bonakdar, New York; amongst many others. She lives and works in New York City.

A full-color, soft-cover scholarly publication will be available during the exhibition.

Organized by Amy Smith-Stewart, curator, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum.

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