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Arnold Joseph Kemp, RALLY (detail), 2015

New Dominion

Sonya Clark, Ben Durham, John D. Freyer, Susie Ganch, Hope Ginsburg, Noa Glazer, Arnold Joseph Kemp, Richard Roth
Curator: Lauren Ross of the Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU

June 11 - July 17, 2015

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 11, 6-8pm

New Dominion presents a selection of artists living and working in Richmond, Virginia. With a subtle nod to Richmond's history and its present, the exhibition presents works that touch on tensions between the past and the future, independence and loyalty, individuality and community. Many of the works embrace a sense of reinvention, self-determination, ownership, and agency. Many contain a dose of something specific to Richmond.

Since the mid-17th century, Virginia has held the nickname "Old Dominion," a moniker coined by King Charles II for the colony's loyalty to the crown during Civil War in England. Yet that loyalty was relatively short-lived. In fact, much of Virginia's history is centered on war and rebellion; it played an important role in the dispatch of the American Revolution, and later seceded and served as the seat of the Confederacy during the Civil War. Its history is significant, scandalous, and divisive- the birthplace of much of American history, yet developed on the blood of many who suffered and perished. Its history is simultaneously a source of pride and shame, celebration and struggle. Today, Virginia's capital city of Richmond-or, RVA, as the locals affectionately call it-is a place unquestionably grounded in history, yet going through a rebirth. Richmond is experiencing sweeping, forward-looking change. In many respects, its residents are part of a new guard.

The eight artists gathered here are a small sampling of the scope of work being produced in a city teeming with culture and creativity. VCU's School of the Arts is a major driver of the city's cultural scene. Accordingly, many of the exhibiting artists in *New Dominion* are affiliated with the university, including several faculty members.

Sonya Clark works inventively with craft techniques and unexpected materials to explore heritage and identity. Clark will present a new performative work in which she will unravel a Confederate flag during the exhibition opening. Ben Durham combines his own memories with internet research on residents of his hometown to inform handmade paper works that are simultaneous portraits of individuals and their environments. Susie Ganch's tapestry-like wall hangings are fashioned from discarded plastic coffee cup lids gathered

from local coffee shops. These works not only find new life for a amaterial generally regarded as disposable, they carry traces of Richmond's literal DNA. John Freyer presents a work from his ongoing series Free Ice Water in which he guides conversation between participants over Mason jars filled with water, drawing on the cultures of both Relational Aesthetics and substance abuse recovery. **Hope Ginsburg** presents works from an ongoing series, Breathing on Land, in which she and other participants practice meditative breathing using scuba gear on dry land. Noa Glazer combines materials and techniques that she conceives of as "Old World" and "New World" in her work. In New Dominion, she presents sand-casted salt forms embedded within synthetic foam. Arnold Joseph Kemp offers a sculpture that is simultaneously blessed and cursed, along with hand painted photocopies that give touches of individuality to anonymous mask-like forms. Richard Roth's paintings are grounded in modernism, yet rebel against its dogmatic tendencies by playing against doctrines of flatness.

About the curator:

Lauren Ross relocated to Richmond in Fall 2014 to take on the role of inaugural Curator for the Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University. Prior to that, she held curatorial positions at the Philbrook Museum of Art, Friends of the High Line, Brooklyn Museum, and White Columns. Recent curatorial projects include the solo exhibition Nir Evron: Projected Claims, which will travel to The Depot Gallery in Richmond after its debut in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

About the ICA:

The Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) will be a non-collecting institution that showcases a fresh slate of changing exhibitions ranging from innovative visual and performing arts to various forms of design and film. Part exhibition and performance space and part laboratory and incubator, the ICA will be a place to explore new ideas, objects, experiences, and materials related to the central issues of our time. In advance of the opening of its 41,000-square-foot building designed by Steven Holl Architects, the ICA is launching curatorial initiatives in Richmond and beyond. www.ica.vcu.edu.