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***PRESENCE OF WHAT; ABSENCE OF WHOM* BY SUKANYA MANI OPENING IN THE MILLSTONE GALLERY AT COCA**

ST. LOUIS (January 22, 2025)—Indian born, St. Louis-based multidisciplinary artist Sukanya Mani’s solo exhibition, [*Presence of what; Absence of whom*](#), opens in COCA’s [Millstone Gallery](#) on Friday, January 24.

- WHAT:** ***Presence of what; Absence of whom* by Sukanya Mani**
Artist Sukanya Mani presents her most intimate side by using clusters of undulating paper and fabric forms to retell the daily rituals and traditions that shaped her identity as an immigrant woman. Following her commitment to raising awareness about domestic abuse, with a highlight on immigrant and refugee populations, Mani asks the visitors to question the repeated rituals each of us performs to present our own versions of masculinity and femininity. This exhibition is an investigation of identity and meaning making through rituals, clothing over time.
- WHEN:** The exhibition is free and open to the public January 24–April 11, 2025, during COCA’s regularly scheduled business hours.
- WHERE:** Millstone Gallery at COCA
6880 Washington Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63130
- ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:** **Opening Night Reception**
Friday, January 24
6:00–8:00 p.m.
Meet artist Sukanya Mani and hear about the artistic process at the Opening Night Reception of *Presence of what; Absence of whom*.
- Paper Workshop with the Artist**
Sunday, February 9
3:00–5:00 p.m.
Workshop participants, Ages 13+, create their own paper-cut sculpture using Sukanya Mani’s technique. During the session, the artist guides a reflection on how transforming the violent act of cutting into an act of creation is a technique that can be used for self-discovery and storytelling. [Registration Information](#)
- AVAILABLE INTERVIEWS:** **Sukanya Mani, Artist**
Mani seamlessly blends feminist values into actionable art using intentional choices, educational endeavors, and empowerment initiatives to create installations using cut paper, and found objects. Transforming the violent act of cutting into an act of creation is central to her artistic approach. Ultimately, through the delicate manipulation of

space, Mani seeks to evoke empathy, spark conversations, and inspire action. A TEDx St. Louis 2021 Speaker, Mani's works are featured in prominent private and public collections, and she has received numerous awards and grants for her work creating art in the community. sukanyamani.com

WEBSITE: cocastl.org/calendar/presence-of-what-absence-of-whom/

SUPPORTERS: The Millstone Gallery is made possible by The Arthur and Helen Baer Charitable Foundation, The Millstone Foundation, the Missouri Arts Council, and the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis.

The Millstone Gallery is free and open to the public. Since 2008, the Millstone Gallery has brought the community together to share and experience contemporary art, make personal connections to the work, and gain a greater understanding of the artistic process.

ABOUT COCA

COCA's mission is to *enrich lives and build community through the arts*. With a commitment to equity and access, COCA serves as a regional hub for learning in and through the arts for all ages from all backgrounds. One of the most diverse cultural institutions in St. Louis, COCA serves more than 60,000 students, audience members, artists, and families from more than 250 zip codes every year. The fourth largest multi-disciplinary arts organization in the country, COCA is committed to supporting the vitality and creativity of more than 200 artists at the heart of their work in schools, community centers, local business, cultural organizations, and onsite at its campus in University City.

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