

At Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, our engagement with Nick Cave's artistic practice extends back to our opening day. On November 11, 2011, one of Nick's vibrant *Soundsuits* from the Crystal Bridges collection featured prominently in *Wonder World: Nature and Perception in Contemporary Art*, the first temporary exhibition at the museum. *Wonder World* explored the productive tension between tradition and innovation as a recurring theme in contemporary art, and Nick's *Soundsuit* served as the exclamation point on the exhibition. Visitors were enchanted by the proliferation of surface decoration and the halo of toy-like objects emanating from the sculpture's torso—it remains one of the most talked-about works in the collection at Crystal Bridges.

It only makes sense, then, that Crystal Bridges would partner with MASS MoCA and Carriageworks to co-commission Nick's immersive project *Until*, which will launch the exhibition program in our brand new space for contemporary art and performance. This dynamic facility, an adaptive reuse project fashioned from a decommissioned Kraft Foods plant, augments the historical and contemporary programming already established at Crystal Bridges. In many ways a counterpoint to the pristine beauty of the museum's Moshe Safdie-designed building, this new art space stands embedded within the fabric of daily life in downtown Bentonville. A mere mile from Crystal Bridges, the facility anchors a budding downtown district, abuzz with the comings and goings of daily living. The program at the new venue also sits at the intersection of art and everyday life, inviting visitors of all stripes to engage with contemporary art and performance in an unpretentious, accessible setting.

Of course, Nick's work lends itself to exactly this kind of engagement. Crossing freely over the arbitrary boundaries dividing art from function, performance from interaction, and subject from object, the artist provokes foundational and timely questions through the undeniable magnetism of his work. Stemming from the performative possibilities of the *Soundsuits*, Nick's artistic practice now addresses the idea of collective dreaming, and, with the installation of *Until*, he seeks to manifest this dream space in the tangible world.

But even as Nick's work sets the stage for collective compassion and mutual understanding, it also underscores the reality that may inhibit such futures. Among the effusive accumulation of the installation, visitors will encounter embedded images of guns, bullets, and targets—signs of the historical and contemporary violence against African Americans in this country. This experience extends a critique in Nick's work that reaches back to the earliest *Soundsuits*. Like the United States itself, *Until* presents a constantly shifting field of possibility and promise, shot through with the very real threats that haunt the American experience today.

*Until's* appearance in Bentonville represents a regional homecoming for Nick, who was born and raised in Fulton, Missouri, and received a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute. It's also a reminder to us at Crystal Bridges of how far we have come since 2011: from a *Soundsuit* that provoked audience engagement on day one to a fully immersive environment in an industrial building newly reimagined for contemporary art. *Until* will beautifully inaugurate the space; we are so eager to share it with our audiences.