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For Immediate Release

Contact: Amy Day

Tel: 515.612.0775 (m)

E-mail: aday@desmoinesartcenter.org

New Exhibition *Alison Elizabeth Taylor: The Sum of It* Premieres at the Des Moines Art Center

First museum survey of Artist Alison Elizabeth Taylor premieres in Des Moines before traveling to Andover, MA

DES MOINES, IA (September 2022) – The Des Moines Art Center is premiering a new exhibition titled *Alison Elizabeth Taylor: The Sum of It*, opening Saturday, October 15 and running through January 15, 2023, in the Anna K. Meredith Gallery.

Organized by the Addison Gallery of American Art, this is the first museum survey devoted to multimedia artist Alison Elizabeth Taylor, recipient of the 2022 National Portrait Gallery Outwin Boochever Prize. Known for her daring and inventive fusion of the centuries-old practice of marquetry (wood inlay) with gritty and provocative subject matter, Taylor tells tales that are unequivocally modern.

This exhibition assembles dozens of works that chronicle her steady mastery of the now nearly forgotten techniques of this rarified medium and reveal her talent as an extraordinary storyteller and chronicler of 21st-century American culture. *Alison Elizabeth Taylor: The Sum of It* will feature approximately 40 large-scale single panel works, as well as a room-sized installation, that trace the evolution of the artist's practice from early paintings informed by the grains and tones of natural woods to recent more vividly colored works that layer marquetry, paint, and photographic imagery to new and increasingly complex works inspired by the resilience of the artist's urban Brooklyn neighborhood and community during the pandemic.

A native Nevadan, Taylor often uses her hometown of Las Vegas as a lens through which to examine contemporary American life. Juxtaposing the over-the-top and lavish connotations of this craft with dystopian images of blighted desert landscapes, anonymous subdivisions, glitzy casinos, and seedy cocktail lounges, along with their inhabitants, Taylor creates a tension between surface and subject, appearance and reality.

Allison Kemmerer, the Mary Stripp and R. Crosby Kemper Director of the Addison Gallery of American Art and curator of *Alison Elizabeth Taylor: The Sum of It* said, "Taylor repudiates the traditional distinction between craft and high art, transcending both marquetry and painting in these meticulously constructed works, which are as much about seeing as they are about making. The splendor of the shellacked wood invites us to consider the innate humanity of marginalized subjects we might otherwise overlook."

Alison Elizabeth Taylor: The Sum of It will be accompanied by a fully illustrated publication published by DelMonico Books and featuring essays by Kemmerer, *New Yorker* journalist Naomi Fry, and novelist Lynne Tillman. After opening in Des Moines, the exhibition will travel to the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, MA where it will be on view from February 28 through July 31, 2023.



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Alison Elizabeth Taylor: The Sum of It is organized by the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. Support for the exhibition has been provided by the Sidney R. Knafel Fund, the Sherrill Collection of American Art Foundation, David and Pamela Hornik, and the Michael and Fiona Scharf Publications Fund. The Des Moines Art Center's exhibition of *Alison Elizabeth Taylor: The Sum of It* is supported by the Harriet S. and J. Locke Macomber Art Center Fund and ASK Studio.

The Des Moines Art Center is open to the public 11 am – 4p m Tuesday and Wednesday, 11 am – 7 pm Thursday and Friday, 10 am – 4 pm Saturday and Sunday. The museum is closed on Monday. Admission is always free for all.

For additional information and images, contact Director of External Affairs Amy Day at 515.271.0344 or aday@desmoinesartcenter.org.

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About the Des Moines Art Center + John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park

Recognized by international art critics as a world-class museum in the heart of the Midwest, the Des Moines Art Center, an AAM-accredited institution, has amassed an important collection of art from the 19th century to the present, with a major emphasis on contemporary art. Focused on quality and global in scope, it includes major works by Henry Ossawa Tanner, Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe, Francis Bacon, Andy Goldsworthy, Henri Matisse, Wangechi Mutu, Ai Wei Wei, and Kara Walker, among hundreds of others. The collection is housed in three major buildings, each designed by a renowned architect—Eliel Saarinen, I. M. Pei, and Richard Meier. General admission to the museum is always free for all.

In September 2009, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park opened in Des Moines' Western Gateway Park. Philanthropists John and Mary Pappajohn provided funding for and donated 31 sculptures by internationally acclaimed contemporary artists to the Des Moines Art Center. The collection of sculptures by such artists as Martin Puryear, Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Willem de Kooning, Mark di Suvero, Olafur Eliasson, Keith Haring, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Yayoi Kusama, Jaume Plensa, Richard Serra, and Joel Shapiro is the most significant donation of artwork to the Art Center in a single gift in the museum's history. The Pappajohn Sculpture Park is a collaboration of the Pappajohns, the City of Des Moines, the Des Moines Art Center, and numerous corporate and private donors.

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Alison Elizabeth Taylor, (American, born 1972)
The Sum of It, 2017
Marquetry hybrid: wood veneer, acrylic, and shellac, 72 x 52 inches.
Stephanie and Tim Ingrassia.
Photo credit: Courtesy Alison Elizabeth Taylor and James Cohan Gallery, NY



Alison Elizabeth Taylor (American, born 1972)
The Desert Inn, 2017
Marquetry hybrid: wood veneer, acrylic, glitter, museum board, mica, and shellac, 46 x 65 inches
Drs. Joseph Cunningham and Bruce Barnes
Photo: Courtesy Alison Elizabeth Taylor and James Cohan Gallery, NY



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Alison Elizabeth Taylor (American, born 1972)
The Breeder, 2010

Marquetry: wood veneer and shellac, 56 x 45 inches

Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Ellen Pray Maytag Madsen Sculpture Acquisitions Fund, 2011.6



Alison Elizabeth Taylor, (American born, 1972)
Only Castles Burning..., 2017

Marquetry hybrid: wood veneer, acrylic, pigment print, and shellac, 58 x 63 inches

Bill and Christy Gautreaux, Kansas City, MO

Photo credit: Courtesy Alison Elizabeth Taylor and James Cohan Gallery, NY

EDMUNDSON ART FOUNDATION, INC.
4700 GRAND AVENUE DES MOINES, IOWA 50312-2099
515.277.4405
www.desmoinesartcenter.org



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