

**Emilie L. Gossiaux**  
***Other-Worlding***

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Accessible exhibition wall text and labels

**QUEENS MUSEUM**

**Emilie L. Gossiaux**  
***Other-Worlding***

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Our world is overwhelmingly centered around non-disabled humans. Rather than this singular overruling perspective, what if unity was co-built across species and disability status? Emilie L. Gossiaux constructs such a world, bringing to life an image from her imagination of her guide dog London dancing around a white cane maypole. Borrowing the phrase “other-worlding” from feminist scholar Donna Haraway in conceiving a just society that operates outside of hierarchies, Gossiaux proposes an alternative to the intertwined systems of capitalism and ableism that oppress humans and animals. In opposition to repressive structures, the artist’s fantastical installation and three related drawings render scenes of joy, liberation, and love.

Central to this exhibition is the white cane. A tool used by blind and low-vision individuals, the white cane is also a symbol of freedom. Here, Gossiaux

transforms the white cane into a glistening maypole towering at 15 feet tall, three times the size of her own. Paying homage to the white cane, the artist plays with scale to emphasize its importance in providing agency and independence, bestowing it with a much-deserved larger presence and societal awareness.

The artist also creates a space of independence for London, her guide dog, who is transformed here into a woman-sized dog. Melding human and dog together, Gossiaux expands upon their interspecies relationship that is at once interdependent and liberating. The three Londons are unconstrained by the leashes that normally restrict them. Instead, they hold the leash handles in their hands, empowered to move at their own pace.

Across this exhibition, elements of fantasy – dog-women, concurrently shining moon and sun, and a giant white cane – work together to amplify disability joy, autonomy, and a love that transcends

boundaries. By immersing us in a dreamlike terrain, Gossiaux invites us to “other-world” with her.

*Emilie L. Gossiaux: Other-Worlding* is organized by Sarah Cho, Assistant Curator. This exhibition is produced in cooperation with the Queens Museum team: Brian Balderston, Lindsey Berfond, Hayley Blackstone, Gianina Enriquez, Catherine Grau, Mayisha Hassan, Lauren Haynes, Hitomi Iwasaki, Adrienne Koteen, Amari-Grey Johnson, Lynn Maliszewski, Gabriela Peralta, Aaron Strauss, Heryte T. Tequame, Tiffany Tong, and Maria Fernanda Zambrano; Queens Museum fabricators and preparators: Max Bell, Noemi Bilger, Jackson Denahy, Mark Dwinell, Magnus Gitt Henderson, Brittany Hayden, Taly Kornblum Laudi, Clare Koury, Martin Kramer, Ajay Kurian, Samantha Lasko, Juyon Lee, Jetaime Nkiru, Mallie Sanford, and Claude Viaud Peralta.

Emilie L. Gossiaux wishes to thank her partners and friends, including London, Kirby Kersels, Gabby D'Angelo and Mary Collins, as well as Sarah Cho, and the staff at the Queens Museum.

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An audio description narrated by Sarah Cho, Assistant Curator, can be found on the Queens Museum Digital Guide, available for free on the Bloomberg Connects App.

## **Emilie L. Gossiaux**

b. New Orleans, LA, 1989

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### *White Cane Maypole Dance, 2023*

PVC pipe, polystyrene foam, papier-mâché, acrylic paint, matte gel varnish, epoxy resin, felt, Tyvek paper, wire, and tablecloths

Courtesy the artist

This installation's colors evoke spring — pearlescent pink, soft peach, rich lavender, and budding green. Trees materialize from the wall, while a sun and moon simultaneously beam down on a blossoming field. The colors and atmosphere nod to the Euro-American pagan tradition of ringing in the spring with a maypole dance. Gossiaux transforms the maypole into a white cane, symbolically anchoring it as a vehicle for joy and celebration. Dancing around it are three human-sized versions of the artist's guide dog, London. In control of the leashes they hold, the Londons have agency to move freely. In this world, guide dogs and white

canes are celebrated for the autonomy they provide to the blind and low vision community, and are cast as the main characters in a story of flourishing jubilation and liberation.



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From L to R:

*Dancing, Again, 2023*

*Flowers for London, 2023*

*Londons Dancing with Flowers, 2023*

Ballpoint pen and crayon on paper

Courtesy the artist

Gossiaux's drawings conceptualize the imagery held in her mind, revealing her plans for and experimentations with her sculptural installation. Londons' various poses and bodily relationships are contemplated in *Londons Dancing with Flowers*, while alternative choreography is considered in *Dancing, Again*. The works demonstrate the preparatory and explorative aspects of drawing as critical to the artist's practice.

These drawings also serve as focused meditations on the installation's ambiance. Petals flutter in a



chorus of pinks, swirling across *Flowers for London*. Their softness and comfort evoke the expression of love, gratitude, and beauty in the age-old act of gifting flowers. Gentleness is also felt in *Dancing, Again* through the Londons' relaxed bodies and closed eyes that conjure a serenity that feels almost sacred.



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