Elias Sime: Tightrope
TBD – January 31, 2021

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI—July 28, 2020—Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art staff have continued to monitor Kansas City’s efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19. Given the continued news of a major rise of cases in our area, it feels necessary for the Museum to delay any plans to reopen at this time.

PLEASE CHECK THE MUSEUM WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON REOPENING DATES AND RELATED NEWS. Once we are able to reopen, Elias Sime: Tightrope will remain on view through January 31, 2021.

The first major museum exhibition to focus on the work of contemporary artist Elias Sime (Ethiopian, born 1968), Tightrope features more than two dozen works of art in varying scales and showcases brightly-colored tableaux and sculptural assemblages rooted in both the figurative and abstract modes of modern Ethiopian art.

“This is such an exciting and engaging show because Sime’s monumental masterpieces address issues that people in Kansas City are interested in and are relevant to people’s lives around the world,” stated Sean O’Harrow, executive director at Kemper Museum. He continued, “the interconnected global economy, technology, recycling, and environmental disasters... consideration of the precarious balance of our lives is so important to everyone, I am proud we are presenting this exhibition to the Kansas City public at this time.”

– CONTINUED –
In October 2019, Sime was awarded an African Art Award at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art. Recognizing the best in contemporary African art, the 2019 event honored the achievements of global contemporary artists Njideka Akunyili Crosby and Elias Sime, stating, "Both artists use principles of connection to express critical viewpoints, further influencing the way the world experiences the dynamic and diverse arts of Africa." (Click here to read the full release.)

In *Tightrope*, Sime repurposes salvaged electronic components such as circuits and keyboards in his work to explore the precarious balance between the progress that technology has made possible and its detrimental impact on the global environment. The exhibition explores how devices intended to connect us have instead mediated our interactions while simultaneously creating massive amounts of e-waste.

Sime’s work—like topographical maps or aerial perspectives of vast landscapes—also points to the natural pathways existing in the environment, revealing that the organic fibers which connect us are not unlike the inner workings of man-made machines. Deconstructing them can expose and demystify their internal dynamics, allowing for a new lyricism and energy to emerge.

*Elias Sime: Tightrope* is organized by the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, and will also be on view at the Akron Art Museum in Akron, Ohio; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri; and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada.

A full-color catalogue is available in conjunction with this exhibition. *Elias Sime: Tightrope* is the first monograph focusing on the work of Elias Sime and features contributions by Tracy L. Adler, Johnson-Pote Director of the Wellin Museum; Meskerem Assegued, Anthropologist, Curator and Cofounder of Zoma Museum; Karen E. Milbourne, Curator, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution; and Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi, Steven and Lisa Tananbaum Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The book is copublished by the Wellin Museum of Art and DelMonico Books • Prestel.

Additional coverage of *Elias Sime: Tightrope* has included:

- [Elias Sime](#) ARTFORUM | September 3, 2019
- [Love and Craftsmanship in the Relationship Between Machines and Humanity](#) Hyperallergic | September 17, 2019
- [Ethiopian Artist Elias Sime's First Major Show Goes on View at the Wellin Museum](#) Galerie Magazine | November 7, 2019
- [Social Sculpture: Elias Sime Interviewed by Louis Bury](#) BOMB Magazine | December 2, 2019
- [Eight Innovators to Watch in 2020](#) Smithsonian Magazine | January 3, 2020
Support for Kemper Museum is generously provided by members and donors. Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art is open 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Tuesday–Wednesday; 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m., Thursday and Friday; and 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. All exhibitions and public programs at Kemper Museum are free.

###

About Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art
Kansas City’s renowned FREE contemporary art museum, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art opened in October 1994 and boasts a rapidly growing Permanent Collection that uniquely bridges modern and contemporary works of art featuring artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Helen Frankenthaler, Willem de Kooning, Georgia O’Keeffe, Keltie Ferris, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Richard Mosse, and Ursula von Rydingsvard. Special exhibitions, installations, lectures, and workshops, as well as youth, teen, and family programs are regularly hosted at the Museum. For more information about Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art visit kemperart.org.

For high-resolution images and general media inquiries please contact:

Breeze Richardson
Director of Marketing and Communications
brichardson@kemperart.org | 816-457-6132 (direct)