Louisville, KY (August 6, 2018) The Speed Art Museum is proud to present a solo exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Kentucky artist Keltie Ferris. Born in Louisville in 1977, Ferris offers a fresh approach to abstract painting and the exploration of the artist’s identity through the body. Featuring works from the last eight years, *Keltie Ferris: *O*P*E*N** celebrates an artist who thoughtfully examines the language and history of painting and the nature of being an artist today.

For the past fourteen years Ferris has employed techniques that defy expectations. Using spray paint, she adopts a language associated with graffiti and home décor and deftly applies it to her canvases, creating effects which range from pointillist explosions and vibrational blurs, to arabesque curves and swirls of lines. Her use of the palette knife, particularly in recent years, led Ferris to build up thick impasto areas of color that project forward on the canvas, enhancing the illusion of depth.

“Keltie Ferris’ abstract paintings are known for pushing boundaries and expanding our understanding of the medium. This exhibition offers a rare overview of her dazzling arsenal of techniques and debuts new works from her most recent series of paintings and body prints,” stated Miranda Lash, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Speed Art Museum.
In addition to paintings, this exhibition will include a series of new body prints. Ferris creates these prints by covering herself in oil, laying atop a sheet of paper, and applying pigment to the paper’s surface. The resulting prints have an intense, vibrant color and a deliberately androgynous appearance, highlighting the artist’s fluid gender identity. Ferris began creating body prints in 2013, drawing inspiration from Jasper Johns’ “Skin” prints and David Hammons’s body prints from the 1960s. In contrast to Yves Klein’s Anthropometry series, Ferris’s work uses the female body as an active agent in performing and blurring gender identities. Through her prints, Ferris highlights a personal, indexical relationship to her work, while simultaneously summoning the idea of an army of citizens or an electorate.

Through this survey of work, *Keltie Ferris: O-P-E-N* charts an evolution in Ferris’ practice from her earlier paintings, evoking star constellations, digital pixilation, and networks of waves and light, to her most recent body of work, which prominently uses spray-painted lines, raised polygonal shapes, and areas of erasure, to create dynamic and complex compositions. Speed Director, Stephen Reily, said “The Speed could not be happier to host the largest museum exhibition yet devoted to a Louisville native who seems to have brought her hometown’s welcoming spirit to the New York art world. Keltie Ferris brings together digital culture, gender-fluidity, and an artist’s careful use of paint to offer a positive vision for both the future and for our embattled present.”

*Keltie Ferris: O-P-E-N* opens at the Speed Art Museum on October 6, 2018 and will close on February 3, 2019.

**About the artist:**

Keltie Ferris lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Her artwork has been featured in *The New York Times, Art in America, Artforum, The Brooklyn Rail*, and *ARTnews*.

Ferris graduated with a BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and an MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2006. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Keltie Ferris (F(U(T)U)R)E* at Mitchell-Innes & Nash (2018); *Body Prints and Paintings* at the University Art Museum at SUNY Albany, New York (2016); *Paintings and Body Prints* at Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York (2015); *Keltie Ferris: Doomsday Boogie* at the Santa Monica Museum of Art, Los Angeles (2014); and *Man Eaters* at the Kemper Museum, Kansas City (2009-10). In 2014 she was awarded the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award in Painting by the Academy of Arts and Letters.

For more information on *Keltie Ferris: O-P-E-N*, as well as current exhibitions on view at the Speed Art Museum, visit [speedmuseum.org](http://speedmuseum.org).

**Support for the Speed Art Museum’s exhibition season is provided by:**

Elizabeth W. Davis
Stephen Reily and Emily Bingham
David and Betty Jones
About the Speed Art Museum

The Speed Art Museum is Kentucky’s largest art museum. An independent and encyclopedic museum located on the campus of the University of Louisville, the Speed celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2017. Louisville philanthropist Hattie Bishop Speed founded the Speed Art Museum, which opened in 1927, with a belief in the power of art to change people’s lives.

The Speed reopened in 2016 following a 3-year, $60 million renovation and expansion designed by Kulapat Yantrasast of wHY that doubled the museum’s overall square footage and nearly tripled its gallery space. Free Owsley Sundays, sponsored by the Brown-Forman Corporation, draw large and diverse crowds every week. For more information, visit www.speedmuseum.org.

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