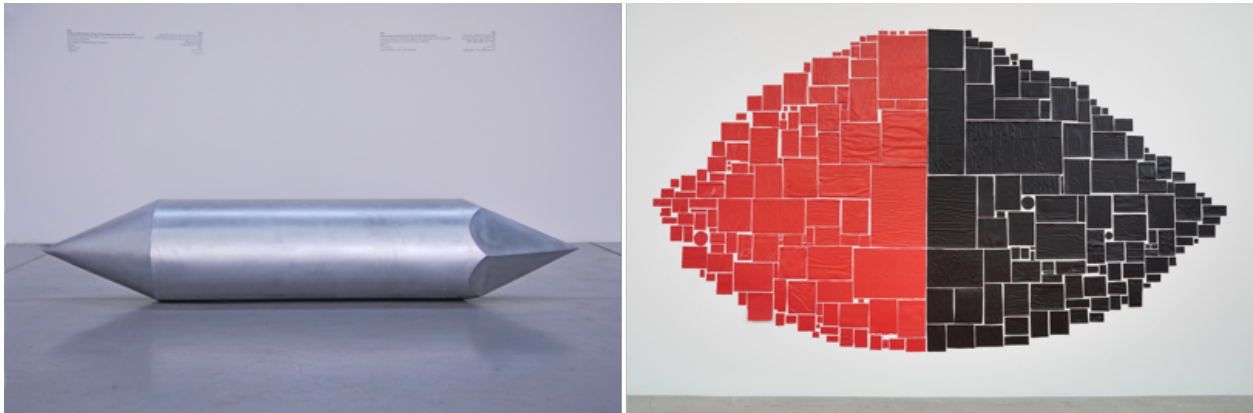


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland Celebrates Fifth Anniversary of its
Farshid Moussavi-Designed Building in October 2017
With Groundbreaking Fall Exhibitions**

Program includes *A Poethical Wager*, a group exhibition of international contemporary artists who create abstract works with an ethical approach, and a sound installation by Phil Collins that explores the transformative power of music



CLEVELAND, OHIO (June 29, 2017)—The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Cleveland will present two exhibitions this fall: *A Poethical Wager*—the first major exhibition organized by Senior Curator Andria Hickey since she joined MOCA last fall—and the first museum presentation in the United States of *Phil Collins: my heart's in my hand, and my hand is pierced, and my hand's in the bag, and the bag is shut, and my heart is caught*.

On view from October 7, 2017 – January 28, 2018, these exhibitions are part of MOCA's new artistic vision, which includes programs celebrating the fifth anniversary of its Farshid Moussavi-designed building in fall 2017, and leading up to the 50th anniversary of the Museum in fall 2019.

“MOCA's fall 2017 season is our first to reflect Senior Curator Andria Hickey's artistic vision for the institution,” says Executive Director Jill Snyder. “Andria, who joined us after serving at the Public Art Fund in New York, is positioning MOCA globally while also asserting the public value of the institution to the immediate community. Visitors to MOCA this fall will discover art and artists grappling with the issues of the day in new and uncharted ways.”

A Poethical Wager

October 7, 2017 – January 28, 2018

Mueller Family Gallery and Rosalie + Morton Cohen Family Gallery

In the spirit of MOCA's pivotal role as a conduit for local and international discourse through contemporary art, ***A Poethical Wager*** proposes that museums have an ethical imperative to define the relationships that exist between art and the social, political, and economic issues of our present moment. The artists in the exhibition weave rich narratives of specific events and ideas, yielding poetic interpretations of their chosen subjects through a range of media—including sculpture, assemblage, film, installation, and painting. The works in the exhibition speak to an increasing global dependence on abstract transactions, manifesting the complexity of modern life in both form and process.

The title of the exhibition references a book by American poet and scholar Joan Retallack, entitled *The Poethical Wager*, which is in part about forms that break patterns. In Retallack's words, "A poetics can take you only so far without an h. If you're to embrace complex life on earth, if you can no longer pretend that all things are fundamentally simple or elegant, a poetics thickened by an h launches an exploration of art's significance as, not just about, a form of living in the real world."

Curator Andria Hickey states, "*A Poethical Wager* was developed through conversations with artists, and is especially timely given the increasingly complex relationship we have with world events that affect us and yet are divorced from our own personal experiences. Looking at abstraction as a form of response suggests a different way of working, and a different way of thinking about the affective power of art today."

Artists featured in the exhibition include **Doug Ashford** (b. 1958, Rabat); **Abbas Akhavan** (b. 1977, Tehran); **Abraham Cruzvillegas** (b. 1968, Mexico City); **Lara Favaretto** (b. 1973, Treviso); **Iman Issa** (b. 1979, Cairo); **Rashid Johnson** (b. 1977, Chicago); **Jumana Manna** (b. 1987, Princeton); **Oscar Murillo** (b. 1986, La Paila), and **Mario García Torres** (b. 1975, Monclova).

New works include two additions to Iman Issa's ongoing *Heritage Studies* series, as well as a new sculpture to be made in Cleveland by Abraham Cruzvillegas. Additionally, Oscar Murillo, Rashid Johnson, and Abbas Akhavan will recreate previous works specifically for MOCA's space. In Akhavan's *Study for a Blue Shield* (2011), a gallery wall is painted with a geometric blue and white design; this shape, which references the International Committee of the Blue Shield logo, is cut out to leave a cavity in the wall, while the removed form is hidden from view and installed on the Museum's roof. Using a visual code that is both abstract and directive, the work refers to a marking that the National Museum of Iraq placed on its roof in 2003 in an effort to guard the institution from aerial bombings. Rashid Johnson will present *Shea Wall* (2015/2017), a reimagining of Allan Kaprow's *Sweet Wall* (1970), for the first time inside the confines of a gallery space. Johnson's intervention recreates Kaprow's wall with cinder blocks as well as blocks made out of shea butter—a medium the artist associates with African American culture.

Research is also an integral part of the exhibition, with several of the works drawing on a broad constellation of source materials. Jumana Manna's series of sculptures, *The Contractor's Heel*, commissioned for the 6th Marrakech Biennale in 2016, speaks to the role that archaeological heritage sites play in the making of contemporary social, political, and cultural myths. Similarly, Mario García Torres presents his new film, *Tetela* (n.d.), together with a series of objects to create an alternative narrative around the now-derelict Centro de Meditación, a utopian building constructed in 1986 in Santa Maria Ahuacatlán, Mexico.

Other works on view include Doug Ashford's *Next Day* (*New York Times*, pages A1–A28) (2015–16), a series of inkjet prints based on pages of *The New York Times* published on September 12, 2001, the day after the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. The prints cover the newspaper stories with colors and geometric shapes, commenting on how the events of that day have become abstracted years after the attack.

Phil Collins: my heart's in my hand, and my hand is pierced, and my hand's in the bag, and the bag is shut, and my heart is caught

October 7, 2017 – January 28, 2018

Toby Devan Lewis Gallery

MOCA will present the first US museum exhibition of an intimate sound installation by British artist Phil Collins (b. 1970, Runcorn). The work features six listening booths housing 7" vinyl recordings of original songs that the artist created in collaboration with guests of a homeless shelter in Cologne, Germany, as well as with Collins' vast network of musicians.

To make this work, Collins installed a phone booth with a free line at the shelter, available to all for unlimited local and international calls, with the agreement that the conversations would be recorded and kept anonymous. The selected recordings were then shared with a group of musicians, including David Sylvian, Scritti Politti, Lætitia Sadier, Maria Minerva, Damon & Naomi, and Planningtorock, who used the conversations to create new songs played on record players in the listening booths.

Touching on the transformative power of music, Collins' installation resonates with Cleveland's well-known music scene, as well as the city's deep struggle with poverty and homelessness. Collins states that "art has an imperative to address important issues... and... in places and times of increasing division, it's crucial that it becomes a prism for reflection in order to create, or ballast, the bridges between us."

All 2017 exhibitions are funded by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts as well as Leadership Circle gifts from Yuval Brisker, Joanne Cohen and Morris Wheeler, Margaret Cohen and Kevin Rahilly, Becky Dunn, Harriet Goldberg, Agnes Gund, Michelle Shan-Jeschelnig and Richard Jeschelnig, Donna and Stewart Kohl, Jan Lewis, Toby Devan Lewis, Scott Mueller, and an anonymous donor.

All MOCA Cleveland exhibitions are supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from **Cuyahoga Arts & Culture**, the **Cleveland Foundation**, the **George Gund Foundation**, and the continuing support of the Museum's Board of Directors, patrons, and members.

Media Contacts:

FITZ & CO

Meg Blackburn | mblackburn@fitzandco.com | 212 620 7390

Ellen Dulsky Watkins | ewatkins@fitzandco.com | 646 589 0929

Above:

Iman Issa, *Heritage Studies #5*, aluminium and vinyl text, 2015, 93 x 18 inches. Installation view, Sharjah Biennial 12, Sharjah, 2015. Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo, London. Photo: Alfredo Rubio.

Abraham Cruzvillegas, *Itchy blind self portrait drinking a Colimita beer by the patio, under the shade of the Pomarrosa tree, remembering the late Valentín Campa after reading Terry Eagleton's 'Hope without optimism' while I listen to the beautiful version of 'La Martiniana' with Tinito y Porfirio's duet, but really wanting to have some cashews before going for dinner, whatever the Paleolithic menu at Lardo could include...*, 2016, black and red acrylic paint on newspaper clippings, cardboard, photographs, drawings, postcards, envelopes, tickets, vouchers, letters, drawings, posters, flyers, cards, recipes, napkins and steel pins on wall, dimensions variable (installation of 456 pieces). Courtesy of the artist, kurimanzutto, Mexico City and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco.

###

ABOUT MOCA CLEVELAND

Cleveland's Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) plays an urgent and exciting role in the city's cultural landscape. As a non-collecting institution and the region's only contemporary art museum, MOCA is ever-changing, introducing new exhibitions three times a year and creating fresh experiences for visitors each season. Since its founding in 1968, MOCA has presented the works of more than 2,000 artists to our region, often through artists' first solo shows.

A *kunsthalle* in the Midwest, MOCA acts as both conduit and catalyst for anyone seeking creativity and inspiration.

For 48 years, MOCA, Northeast Ohio's only contemporary art museum, has brought the art and ideas of our time to Cleveland and beyond. MOCA was the first in the region to exhibit the works of vanguard artists like Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Laurie Anderson, Roy Lichtenstein, and Christo; and we continue to bring the work of emerging and established regional, national, and international artists to our area.

For more information, visit <http://mocacleveland.org/about>

Join the conversation on social media by mentioning **MOCA Cleveland** and using the hashtag #MOCAcleveland when posting.

Facebook: [@MOCACleveland](#) | **Twitter:** [@MOCACleveland](#) | **Instagram:** [@mocacleveland](#)

VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission for MOCA Cleveland members and children under 6 years old is free. General admission is \$9.50; seniors 65+, \$6; and students with valid ID, \$5. MOCA Cleveland is free to all on the first Saturday of each month; MOCA Free First Saturdays are made possible by PNC.

MOCA Cleveland's hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 11 – 6pm; Friday, 11 – 9pm; Saturday, Sunday, 11 – 5 pm; closed Monday.

MOCA Cleveland · 11400 Euclid Avenue · Cleveland, OH 44106 · 216-421-8671