

**The Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland Announces  
OPEN HOUSE, A Series of New Initiatives Focused on  
Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**

**OPEN HOUSE Includes Free Admission for All, Beginning March 16**



Lee Mingwei, *The Mending Project*, 2009/2015, mixed media interactive installation, dimensions variable. Collection of Amy & Leo Shih, Installation view at Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2015. Courtesy of the artist.

**Cleveland, OHIO (March 4, 2019)** — On the occasion of its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (moCa) is launching OPEN HOUSE, a set of initiatives that embodies the values of diversity, inclusion, and accessibility—core elements to the Museum’s philosophy and practice—and makes the Museum more welcoming and collaborative for all audiences. Situated within a broader national dialogue about the 21<sup>st</sup> century role of museums, moCa’s OPEN HOUSE initiatives embrace the societal imperative for greater civility, social justice, and informed public discourse.

OPEN HOUSE initiatives include free admission for all, the creation of a diversity curatorial fellowship, an engagement guide apprenticeship program, enhanced onsite programming for families and teens, and the addition of an education specialist.

- The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation provided the lead investment in OPEN HOUSE, launching an annual “Bold Initiatives” grant of \$500,000 over three years to small and mid-sized institutions and museums taking bold steps to increase attendance through outreach, diversity, and inclusion. This grant will support a moCa-wide shift to a frontline engagement team trained to support visitor experiences throughout the museum and a new Education Fellowship position dedicated to on-site engagement strategies.

- The Cleveland Foundation is another key partner in OPEN HOUSE. A multi-year gift from the Cleveland Foundation allows moCa Cleveland to offer innovative, inclusive experiences that are accessible to everyone in our community.
- Beginning on March 16, 2019, moCa Cleveland will offer free admission for all. moCa is able to make a lasting commitment to lower this economic barrier to entry through generous gifts from The Kelvin & Eleanor Smith Foundation, The Connor Foundation, and The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation. Building off the positive public response to Free First Saturdays, free admission to teens, and free public programs, the Museum is taking the final step to make moCa free and open to all.
- A gift from the George Gund Foundation will support the creation of a diversity-focused Curatorial Fellowship that enables moCa to broaden its curatorial team to mirror the diversity of the Cleveland community. LaTanya Autry brings a wealth of experience to this role after holding curatorial positions at the Yale University Art Gallery and the Mississippi Museum of Art, among others. She joins moCa's newly appointed Chief Curator, Courtenay Finn.
- A gift from PNC will enhance Saturday programming geared toward intergenerational families that creates connections, supports learning, and sustains engagement. *Family Fun on Saturdays provided by PNC* will include guided tours, hands-on workshops, and pop up activities for audiences of all ages on what is historically the museum's highest-attended day.

"Removing the economic barrier to visitation is just one phase of our OPEN HOUSE initiative. Inclusion is a central focus, and to effectively serve all audiences we will integrate welcoming, collaborative practices into every aspect of our business. Comprehensive in scope, our OPEN HOUSE initiatives assert the museum as a safe gathering place, a public forum, and a contemplative haven to process our multi-cultural world," explains Jill Snyder, moCa's Kohl Executive Director.

Says Carl Thoma, Co-Founder, The Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation, "moCa received the inaugural 'Bold Initiatives' grant because they demonstrate qualities of leadership we are seeking to support: open, self-critical, and confident to seek input from others. I believe these qualities are essential in achieving an inclusive, accessible and diverse environment that will attract and engage new audiences."

## EXHIBITIONS

For its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, moCa Cleveland has organized exhibitions that both honor the museum's founding and illuminate the key ideas within OPEN HOUSE.

**Lee Mingwei: You Are Not a Stranger** (March 15-July 28, 2019) includes works that are designed to enchant and inspire audiences through the exchange of kindness between strangers. Including photography, installation, and performance, the exhibition offers a series of unique and powerful interactive experiences with art, through four of the artist's - well-known and prominently exhibited works: **Sonic Blossom** (2013), **The Moving Garden** (2009), **The Mending Project** (2009), and **100 Days with Lily** (1995).

**Sunrise** (March 15-July 28, 2019) honors the vision of the museum's three founders, Agnes Gund, Marjorie Talalay, and Nina Sundell. For this exhibition, their daughters selected contemporary art works by seminal artists that represent their mothers' passions and interests throughout their lives.

**Abe Frajndlich: Portraits of Our Early Years** (March 15-July 28, 2019) is a photography exhibition comprised of intimate portraits of iconic artists and figures who were part of moCa's early history. Frajndlich's specially-curated collection includes portraits of Christo, Roy Lichtenstein, Laurie Anderson, and Robert Rauschenberg, among others.

**Sondra Perry** (April 27-August 11, 2019), moCa's inaugural recipient of Toby's Prize, will debut newly-commissioned work on April 27, 2019. With this exhibition, titled **A Terrible Thing**, Perry explores the relationship between how people make spaces, and how spaces in turn shape people. Drawing connections between architecture, history, and the transformation of landscape in Cleveland, Perry's new video and installation reveals the precarious interplay between people and place. Toby's Prize is a biennial award named for philanthropist Toby Devan Lewis, an Honorary Director of moCa.

### **For Freedoms**

moCa Cleveland and For Freedoms, an artist-run initiative founded by artists Hank Willis Thomas and Eric Gottesman, continue their two-year residency focused on a series of Town Hall discussions inspired by Franklin D. Roosevelt's historic Four Freedoms speech outlining the four essential human rights: freedom from want, from fear, of worship, and of expression. Co-produced with The City Club of Cleveland, the nation's oldest continuous forum for free speech, For Freedoms Town Halls at moCa Cleveland provide open platforms for civil, topical conversations that seek to encourage a more active, collaborative, inclusive, and empathic community.

*Love is a Political Act* on Saturday, May 11 will emphasize the role of compassion and empathy in our democracy. Throughout the day, visitors will practice and share compassion through guided participatory experiences and have opportunities to participate in community-driven projects that create bridges to the struggles and humanity of others.

### **ABOUT THE CARL & MARILYNN THOMA ART FOUNDATION**

Carl and Marilyn Thoma have been collecting art since 1975. They believe passionately in the power of art to enrich life and to deepen understanding of the cultures, places, and times of which we are a part. In 1986 the Thomas established a family foundation to fulfill their broad passion for philanthropy. Inspired to make contributions with wide-ranging, yet personal impact, in 2014, the Thomas went on to found the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation to distinguish their initiatives in, and support of, visual art. As their collections evolved, they have contributed increasingly with their personal involvement and financial support to the development of exhibitions, symposia and publications, the formation of fellowships and awards, and the endowment of professorial chairs and curatorial positions.

### **ABOUT MOCA CLEVELAND**

For 50 years, the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (moCa) has played an urgent and exciting role in the cultural landscape of Cleveland and the international art world. A kunsthalle in the Midwest, moCa is a conduit and catalyst for creativity and inspiration, offering exhibitions and programs that provide public value and generate an open dialogue about the art and ideas of our time.

Since its founding in 1968, moCa has presented the works of more than 3,000 artists, often through artists' first solo exhibitions. In its first decades, moCa Cleveland presented the work of such vanguard artists as Laurie Anderson, Christo, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol. Recent artist commissions include Tauba Auerbach, Simon Denny, Aleksandra Domanovic, Michelle Grabner, Lisa Oppenheim, Adam Pendleton, Sondra Perry, and Sara VanDerBeek.

In 2012, moCa Cleveland relocated to Cleveland's University Circle district, which boasts one of the country's highest concentrations of cultural, educational, and medical institutions. moCa Cleveland's building, designed by London-based architect Farshid Moussavi, is a faceted building of mirror-finish black stainless steel and an iconic landmark in Cleveland.

**For more information, visit [mocacleveland.org](http://mocacleveland.org)**

Join the conversation on social media by using @moCaCleveland and #moCamoments #moCa50

Facebook: @moCaCleveland | Twitter: @moCaCleveland | Instagram: @moCacleveland #moCacleveland

**SPONSORSHIP**

All exhibitions are funded by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and Leadership Circle gifts from anonymous donors, Yuval Brisker, Joanne Cohen and Morris Wheeler, Margaret Cohen and Kevin Rahilly, Grosvie and Charlie Cooley, Becky Dunn, Lauren Rich Fine, Harriet Goldberg, Agnes Gund, Michelle and Richard Jeschelnic, Kohl Family, Jan Lewis, Toby Devan Lewis, and Scott and Kelly Mueller.

All 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.

Sherwin-Williams is the official paint of moCa Cleveland.

*Lee Mingwei: You Are Not a Stranger*

Major exhibition support provided by Anonymous, DLR Group | Westlake Reed Leskosky, The John P. Murphy Foundation, and Ministry of Culture, Taiwan and Taipei Cultural Center in New York.

*Sonic Blossom* is presented in partnership with Cleveland Institute of Music, Art Song Festival, and Cleveland Museum of Art.

Additional support for *Sonic Blossom* provided by Rebecca and Irad Carmi.

Additional support for *Moving Garden* provided by Landscaping & Blooms.

Additional support for *Sunrise* provided by the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Board of Directors Fund.

*Abe Frajndlich: Portraits of Our Early Years*

Major support provided by Roy Minoff. Additional support from the Anselm Talalay Photography Endowment.

**Media Contacts**

Meg Blackburn | FITZ & CO | [mblackburn@fitzandco.art](mailto:mblackburn@fitzandco.art) | 212-620-7390

Yun Lee | FITZ & CO | [ylee@fitzandco.art](mailto:ylee@fitzandco.art) | 646-589-0920