Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland

press release

Sam Falls, *Untitled (San Bernardino National Forest, CA.)*, 2017-2019. Pigment on canvas, 128 inches x 272 inches (325.1 x 690.9 cm). Courtesy the artist and 303 Gallery, New York

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moCa Cleveland announces 2023 exhibitions and residencies focused on identity, nature, memory, and collaboration

Shows feature new works by Nina Chanel Abney, Sam Falls, Andrea Bowers, Shannon Finnegan, Amber N. Ford, and Erykah Townsend alongside evolution of long-form residencies.

CLEVELAND, Ohio—November 10, 2022 Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (moCa) announces its next two seasons of exhibitions, artist projects, and residencies. The year features a robust roster of artists who will debut new works or present career-first moments. Exhibited within and beyond the walls of moCa's building, the shows will deepen a connection with artists and northeast Ohio communities and partners.

In addition to exhibitions, moCa continues to adapt long-form residencies in 2023. Beginning this December, the museum welcomes Brooklyn-based artist Shannon Finnegan as the second *Getting To Know* Artist-in-Residence. At the same time, moCa continues its institutional residency model through a new partnership with Cleveland's Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center (JDBCAC), which follows last year's pilot with the Museum of Creative Human Art. JDBCAC will program a portion of moCa's spaces and together, the organizations also will partner on an adapted Artist-in-Residence (AIR) program.

"This model continues moCa's commitment to sharing its physical space and collaborating with other Cleveland cultural organizations seeking to elevate and advance the work of artists and communities who have been historically marginalized," notes Megan Lykins Reich, Kohl Executive Director for moCa Cleveland. "We are very excited to expand our ongoing programming partnership with JDBCAC. This residency provides the special opportunity to be more proximal and regularly engaged together in the service of our artistic and cultural communities."

WINTER/SPRING 2023 EXHIBITIONS

Nina Chanel Abney: Big Butch Synergy

January 27-June 11, 2023

Nina Chanel Abney uses a unique language of coded icons, numbers, and figures in paintings and collages that communicate urgent messages about resistance, love, and hope. For this exhibition, she debuts a new body of work presented in two shows, one at ICA Miami, *Big Butch Energy*, and one at moCa Cleveland, *Big Butch Synergy*. The series explores and celebrates expressions of Black masculine women and those who resist hetero- or cis-normative gender roles. In moCa's multi-space presentation, Abney will create a site-responsive monumental artwork on the museum's ground floor and a new series of gallery-installed large-scale paintings that all teem with her bold, pictorial language and characteristically impactful expressions.

Sam Falls: We Are Dust and Shadow

January 27-June 11, 2023

Sam Falls's show at moCa, the artist's first major solo museum exhibition, offers expansive insight into his unique practice of collaborating with nature to create monumental paintings and sculptures. Falls's poetic, ghostly works examine the sublimity and inherent melancholy of nature's cycles and finite life. Interested in photographic exposure and representation, Falls experiments with the effects of sunlight, rain, and temperature, harnessing weather patterns and environmental conditions to create paintings, sculptures, and photographs in and with nature. In addition to new sculptures and paintings made by Falls in various national parks across the country, moCa is partnering with the Cleveland Botanical Garden & Holden Arboretum on programming and to support Falls's creation of new ceramic works, using materials from Northeast Ohio.

Amber N. Ford: Someone, Somewhere, Something

January 27-June 11, 2023

Best known for photography, artist Amber N. Ford delves into the medium of sound as a tool to share intimate stories of grief. During her Winter/Spring 2022 residency at moCa, Ford used moCa's space as a site to collect responses from audiences about their experiences of loss and trauma. *Someone, Somewhere, Something* applies this content in a new audio work presented in various unconventional sites throughout the museum to create poignant sound collages that make space for mourning while also supporting catharsis and healing.

moCa AIR is supported by Margaret Cohen & Kevin Rahilly.

SUMMER/FALL 2023 EXHIBITIONS

Alexandra Kehayoglou, *Rio Parana de las Palmas*, 2021. Hand-tufted wool, 472.4 x 169.3 in (1199.896 x 430.022 cm). Courtesy the artist

A soft place to land

July 7-December 31, 2023

A soft place to land highlights artists who use textiles to unpack personal histories and reveal how fiber arts materially and metaphorically connect stories to broader socio-cultural narratives. The exhibition focuses on textiles' ability to embody collective and individual memories. Presented artists elevate mundane or ubiquitous objects into tangible, fibrous expressions of the moments and traditions that have shaped them. The artists, coming from multi-generational backgrounds and at various points in their careers, create a conversation about resilience, homesickness, connectivity, and care for themselves, one another, and the audiences experiencing their works. The artworks in *A soft place to land* showcase the influence of place and placemaking on one's identity, confront trauma associated with upbringing, and celebrate materiality as an essential tool in self-discovery.

Artists include:
Pia Camil, Cass Davis, Alexandra Kehayoglou, Kaveri Raina, Na Chainkua Reindorf, Liang Shaoji

Group exhibition co-curated by Shannon Finnegan

July 7-December 31, 2023

Shannon Finnegan will create an expanded iteration of their experiments with seating-centric exhibitions. In this show, the artwork comes to the visitor, and all things can be picked up and touched. Audience members become participants in this experiential exhibition. Encouraging visitors to handle the works presented has the potential to bring them deeper into the exhibition, forming their own relationships with the artists.

The project includes works by artists from the disability arts ecosystem that has nourished Finnegan's practice and with whom Finnegan often collaborates. Placing these individuals directly in conversation demonstrates the importance of community and the ways in which connections—both between artists and between artworks—inform how audiences make meaning.

Additional support provided by the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Andrea Bowers: Exist, Flourish, Evolve

July 7-December 31, 2023

moCa is working with Cleveland-raised artist Andrea Bowers on a large-scale campaign—*Exist, Flourish, Evolve*—to build awareness and action around the dangers facing Lake Erie. For several years, Bowers has been collaborating with the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) and activist Tish O'Dell, who drove community-led legislation for the Lake Erie Bill of Rights (LEBOR) in Toledo, Ohio. moCa will present a new film and works in relation to this project, alongside a series of public programs inviting audiences to engage with local climate and environmental concerns and community issues together.

This project is supported by a Public Art grant through the VIA Art Fund.

Erykah Townsend, *Look Mom, I'm a Woman Now!,* 2021. Acrylic, oil, modeling paste, and toy witches on panel, 24 x 36 in (60.96 x 91.44 cm). Courtesy the artist

Erykah Townsend
October 27-December 31, 2023

As a moCa AIR Artist-in-Residence, multimedia conceptual artist Erykah Townsend is working from July–December 2022 to produce new work that unpacks the relationship between innocence and absurdity, rethinking the experiences and encounters of youth from cartoons, comics, birthday parties, and childhood games. Townsend, a participating artist and member of the 2025 FRONT Triennial Artistic Team, uses humor to interpret personal experiences, consumerism, and art history. In her work, characters, icons, and objects perform as avatars of allegory and criticism, while still referencing their original meaning. Her exhibition project at moCa opens around Halloween 2023 to explore, critique, and poke fun at the role of consumerism around this and other holidays.

moCa AIR is supported by Margaret Cohen & Kevin Rahilly.

RESIDENCIES
Institutional and Artist Residency: Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center
January-December, 2023

Beginning in 2021, moCa developed two new residencies to more deeply connect with artists and arts organizations in our region. The AIR Artist-In-Residence program focuses on emerging or mid-career artists based in northeast Ohio's Cuyahoga County. Selecting three artists over a year and a half, each artist was provided an honorarium, a studio space, access to moCa's resources, and an exhibition project developed over their residency. Two of those installations by AIR artists Amber N. Ford and Erykah Townsend will be realized during the 2023 calendar year. Additionally, in July 2022, moCa unveiled its first Institutional Residency with the Museum of Creative Human Art (MCHA). This residency was designed to explore how organizations of different sizes but with similar missions and commitments can work collaboratively in space and programming, learn from one another, and mutually advance goals of equity, education, and creativity. With a focus on investing in locally-based artists, audiences, and partners who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color, the 2021-22 residency provided opportunities for moCa and MCHA to work together through collaborative brainstorming, problem solving, development, project realization, audience engagement, and evaluation.

Starting in January 2023, moCa will align its learning from the AIR Artist-in-Residency and MCHA Institutional Residency into a hybrid opportunity. Continuing a strong collaborative relationship developed with Julia de Burgos Cultural Art Center (JDBCAC) during moCa's presentation of the exhibition *Axis Mundo: Queer Networks in Chicano L.A.* (July–December 2021), moCa and JDBCAC will partner on a year-long institutional and artist residency throughout 2023. JDBCAC will occupy and engage spaces on moCa's first and third floors in relation to its mission and work, and co-design programming with moCa including an adapted AIR program to advance the work of Latino/a/x artists and artists of color and provide new professional development opportunities. JDBCAC and moCa will create two cohorts of early career artists who will work alongside mentor artists and arts leaders, and moCa will host exhibitions of these artists' work throughout the duration of the residency.

RESIDENCIES

Shannon Finnegan, Do you want us here or not (MMK) 3, 2021. Plywood, paint, 72 x 26 x 36 in (182.88 x 66.04 x 91.44 cm). Photo by Axel Schneider. Courtesy of Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main

Getting to Know: Shannon Finnegan

December 2022-December 2023

In January 2021, moCa launched a new residency called *Getting to Know*, designed to support a non-local contemporary artist working in social practice in a long-form project with moCa and our community that allows for repeat engagement, extended exploration, and the development of new work. Our first *Getting to Know* artist was Chicago-based fiber artist Aram Han Sifuentes (2021-22). moCa's second *Getting to Know* resident artist will be Shannon Finnegan.

Shannon Finnegan is a Brooklyn-based artist who makes work about access and disability culture. Their practice prioritizes expanding accessibility within and outside of cultural institutions. Some of their recent work includes *Anti-Stairs Club Lounge,* an ongoing project that gathers people together who share an aversion to stairs; *Alt-Text as Poetry*, a collaboration with Bojana Coklyat that explores the expressive potential of image description; and *Do You Want Us Here or Not*, a series of benches and cushions designed for exhibition spaces that explore the need and desire to sit and rest. During this residency, Shannon and moCa Curator Lauren Leving will co-curate a group exhibition that will intervene creatively in moCa's Lewis Gallery, opening summer 2023. Creating virtual and in-person programming, Shannon also will connect their work with a variety of audiences by designing new Creative Toolboxes, moCa's ongoing delivery-based program where art-making materials and creative prompts are made available through community-based partners to residents in the neighborhoods around the museum.

For years, moCa has focused strongly on improving accessibility and equity for audiences with disabilities. moCa's building opened in 2012 and was designed to meet, or in many cases, exceed ADA standards and requirements. In addition to these baseline accessibility measures, moCa has continued to redesign its spaces to maximize universal design and accommodate audiences of all abilities and interests. In October, moCa received the 2021-22 Maximum Access award from MaxHousing (formerly Accessible Housing of Ohio), recognizing leadership in accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities. In working with Finnegan in a long term way, moCa's goal is to create an ongoing program of *Here to Lounge* adaptations that build off of our exhibitions so that visitors can engage with the shows in a tactile way, on a smaller, more intimate scale, increasing sensory learning and experiential programming.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

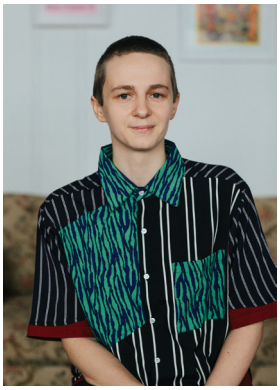
Nina Chanel Abney (b. 1982, Chicago, IL) strives to signal narratives that speak to topics on politics, heritage, race, sexuality, and celebrity. The figures in her works typically appear as heavily stylized, graphic, geometric shapes against vivid backgrounds overlaid with symbols and patterns. Known for her frenetic, large-scale paintings, Abney has recently been commissioned to transform the Lincoln Center's new David Geffen Hall's façade in New York, drawing from the cultural heritage of the neighborhood previously known as San Juan Hill that comprised African American, Afro-Caribbean, and Puerto Rican families, which she similarly did recently for a public mural at the new Miami World Center inspired by Overtown, a historic Black neighborhood in Miami. Her first solo exhibition debuted in 2017 at Nasher Museum of Art, North Carolina, and subsequently toured to Chicago Cultural Center; Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the California African American Museum; and the Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, State University of New York. Recent exhibitions include The Gordon Parks Institute (2022), The Art Gallery of New South Wales (2021), ICA Boston (2020), The Contemporary Dayton (2019), The Norton Museum of Art (2019), and Palais de Tokyo (2018). Her work is in the collections of MoMA New York, The Rubell Family Collection, The Brooklyn Museum, Bronx Museum and the Burger Collection, Hong Kong.

Andrea Bowers (b. 1964, OH) is a Los Angeles-based artist who has been recording and amplifying the work of activists present and past for more than two decades. Her multi-media practice includes drawing, video, sculpture, and installation work that foregrounds the experience of the people who dedicate their time and energy to the struggle for gender, racial, environmental, labor, and immigration justice and those who are directly affected by systemic inequality. Over time, her different bodies of work have become a document of the changing language, prerogatives, and dynamics of social justice movements. In 2021 a major mid-career survey of Bowers's work curated by Michael Darling and Connie Butler opened at the MCA Chicago and traveled to the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles in 2022. Other recent solo exhibitions include *Grief and Hope*, Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany and *Light and Gravity*, Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen, Germany. In September 2022, Bowers opened a solo exhibition including both new and existing work at the Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Milano as part of an exhibition program organized by the Fondazione Furla. Bowers is represented by Vielmetter Los Angeles, Andrew Kreps Gallery, Kaufmann Repetto, and Jessica Silverman Gallery.

Pia Camil (b. 1980) lives and works in Mexico City. She has a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and an MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art, London. Camil is a visual artist based in Acatitlán, State of Mexico. Her paintings, sculptures, performances and installations emphasize the importance of collectivity and are frequently done in collaboration with local manufacturers. The subject matter of her work focuses on the rural / urban contexts with a formal yet critical dialogue with modernism. Her work has been exhibited internationally with recent solo-exhibitions including: *Nidos y Nudos*, Blum & Poe Gallery, LA (2021), *Three Works*, moCa Tucson (2020), *Laugh Now, Cry Later* at OMR Gallery, Mexico City (2020); *Here Comes The Sun*, performance at Guggenheim Museum, New York (2019); *Fade into Black: Sit, chill, look, talk, roll, play, listen, give, take, dance, share*, Queens Museum, New York (2019); *Bara, Bara, Bara*, Tramway Art Space, Glasgow (2019); *Telón de Boca*, Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City (2018); *Split Wall*, Nottingham Contemporary (2018); *They*, Galerie Sultana, Paris (2018); *Bara, Bara, Bara*, Dallas Contemporary (2017); *Slats, Skins & Shopfittings*, Blum & Poe, New York (2016); *A Pot for a Latch*, New Museum, New York (2016); *Skins*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2015); *The Little Dog Laughed*, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles (2014); *Espectacular Telón*, Galerie Sultana, Paris (2013); *Cuadrado Negro*, Basque Museum Centre for Contemporary Art, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain (2013).

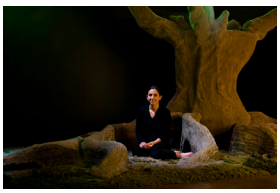
Cass Davis (b. 1986, IL) is a Chicago-based artist with an MFA in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2017). Their solo shows include *Out of Time* at Engage Projects, Revelations at University of Southern Indiana, *HEARTLAND* at G-CADD St. Louis, *No Body on Earth But Yours* with the Chicago Underground Film Festival, and *Of Roses* and Jessamine at SITE gallery, Chicago. Davis has shown in group exhibitions and screenings at the Design Museum Chicago, IL, Bemis Center in Omaha, NE, York St. John University, UK, Tile Blush in Miami, FL, The Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, The American Medium in NYC, UIS Visual Arts Gallery, Springfield, IL, Terrain Biennial Oak Park and Springfield, IL, Mana Contemporary Chicago, Chicago Artists Coalition, 062 Gallery, Sullivan Galleries, and the Mary Elizabeth Dee Shaw Gallery, Utah.

Sam Falls (b. 1984, San Diego, CA) works intimately with the core precepts of photography—namely time, representation, and exposure—to create works that both bridge the gap between various artistic mediums and the divide between the artist, object, and viewer. Working symbiotically with nature and the elements, Falls's artworks are engrained with a sense of place indexical to the unique environment of their creation while imbued with a universal sense of mortality. With a reverence toward art history, Falls empathetically blurs the lines between artistic genres and practices, from modern dance and minimalist painting to conceptual photography and land art, boiling it down to the fundamentals of nature and the transience of life that art best addresses. Falls is represented by 303 Gallery (New York), Galerie Eva Presenhuber (Zurich and Vienna), Jessica Silverman Gallery (San Francisco), and Galleria Franco Noero (Turin).



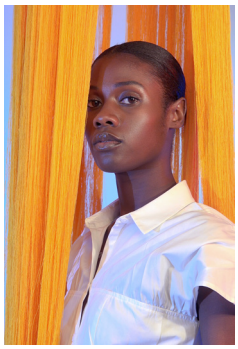
Shannon Finnegan (b. 1989, Berkeley, CA) is a project-based artist. They experiment with forms of access that intervene in ableist structures with humor, earnestness, rage, and delight. Some of their recent work includes *Anti-Stairs Club Lounge*, an ongoing project that gathers people together who share an aversion to stairs; *Alt-Text as Poetry*, a collaboration with Bojana Coklyat that explores the expressive potential of image description; and *Do You Want Us Here or Not*, a series of benches and cushions designed for exhibition spaces. They have done projects with Banff Centre, Queens Museum, the High Line, MMK Frankfurt, the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, and Nook Gallery. Their work has been supported by a 2018 Wynn Newhouse Award, a 2019 residency at Eyebeam, 2020 grant from Art Matters Foundation, and a 2022 grant from The Canada Council for the Arts. Their work has been written about in Art in America, BOMB Magazine, The Believer, and the New York Times. They live and work in Brooklyn, NY.

Amber N. Ford (b. 1994, Cleveland, OH) is an artist based in Cleveland, OH. She received her BFA in Photography from the Cleveland Institute of Art (2016). Interested in race, and identity, she is best known for her work in portraiture, which she considers a "collaborative engagement between photographer and sitter." She has been featured in exhibitions at Kent State University, Transformer Station, SPACES Gallery, The Morgan Conservatory, The Cleveland Print Room, Zygote Press, and Waterloo Arts, as well as in outdoor public spaces on the Capitol Theatre Building located at the corner of Detroit and West 65th. In 2021, her work was on view at ThirdSpace Action Lab as a part of *Imagine Otherwise*. Recent awards include Gordon Square Arts District Artist-In-Residence (2019) and the Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award (2017).



Alexandra Kehayoglou (b. 1981) is an Argentinian and Greek visual artist who works primarily with textile materials. She produces works combining textiles, sculpture and installation. Alexandra's repertoire includes memories of various native and endangered landscapes that the artist has visited and desires to preserve over time. Her renowned pastizales (grasslands), fields, and shelter tapestries exhibit sublime realities which the viewer can contemplate or utilize. n 2014, Kehayoglou created a major collaboration with Belgian designer Dries Van Noten. She developed a carpet of fifty meters long inspired by John Everett Millais' Ophelia. In 2016, Kehayoglou presented the *No Longer Creek* at Design Miami/Basel, decrying the decimation of the Raggio creek in Buenos Aires. In October 2016, the work Repoussoir for a New Perspective was exhibited at the Onassis Foundation, New York, as part of the festival Antigone Now. At the end of 2017, The Triennial of The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, included Kehayoglou's work Santa Cruz River. The work is an interactive installation part of an extensive research project about the future damming of the Santa Cruz River in the Argentinian Patagonia.

Kaveri Raina (b. 1990; Delhi, India) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She received her BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2011, her MFA in Painting and Drawing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2016. She attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2017. Raina has received various awards and fellowships including the James Nelson Raymond fellowship and the Fred and Joanna Lazarus Scholarship, and she was recently nominated for the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors grant. Raina's work has been exhibited in the US, India and Europe.



Na Chainkua Reindorf (b. 1991, Ghana) is a mixed media artist and mythmaker. Her work, which ranges from large-scale tapestries and paintings to immersive sculptural installations, is an exploration of and an ode to the rich cultural history of West African textiles, focusing largely on the complexities and visual culture surrounding masquerades and ceremonial costumes. She incorporates contemporary materials into her work, using these historical textiles and costumes as inspiration to investigate ongoing social topics centered on the politics of dress, identity and gender and their close relation to culture and tradition. Na Chainkua has exhibited internationally in institutions across the United States, France, Italy, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Nigeria, and Ghana, as well as in the Ghanaian Pavilion at the 2022 Venice Biennale.

Liang Shaoji (b. 1945, Shanghai) studied soft sculpture from Maryn Varbanov at China Academy of Art. For more than thirty years, Liang has been indulged in the interdisciplinary creation in terms of art and biology, installation and sculpture, new media and textile. His *Nature Series* sees the life process of silkworms as a creation medium, the interaction in the natural world as his artistic language, time and life as the essential idea. His works are fulfilled with a sense of meditation, philosophy and poetry while illustrating the inherent beauty of silk. Selected exhibitions: *Liang Shaoji: A Silky Entanglement*, Power Station of Art, Shanghai (2021-2022); *The Allure of Matter: Material Art from China* (touring exhibition), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Smart Museum of Art (Chicago), U.S.A. (2019-2020).

Erykah Townsend (b. 1997, South Euclid, OH) is a conceptual artist born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1997. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 2020. Her paintings and objects are heavily influenced by pop culture. She quotes, "I use pop culture as a medium itself—exploring the spaces it fills in our lives and the inquiry of how real are the imaginary." Her reflective and humorous narratives are interpretations of personal experiences, society, capitalism and art history. Characters, icons, and objects depicted in her work play as avatars of her allegories and criticism, while they retain aspects of their original source.

FREE ADMISSION & HOURS

Daily Admission at moCa Cleveland is always free to all.
Thursdays-Sundays, 11AM-5PM; Holiday hours available at mocacleveland.org

ABOUT moCa CLEVELAND

For more than 50 years, the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (moCa) has played an exciting role in the city's cultural landscape. moCa is a conduit and catalyst for creativity and inspiration, offering exhibitions and programs that provide public value and make meaning of the art and ideas of our time.

Since its founding in 1968, moCa has presented the works of more than three thousand artists, often through artists' first solo shows. Soon after its founding, moCa was the first in the region to exhibit the works of many vanguard artists such as Laurie Anderson, Christo, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Adrian Piper, and Andy Warhol. Recent artist commissions and solo exhibitions include work by Tauba Auerbach, Xavier Cha, Simon Denny, Aleksandra Domanović, Michelle Grabner, Byron Kim, Ragnar Kjartansson, Tony Lewis, Kirk Mangus, Catherine Opie, Adam Pendleton, Sondra Perry, Joyce J. Scott, Do Ho Suh, Liu Wei, and Renée Green, among many others.

2023 INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORS

All current moCa Cleveland exhibitions are funded by Leadership Circle gifts from Doreen & Dick Cahoon, Joanne Cohen & Morris Wheeler, Margaret Cohen & Kevin Rahilly, Grosvie & Charlie Cooley, Becky Dunn, Harriet Goldberg, Agnes Gund, Jan Lewis, and Toby Devan Lewis*.

moCa Cleveland is provided institutional support in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, the George Gund Foundation, the Nord Family Foundation, the Ohio Arts Council, PNC, and the continuing support of the museum's Board of Directors, patrons, and members.

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