



THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

MOCA PRESENTS ART FOR EARTH'S SAKE

**A Series of Discussions about Art and Climate Change
Organized by Frances Anderton and Livia Mandoul**

October 2 through December 11, 2022



LOS ANGELES, CA—The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) presents Art for Earth's Sake, a series of five public conversations about the art world and climate change that brings together artists, scholars, architects, and activists. The talks take place from October 2 through December 11, 2022.

Guest speakers include Christie's **Bonnie Brennan**, professor and scholar **Eric Avila**, Natural Resources Defense Council's **Elizabeth Corr**; artists **Kim Abeles**, **Nancy Baker Cahill**, **Glenn Kaino**, and **Michael Wang**; architects **Frederick Fisher** and **Kulapat Yantrasast**, and Proto founder **David Nussbaum** among other luminaries in the field.

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"This series is an important part of MOCA's commitment to more sustainable museum practices," said MOCA Associate Curator Alex Sloane. "We recognize that we have a lot to learn and a challenging path forward. Art for Earth's Sake is an opportunity to create conversations, ask difficult questions, and hold ourselves and our field accountable."

Artists are increasingly exploring the climate crisis in their work. However, the art world's contribution to the climate crisis, from its boundless international travel to the growth of energy-intensive art forms and installations, is often overlooked. In this series, organized by design journalist **Frances Anderton** and art and environment specialist **Livia Mandoul**, MOCA considers the creative ways in which the art world is addressing its own environmental footprint. Invited speakers will explore topics ranging from greening art facilities and art fairs to reckoning with environmental justice and the sources of money in the art business. Finally, the program will consider the impact of making the industry more sustainable on artistic expression itself.

The series will open with *The Art World Meets the Crisis* panel on Sunday, October 2, 2022, focusing on the environmental challenges within the art world and how it can use its outsized cultural influence to bring about change inside and out of the industry – with [Michael Wang](#), artist and creator of the provocative 2012 Carbon Copies project; [Debra Scacco](#), artist and founder artist and founder of climate-focussed research program Air, [Russell Fortmeyer](#), engineer and member of the [Gallery Climate Coalition](#) (GCC).

In a display of future possibilities, [David Nussbaum](#), founder of [Proto](#), will beam in [Bonnie Brennan](#), the New York-based President of Christie's Americas, **as a hologram**.

"As the writer, Kurt Vonnegut has said, it falls to artists to sound the alarms when society is in great danger, like the proverbial canary in the coal mine. Art for Earth's Sake will show how artists are confronting the climate catastrophe, through creative provocation and through practical application within the art world itself," said Anderton.

Art for Earth's Sake Schedule:

The Art World Meets the Crisis

With Bonnie Brennan, Russell Fortmeyer, David Nussbaum, Debra Scacco, and Michael Wang

Moderated by Alex Sloane

Sunday, October 2, 2022

5pm

Ahmanson Auditorium, MOCA Grand Avenue

Support for environmentally conscious art is surging, [declared the New York Times](#) in early 2022, noting that more than a dozen exhibitions explicitly confronting climate change had been on view in cities from Santa Fe, N.M., to Singapore. MOCA itself has entered the conversation, with the establishment in 2020 of its Environmental Council. But is it enough to make chest-thumping art *about* climate change? What about the art world's own contribution to the mammoth human-made carbon footprint—through boundless travel ([private jets for art fairs](#)), shipment, post-installation waste; and through its financial entanglements, from philanthropic support from dirty industries to its role as a commodity in late-capitalism? Art for Earth's Sake opens with a broad look at how the art world can use its outsized cultural influence to bring about change inside and out of the art industry. Is it time to focus on local artists, and cultivate more regional art communities? Or go global while staying in place, with a little help from holograms?

Art on Screens and its Energy Impact IRL

With Nancy Baker Cahill and Glenn Kaino

Moderated by Charlotte Kent

Saturday, October 22, 2022

5pm

Ahmanson Auditorium, MOCA Grand Avenue

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Digital light walls and screen-based installations chug energy to maintain their dazzling, kinetic effect. Meanwhile, crypto art, or non-fungible tokens (NFTs), generates such [a high carbon and human cost](#) that artists are [divided](#) on whether to embrace the technology. Can the art world have its carbon cake and eat it? Is the Ethereum Merge a game-changer?

[The Medium is the Message: Clean Artmaking from Earth to Outer Space](#)

With Julia Christensen, Elizabeth Corr, Lily Kwong, and a special performance by Modern Biology

Moderated by Jason E.C. Wright

Saturday, November 5, 2022

3pm

The Aileen Getty Plaza, The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

The purity of an artwork often belies the dirty materials that went into its making: toxic paints and glazes in painting and ceramics; poisonous particulates in the process of sculpting and smelting objects. A current generation of artists views the materials themselves as part of the artistic narrative, especially when that narrative is an environmental one. We will hear from one creator who makes installations out of plant materials to comment on our relationship with flora and fauna and another who protests e-waste and the upgrade economy through a conceptual project involving a spaceship flying light years that has to regenerate itself. But is this didactic art also good art? And how effective is the message?

[Dirty Topic: Environmental Justice in L.A. Art](#)

With Kim Abeles, Eric Avila, and Maru García

Moderated by Jennifer Swann

Sunday, November 20, 2022

3pm

Ahmanson Auditorium, MOCA Grand Avenue

Many Angelenos live in neighborhoods devastated by the environmental blights of polluted air (from refineries, manufacturing, shipping, freeway and air traffic) and toxic waste at brownfield sites. Some LA artists have found ways to bear witness to this environmental (in)justice, like the Chicano painters Carlos Almaraz, David Botello, and Frank Romero, who captured Boyle Heights destroyed by freeways, to contemporary artists making art about lead-contaminated soil at the Exide battery plant in Southeast LA and about the invisible killer: smog. How much can these works serve as a call to action?

Staying Cool: Designers Green Art Buildings

With Lance Collins, Frederick Fisher, Simone Paz, and Kulapat Yantrasast

Moderated by Frances Anderton

Sunday, December 11, 2022

3pm

The Aileen Getty Plaza, The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

Art lives in museums and private collections that can generate a high energy footprint, from the construction of new buildings to the climate-controlled storage. Add to that the carbon footprint generated by the production, installation and demolition of temporary exhibitions and art fairs. What are architects and designers doing to lighten this impact? Does the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA offer clues—through its genesis as an adaptively reused, rather than new, building? What can we learn from “living buildings,” and how do we keep museums cool as they use more and more computer technologies to tell their stories?

This series is aligned with MOCA's commitment to sustainability. The museum is evaluating our processes to embed sustainable solutions into all operations.

MOCA's environmental programming series highlights the museum's work around climate, conservation, and environmental justice. Guided by the work of the MOCA Environmental Council, the first sustainability council at a major arts museum in the United States, this series presents artists, activists, and scholars committed to critical ecological issues in Los Angeles and globally.

The 2022 series is made possible by Nora McNeely Hurley and Manitou Fund.

Frances Anderton covers Los Angeles design and architecture in print, broadcast media, and public events. Her book, *Common Ground: Multifamily Housing in Los Angeles*, will be published in October 2022 by Angel City Press. For many years she hosted *DnA: Design and Architecture* for KCRW public radio station, and produced Warren Olney's current affairs shows *Which Way, LA?* and *To The Point*. "Wasted: Neat Solutions to the Dirty Problem of Waste," a series she co-produced for KCRW, won a 2022 Golden Mike award for Best Feature News Series Reporting.

Livia Mandoul works at the intersection of art, culture, and the environment. As a project management and communications consultant, her work is driven by a deep passion for protecting our planet and fighting the climate crisis. In her previous role at Lyn Winter, Inc. she helped devise communications strategies and cultural programming. Projects included three editions of the contemporary art exhibition Desert X, the *Artists Talk* series at the Broad Stage, and two editions of Art Los Angeles Contemporary (ALAC). She holds an MA in Art Business from Sotheby's Institute of Art and the Drucker School of Management as well as a Certificate in Sustainability from UCLA.

Image credits: Clockwise from top left, Performance by Modern Biology, courtesy of the artist; Michael Wang, *Extinct in New York*, 2019. Living organisms, lights, air and water circulation devices, substrate, aluminum, polycarbonate, and acrylic enclosures. Dimensions variable; Maru Garcia, *Membrane tensions*, 2021. Installation. Glass containers with SCOBY culture, bacterial cellulose sculptures, webcams, overhead projector, drawings. Dimensions variable. Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG). Courtesy of LAMAG; Nancy Baker Cahill, *Mushroom Cloud NYC / RISE*, 2022, Installation view Hudson River, NYC for Tribeca Film Festival.

THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

About MOCA: Founded in 1979, MOCA is the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth; a world-class permanent collection of more than 7,500 objects, international in scope and among the finest in the world; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

More Information: For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call 213/626-6222 or access MOCA online at moca.org.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Eva Seta
Director, Communications
eseta@moca.org

Amy Hood
Chief Communications Officer
ahood@moca.org