New exhibitions at moCa Cleveland by Manabu Ikeda, Andrea Bowers, and BlackBrain uplift nature and sacred human experience

Opening Night Celebration: Friday, Feb 2, 2024

CLEVELAND, Ohio—The Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (moCa) announces three new exhibitions that explore the power of nature and human nature. From asserting our obligation to protect the Great Lakes to envisioning rebirth that comes after climate devastation to symbolizing our existential journeys, these exhibitions elevate our shared experiences to encourage connection and change.

Kohl Executive Director Megan Reich notes, “This season beckons and probes in equal measure. It is teeming with awe-inspiring artworks that invite us into their richness with ease. In all three shows, drawing plays a primary role, a technique that we all understand but in the hands of these artists, becomes a transcendent practice.”

Opening Friday, Feb 2 and running through May 26, 2024, the exhibitions include the United States debut of Manabu Ikeda’s acclaimed *Flowers from the Wreckage* retrospective and new commissions, installations, and artworks by Northeast Ohio-raised artist Andrea Bowers and Cleveland-connected collaborative BlackBrain Group. Aligned with moCa’s approach and values, collaboration is key this season, from BlackBrain Group’s immersive installation done with our institutional residency partner Julia de Burgos Cultural Art Center (JDBCAC) to collaborations with Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) and Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) in support of Andrea Bowers’s new monumental neon in downtown Cleveland.
WINTER/SPRING 2024 EXHIBITIONS

Manabu Ikeda: Flowers from the Wreckage
Feb 2-May 26, 2024

The first North American retrospective of its kind, Manabu Ikeda: Flowers from the Wreckage presents over 50 works from the past 25 years. Seeking inspiration from his surroundings, Ikeda (born 1973, Saga, Japan; lives and works in Madison, WI) brings attention and inspiration to viewers while sending warnings about the painful reality of environmental disasters. Central to his practice are metaphors of grief and the undeniable aspects of life, including the fundamental forces of Mother Nature. Ikeda's drawings also reveal human resilience and the ability to rise above devastating situations when it appears impossible.

Organized by the Audain Art Museum (Whistler, Canada) and curated by Kiriko Watanabe, Gail & Stephen A. Jarislowsky Curator, the show includes several of Ikeda's renowned monumental works including Foretoken (2008), Meltdown (2013) and Rebirth (2013-16), each about the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, the most devastating earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear power disaster in the country's recorded history. In each work, Ikeda painstakingly builds worlds that are both profoundly familiar and also beyond comprehension, inspiring and awe-inspiring in equal measure.

Open Studio Artist Residency
Select times throughout season. Visit moCacleveland.org for full schedule.

Manabu Ikeda will be onsite for an in-gallery studio residency at moCa at various times throughout the exhibition season. Visitors can experience Ikeda's creative process for themselves as he continues work on a new monumental drawing based on water inside moCa's Mueller Family Gallery. Engagement Guides and CIA students will be available to discuss and answer questions about the artist's practice during these sessions.

Organized and circulated by the Audain Art Museum, Whistler, BC, Canada, with the generous support from the Audain Foundation. This exhibition is curated by Kiriko Watanabe, Gail & Stephen A. Jarislowsky Curator, Audain Art Museum.

Lead support from Dealer Tire.
Lead support for Manabu Ikeda's artist residency from The Flagstar Foundation.

About Manabu Ikeda
Born in Saga, Japan, Manabu Ikeda currently lives and works in Madison, Wisconsin. Ikeda is renowned for his highly detailed pen-and-ink drawings and complex imagery. Ikeda has exhibited his work internationally, including Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Korea, Russia, and the United States. It took Ikeda over three years to draw Rebirth, which is widely recognized as his masterpiece referencing the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and a collision between nature and humankind. Organized by the Audain Art Museum, Manabu Ikeda: Flowers from the Wreckage is Ikeda's first solo exhibition in North America.
Andrea Bowers: Exist, Flourish, Evolve  
Feb 2-May 26, 2024

Huron, Ohio-raised, LA-based artist Andrea Bowers bears witness in her work, drawing attention to and inspiring action on urgent issues of our time. Her drawings, sculptures, installations, and films document collective action and amplify the labor and lived experiences of activists dedicated to change. Developed through an ongoing partnership with CELDF and activist Tish O’Dell, Exist, Flourish, Evolve is a new, multi-site, multimedia campaign that builds awareness and action around the dangers facing Lake Erie and the Great Lakes ecosystem.

This project is anchored by a new, monumental neon public artwork installed on the Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) building and facing Lake Erie that declares the right of Lake Erie to exist, flourish, and naturally evolve—words drawn from CELDF’s Lake Erie Bill of Rights. Created with commission support from VIA Art Fund, the bright, buoyant light sculpture obliges us to examine our role in damaging, repairing, protecting, partnering with, and ensuring the health of the Great Lakes that we depend on for survival.

At moCa Cleveland, Bowers’s exhibition presents additional artworks about environmental justice. New works include a neon chandelier, an LED text and light installation that is a corollary to the downtown neon sculpture, a drawing of the Lake Erie Bill of Rights, and a documentary film investigating the impact of factory farming on Lake Erie’s ecosystem.

Truth, Reckoning, & Right Relationship with the Great Lakes Conference:  
Apr. 22-23

Working with CELDF, this two day summit—which follows a one day “truth and reckoning” symposium at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in October 2023—focuses on creating “right relationships” with Lake Erie and will include a keynote address and artist talk, breakout sessions, and special presentations by high school students from MC2STEM High School and John Hay School of Science and Medicine.

Commission sponsorship provided by VIA Art Fund.  
Generous support from Thompson Hine LLP, Joanne Cohen & Morris Wheeler, Chuck & Char Fowler, and Nicholas & Erin Reif.  
Community Partners: Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) and Great Lakes Science Center

About Andrea Bowers

Ohio-raised Andrea Bowers 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.
BlackBrain: **SCRD GRDN**  
Feb 2-May 26, 2024

*SCRD GRDN* is a new project by BlackBrain and guest artists from JDBCAC’s Unidos por el Arte program. Representing a metamorphosis from lone artist into collective creative force and guided by the mantra “go fast, go alone; go far, go together,” BlackBrain Group transforms solitary endeavors into dynamic collaborations grounded in a shared passion for storytelling through art.

*SCRD GRDN* is an immersive painting installation about the resolute human spirit and its existential journey through oppression, justice, prosperity, and divine understanding. Fusing artistic styles and techniques, the series meditates on the interplay and influence between the inner self and the external forces that shape our existence.

**Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center Institution & Artist Residency:**  
This project is part of moCa’s institutional and early career artist residency with JDBCAC from January 2023-May 2024. JDBCAC occupies and engages spaces on moCa’s first and third floors in relation to its mission and work, and co-designs programming with moCa to advance the work of Latino/a/x artists and artists of color and provide new professional development opportunities. In 2023, BlackBrain founder Ariel Vergez served as a mentor artist to the seven artists involved in the moCa/JDBCAC early career artist residency, who presented their work in a group show called **¡Juntos! (Together)** last year.

*Lead support for this residency provided by Margaret Cohen & Kevin Rahilly with additional major support from The Cleveland Foundation.*

**About BlackBrain**  
Ariel Vergez, aka BlackBrain, is a seasoned artist with a rich heritage and a passion for storytelling through art. Born in the Dominican Republic and raised in Florida, BlackBrain is the child of two immigrants who came to the United States in search of opportunity and met each other while working in the service industry. Growing up in a household where art was a daily presence, BlackBrain pursued his passion for art at the collegiate level, studying Industrial Design at the Cleveland Institute of Art. With a background in product and graphic design, BlackBrain has worked with world-class brands and has a keen understanding of the importance of storytelling in design. He has fused that experience towards his first love art. This experience is evident in BlackBrain’s art series, which feature unique narratives, a cross-wiring of pop culture icons, and a *vuja dé* feeling of nostalgia.
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 a vital 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, 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, Renée Green, and Nina Chanel Abney, among many others.

2024 INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORS
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