



Press Release

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit

For Interviews and Images Contact:

Elysia Borowy-Reeder

eborowy@mocadetroit.org

Mike Kulick

mkulick@mocadetroit.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PEOPLE'S BIENNIAL 2014

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit

September 12, 2014 – January 4, 2015

Curators: Harrell Fletcher and MOCAD Guest Curator Jens Hoffmann

MOCAD ANNOUNCES SECOND PEOPLE'S BIENNIAL



DETROIT - From award-winning photography to environmental activism, People's Biennial presents an unprecedented collaboration between established artists and creative individuals operating outside the conventional art world. Opening September 12, 2014, the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD) presents *People's Biennial 2014*.

People's Biennial is an exhibition series conceived by the artist Harrell Fletcher and the curator Jens Hoffmann in 2009. Through its examination of the little-known, the overlooked, the marginalized, and the excluded, the project offers a fascinating view into a diverse range of creative practices in America today. It proposes an alternative to the standard contemporary art biennial, which mostly focuses on art from select major cities. It questions the often exclusionary and insular process of selecting art that has at times turned art exhibition spaces into privileged havens seemingly detached from the realities of everyday life. *People's Biennial 2014* showcases artwork that might not otherwise appear in a museum context.

For the second iteration of this exhibition series, curators Fletcher and Hoffmann have invited 17 recognized artists or artist duos/collaboratives based in a wide set of locations around the United States to connect and collaborate with creative individuals who are personally known to them, but mostly unknown

in the mainstream art world. Each collaboration will be displayed in a free-standing structure resembling a small house within the refurbished Woodward Gallery of MOCAD. It will be a creative community of the unknown, the overlooked, and the surprising. Fletcher says, "In the first version, we did very quick research. We employed open calls where we reviewed work in the five regions we focused on, almost like an Antiques Roadshow approach. It was fruitful in that we ran across a lot of interesting work in a short time, but I'm very excited by this second approach because it enables more developed relationships between established artists and people they want to gain greater public appreciation for. It also creates more surprise and mystery for us, because we only selected the first set of artists, and then they used their agency to select their collaborators."

Participating Collaborations:

Jennifer Allora & Guillermo Calzadilla and Robert Rabin
Carson Ellis and Hank Meloy
Wendy Ewald and Denise Dixon
Dara Friedman and Ishmael Golden Eagle
Colter Jacobsen and Lance Rivers
Liz Magic Laser and Wendy Osserman
Sharon Lockhart and Fearless Fred
Cary Loren and Jimbo Easter
Rick Lowe and Jonathan the Plant Man
Ken Lum and Orkan Telhan
Jeffrey Mitchell and Vic Oblas
Scott Reeder and Xav Leplae
Alec Soth and George Wurtzel
Hank Willis Thomas and Baz Dreisinger
Transformazium and James Kidd
Lee Walton & Harriet Hoover and Mr. Coppers
Steven Yazzie and Jonathan Bond

About the Curators:

Harrell Fletcher has produced a variety of socially engaged, participatory projects since the early 1990s for institutions, museums, and exhibitions around the world. He received his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and his MFA from the California College of the Arts. He studied organic farming at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He went on to work on a variety of small farms, which impacted his work as an artist. He participated in the *2004 Whitney Biennial* and is the 2005 recipient of the Alpert Award in Visual Arts. In 2002, Fletcher created *Learning To Love You More* with Miranda July, a participatory website now in the collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Fletcher is an associate professor of art and social practice at Portland State University.

Jens Hoffmann is the deputy director and head of exhibitions and public programs at the Jewish Museum, New York, and guest curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. He has curated more than 50 exhibitions internationally since the late 1990s, including the *2nd San Juan Triennial* (2009), the *12th Istanbul Biennial* (2011), and the *9th Shanghai Biennale* (2012). He was the director of the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco (2007–12) and director of exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London (2003–7).

People's Biennial 2014, co-curated by MOCAD Guest Curator Jens Hoffmann and Harrell Fletcher, opens September 12, 2014, at 6 pm for MOCAD members with a walkthrough with Harrell and Hoffmann at 6:15 pm. The exhibition opens to the general public at 7 pm. Music performance by Ava Luna and Celestial Shore at 8 pm. (free for MOCAD members; \$7 for non-members after 9 pm). The show will run until January 4, 2015. Also opening September 12, 2014 are DETROIT CITY and *Vdrome*.

MOCAD is open to the public Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday 11 am–5 pm, and Thursday and Friday 11 am–8 pm. For more information please visit mocadetroit.org or contact MOCAD at info@mocadetroit.org.

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Full press release available for download [here \(PDF\)](#)

Media Contacts:

MOCAD

Mike Kulick
Web + Digital Media Manager
mkulick@mocadetroit.org

Elysia Borowy-Reeder
Executive Director
eborowy@mocadetroit.org

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MOCAD is generously supported by individual and corporate members, private and corporate foundations, and government agencies. MOCAD is located on Woodward and Garfield between the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Detroit Institute of the Arts, Wayne State University and the College for Creative Studies. The Museum is an innovative addition to Detroit's vibrant Midtown neighborhood, and functions as a hub for the exploration of emerging ideas in the contemporary arts. The 22,000 square foot building, a former auto dealership, has been simply renovated to maintain its historic character. With its raw, flexible and cavernous spaces, the building is well suited to the exhibition of contemporary art. Our ambitious series of public programs includes lectures, musical performances, films, literary readings and educational activities for children. The MOCAD Store includes merchandise not sold in the metropolitan area, including specialized art and culture magazines, journals and books, as well as limited edition artists t-shirts and other functional objects. Mobile Homestead is a permanent art work by late artist Mike Kelley located on the grounds of the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. It's both a public sculpture and a private, personal architecture - based on the artist's childhood home on Palmer Road in Westland. MOCAD's Department of Education and Public Engagement programs the ground floor of Mobile Homestead as a community space, as Kelley intended. It is home to projects, events, gatherings, conversations and displays that are created by and for a diverse public, and is intentionally unaffiliated with the Museum's exhibitions and public programming. MOCAD has a parking lot and ample street parking. Information about MOCAD's exhibitions, programs, and special events is available on the MOCAD website at mocadetroit.org or by phone at 313 832 6622.

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