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AS PART OF A CITYWIDE EFFORT MOCAD MOUNTS MAJOR EXHIBITION TO EXAMINE THE 1967 REBELLION

MOCAD ANNOUNCES MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITION THAT EXPLORES MUSIC AND ART AS VEHICLES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

SONIC REBELLION: MUSIC AS RESISTANCE
September 8, 2017 – January 7, 2018

Detroit, MI—Opening at MOCAD this fall, Sonic Rebellion: Music as Resistance explores music...
and art as vehicles of social change. The exhibition forms part of the Detroit '67 project, a coordinated citywide effort among several Detroit institutions to commemorate the city's civil unrest during the summer of 1967. Taking '67 as its starting point, Sonic Rebellion comprises two integrated parts: a material history of Detroit music since the late-sixties and contemporary artworks inhabiting the intersections of visual art, music, protest, and the politics of identity.

A large-scale group exhibition, Sonic Rebellion features works by renowned local, national, and international artists, including: Sadie Barnette, Kevin Beasley, Andrea Bowers, Gerard Byrne, Vivian Caccuri, Juan Capistrán, Nathan Carter, Marcelo Cidade, Jamal Cyrus, Tim Davis, Ben Hall, Matthew Angelo Harrison, David Hartt, Douglas Henderson, Jibade-Kahlil Huffman, Juliana Huxtable, Rashid Johnson, Titus Kaphar, Richard Lewis, Glenn Ligon, Daniel Joseph Martinez, Darin Mickey, Adam Pendleton, Imani Roach, Tylonn Sawyer, Bayeté Ross Smith, Caleen Smith, Diamond Stingily, Mickalene Thomas, Hank Willis Thomas, Anthony Warnick, and Brenna Youngblood. All of the artworks reflect themes of music and resistance, connecting Detroit’s unique history with underlying racial, social, and economic inequalities still persisting in this country and across the globe.


In addition, numerous Detroit-area individuals and organizations have contributed materials enabling MOCAD to showcase the progressive influences of Detroit music over the last fifty years. This wealth of materials includes documents from the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (D.R.U.M.) and League of Revolutionary Black Workers, demonstrating the role of sound in labor resistance movements stemming from the events of 1967; graphic artwork by Emory Douglas,
Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party; images and fliers from Detroit’s Ashanti Drummers and Dancers; photographer and activist Leni Sinclair’s photographs of jazz, blues, and rock performers, including Fred “Sonic” Smith of the MC5; concert posters and flyers from Detroit counterculture venue the Grande Ballroom; Tribe magazines and records; archival works by Detroit jazz composer Faruq Z. Bey; video from WGPR-TV’s The Scene and The New Dance Show; documentation of the emergence and ongoing influence of Detroit techno; tapes and ephemera from underground Detroit hip hop of the 1990s; media documenting The Foundation of Women in Hip Hop’s support of women’s voices and positive cultural influences; and Detroit musician and producer Sterling Toles’s forthcoming album Resurget Cinerbus, which incorporates archival audio to tell a personal story about the legacy of Detroit ’67. The exhibition will also include oral histories, which provide a vital recourse where material histories have vanished.

“We’re not a historical museum; we look toward the future,” said Elysia Borowy-Reeder, MOCAD’s executive director. “This exhibition is about the intersection of art, music and politics, protests, the role of music as a catalyst for social change and protest.”

In conjunction with the exhibition MOCAD will present several public programs, including a concert series that kicks off with a performance by Detroit techno musicians Octave One as part of the opening events on September 8, 2017. Other programs include a Sonic Rebellion talk with curator Susanne Hilberry Senior Curator at Large Jens Hoffmann on September 8, 2017; film screenings of Never Stop: A Music that Resists by Jacqueline Caux on September 14, Love is the Message, the Message is Death by Arthur Jafa on September 21, and the documentary Ovarian Psychos on October 4, 2017. Additional highlights of the season include a concert by music group The Black Opera, and talks on the history of Detroit ’67 by College for Creative Studies scholar Michael Stone-Richards and ’67 scholar and Arcade Fire member Will Butler. MOCAD will publish a catalog including essays on art, music, and politics in Detroit since the 1960s.
MOCAD extends sincere thanks to the many friends who have shared their knowledge and lent materials to the exhibition, including members of a special advisory council: musicians and producers Piper Carter, John Collins, Bryce Detroit, Dameon Gabriel, Marion Hayden, Sterling Toles, and MOCAD Board Member and musician Derrick May; writers Bill McGraw and Marsha Music; longtime cultural leaders Dan Aldridge, Book Beat owner Carey Loren, Steven Reaume, and Zana Smith; WGPR-TV Historical Society director Karen Hudson-Samuels; designer Jean Louis Farges; artists Oren Goldenberg and Tylonn Sawyer; curator Rebecca Mazzei; community activist Curtis Lipscomb; historian Tim Retzloff; archivist Meghan Courtney; and photographers Doug Coombe and Leni Sinclair. MOCAD thanks Carleton Gholz, Founder and Executive Director of Detroit Sound Conservancy, for his guidance during the exhibition’s conceptualization.

Curated by Jens Hoffmann, MOCAD Susanne Feld Hilberry Senior Curator at Large, with curatorial assistance from MOCAD Ford Curatorial Fellow Robin K. Williams. Exhibition management by Zeb Smith, MOCAD Exhibitions Manager, with MOCAD Exhibitions Assistant Naaman Rosen. Catalogue design by Judith Banham of Middlecott Design.

MOCAD exhibition support is provided by the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation. Sonic Rebellion: Music as Resistance is supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.
I don’t know where to draw the line between music and politics. To me, music is revolution.
– Leni Sinclair

I AM. U R. WE WILL. RESIST.
– Underground Resistance

Editor’s note: Installation images will be available after the exhibition opens on September 8th. The list of participants is subject to change. Please check with MOCAD before publishing. Interviews are available upon request.

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The Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD) 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. As a non-collecting institution, MOCAD is responsive to the cultural content of our time, fueling crucial dialogue, collaboration, and public engagement. The Museum is located between the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Detroit Institute of the Arts, Wayne State University, and the College for Creative Studies. The cavernous 22,000 square foot building, a former auto dealership, has been simply renovated to maintain its raw historic character. MOCAD’s ambitious series of public programs includes lectures, musical performances, films, literary readings and educational activities for area youth. Mobile Homestead, by late artist Mike Kelley, is a permanent art work located on the grounds of the Museum. It is both a public sculpture and a private, personal construction – based on the artist’s childhood home on Palmer Road in Westland. The ground floor serves as a community event space by and for a diverse public, as Kelley intended. MOCAD is generously supported by individual members, private and corporate foundations, and government agencies. More information can be found at mocadetroit.org.