



Museum of Contemporary  
Art Detroit



## MOCAD ANNOUNCES SPRING 2020 EXHIBITION SEASON

**THE NEW RED ORDER: *CRIMES AGAINST REALITY***  
APRIL 16–JUNE 7, 2020

**PETER WILLIAMS: *BLACK UNIVERSE***  
APRIL 16–JUNE 7, 2020

**CONRAD EGYIR: *TERRA NULLIUS***  
APRIL 16–JUNE 7, 2020

**DETROIT, MI** — For its Spring 2020 season, MOCAD presents three new solo exhibitions taking place across the Museum's galleries. These new exhibitions include **The New Red Order: *Crimes Against Reality***, curated by Pat Elifritz, Curator of New Media and Technology, The New Red Order's first solo museum exhibition; **Peter Williams: *Black Universe***, organized by MOCAD and co-curated by Larry Ossei-Mensah and Rebecca Mazzei, guest curators; and **Conrad Egyir: *Terra Nullius***, the Detroit-based artist's first museum exhibition, organized by MOCAD in partnership with the International Studio and Curatorial Program, and coordinated Tizziana Baldenebro, Ford Curatorial Fellow, with curatorial insights from guest curator, Larry Ossei-Mensah. [LEARN MORE.](#)

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## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

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### **THE NEW RED ORDER: CRIMES AGAINST REALITY**

**APRIL 16 – JUNE 7, 2020**

**CURATED BY PAT ELIFRITZ, CURATOR OF NEW MEDIA  
+ TECHNOLOGY WITH CURATORIAL SUPPORT FROM  
TIZIANA BALDENEBRO, FORD CURATORIAL FELLOW**

The New Red Order: *Crimes Against Reality* is the first solo museum exhibition of **The New Red Order**. Their largest presentation to date, this exhibition will showcase The New Red Order's wide-ranging work in video, experimental media, installation, and performance. Occupying MOCAD's Woodward and Video Room galleries, and accompanied by a series of public programs, the exhibition will explore how digital media actively shapes the historicization and interpretation of Indigenous material culture. *Crimes Against Reality* includes new video commissions shot on-location in Detroit and Southeast Michigan.

"The New Red Order raises important questions around the responsibility of cultural organizations in representing Indigenous ideas and sovereignty," says Pat Elifritz, Curator of New Media and Technology at MOCAD and curator of the exhibition. "Their work is critical, and imaginative, standing out in their unique focus on the instrumental role of digital culture and emerging technologies in defining debates around the enterprise of settler colonialism."

#### **ABOUT THE NEW RED ORDER**

The New Red Order describes itself as a public secret society facilitated by core contributors Adam Khalil (Ojibway), Zack Khalil (Ojibway), and Jackson Polys (Tlingit). Collaborating as an interdisciplinary network of informants—including, for

this exhibition, Bayley Sweitzer, Gaile Pranckunaite, Jim Fletcher, Inpatient Press, Walker Schiff, Walter Scott, KITE, Rezarta Seferi, Ashley Byler, and Jeremy Pheiffer, among others—The New Red Order co-produces video, performance, and installation works that confront settler colonial tendencies and obstacles to Indigenous growth and agency. Recent presentations include the inaugural Toronto Biennial of Art and the Whitney Biennial 2019.

### **ABOUT THE EXHIBITION**

The New Red Order: *Crimes Against Reality* is organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit and curated by Pat Elifritz, Curator of New Media and Technology, with curatorial support from Tiziana Baldenebro, Ford Curatorial Fellow. *Crimes Against Reality* is the largest installment to date in *Unboxing*, a program series dedicated to emerging ideas at the crossroads of technology, new media, and contemporary art.

Exhibitions and public programs at MOCAD are supported by the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation. The New Red Order: *Crimes Against Reality* is generously supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

### **ABOUT THE UNBOXING SERIES**

The New Red Order: *Crimes Against Reality* is the next installment in an ongoing series of exhibitions, screenings, and performances at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit dedicated to emerging ideas at the crossroads of technology, new media, and contemporary art. Known as *Unboxing*, the series is a spotlight for new perspectives on digital culture in the museum context. The series provides MOCAD with a dedicated platform for engaging topics unique to art of the twenty-first century, demonstrating the Museum's long-term commitment to artists pushing the boundaries of new media and technology.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supports the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in experimenting with technology and new media to engage regional and international audiences within and beyond the museum walls. Supported programs include the program series *Unboxing*; the online platform *Daily Rush*; the long-term emerging technologies initiative *Radix: Experience in the Age of Digital Everywhere*; and a series of future-focused, tech-based investments across the MOCAD campus.

*The Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit acknowledges that its building at 4454 Woodward Avenue is built on unceded Indigenous lands, specifically the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, comprised of the Ojibway, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi.*

Image: The New Red Order, *Culture Capture: Terminal Addition* (2019) video still.

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## PETER WILLIAMS: BLACK UNIVERSE

APRIL 16 – JUNE 7, 2020

CURATED BY LARRY OSSEI-MENSAH, GUEST CURATOR  
AND REBECCA MAZZEI, GUEST CURATOR

MOCAD announces **Peter Williams: *Black Universe***, an exhibition that surveys Williams' figurative and abstract paintings. Williams' visually compelling works intertwine art historical references, allegories, current events, and personal life experiences. In this two-part exhibition, which presents more than two dozen paintings, Williams addresses difficult social issues, such as racial discrimination and violence, through grotesque figures, vibrant compositions, and symbolic imagery. "Where do Black people go during times fraught with pain and sorrow?" Peter Williams asks. "What of our future consciousness?" Now a professor of painting at the University of Delaware, Williams taught for 17 years at Wayne State University in Detroit and was a well-established member of the arts community.

Organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in collaboration with guest curators Larry Ossei-Mensah and Rebecca Mazzei, the two-part exhibition highlights new figurative works from Williams' *Black Exodus* series (on view at MOCAD) and *Narration and Transition*, a selection of abstract paintings (on view at Trinosophes) that are an essential aspect of his dynamic oeuvre. His art presents an uncensored picture of dominant contemporary culture, one in which our desires, humor, complicity, and brutality are unexpressed.

The formal qualities of painting function purposefully in the artist's work as he slips between abstraction and figuration. Williams' vibrant color palette lures viewers in to explore themes regarding racial animosity, which they may otherwise find

challenging to confront. He also uses pattern and distortion as devices to “scramble things up,” emphasizing the disruptive and disorienting conditions that affect Black lives in American society. His characters may grab the viewer’s attention at first, but nothing can be taken at face value. A network of activity resides in the layers beneath the surface.

***Narration and Transition*** will open on Friday, April 17 from 6 to 9PM at Trinosophes (1464 Gratiot Avenue, Detroit) and features abstract painting by Williams from 2012-2019, including work he developed while living in Detroit. The survey highlights the unconscious, free-flowing meditative process through which Williams develops his coded visual language—the shapes, forms, and experiments with color that become recurring tropes in his representational work.

These paintings often convey multiple perceptual experiences at once, evoking potent imagery of both a physiological and psychological nature—totemic forms suggestive of sexuality and desire, ancient cultural significance, or even his own experience living in his body. Williams experienced great trauma as a young man, when he was involved in a car accident that left him disabled. Flesh, muscle, blood vessels, and cellular activity come to mind in the visceral forms he repetitively makes. These elements also become solutions for figuration, laying the groundwork for symbols and props that emerge in his narrative paintings, where they take on new meaning while carrying the 'DNA' of their origin.

The ***Black Exodus*** series at MOCAD presents a highly evolved Afrofuturist storyline that uses allegory, dark humor, and satire to explore a new ecologically-focused life for Black people. Moreover, this series seeks to examine the idea of space both literally and conceptually as a device that evokes the exploration of an inner and outer consciousness. The paintings featured in *Black Exodus* serve as a visual compliment to the works in *Narration and Transition*.

**Peter Williams: *Black Universe*** is organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit and is co-curated by guest curators Larry Ossei-Mensah and Rebecca Mazzei.

Exhibitions and public programs at MOCAD are supported by the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation. Lead funding for this exhibition is generously provided by The Modern Ancient Brown Foundation. Additional support provided by Luis De Jesus Los Angeles.

In support of this exhibition, MOCAD has partnered with Art+Culture Projects to produce a limited edition print of Peter Williams' work. Prints are available at the Art+Culture website.

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Peter Williams lives in Wilmington, Delaware and is Senior Professor in the Fine Arts Department at the University of Delaware. He earned his MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art and his BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. His paintings are held in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian’s American Art Museum; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Walker Art Center,

Minneapolis; Detroit Institute of Arts, MI; Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington; Howard University, Washington DC; Davis Museum at Wellesley College, MA; Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, OH; the Mott-Warsh Collection in Flint, MI; and The Bunker/Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection, Palm Beach; Jorge Perez Collection, Miami; and the McEvoy Foundation, San Francisco, among others. Peter Williams is represented by Luis De Jesus Los Angeles.

### ABOUT TRINOSOPHES

Trinosophes is an independent multidisciplinary art space that opened to the public in December 2011. Co-founded by musician/composer Joel Peterson and curator/writer Rebecca Mazzei, the venue presents performances, lectures, screenings, and exhibitions by more than 200 international and local artists per year.

Image: Peter Williams, *The Sudanese Market* (2019). Oil on canvas, 72 x 96 in. Courtesy of the artist and the Pizzuti Collection.



## CONRAD EGYIR: TERRA NULLIUS

APRIL 16 – JUNE 7, 2020

COORDINATED BY TIZZIANA BALDENEBRO, FORD CURATORIAL FELLOW WITH INSIGHTS FROM LARRY OSSEI-MENSAH, GUEST CURATOR

MOCAD is delighted to announce **Conrad Egyir: *Terra Nullius***, the first solo museum show for Detroit-based visual artist, Conrad Egyir. For this debut, Egyir

created a new body of work while in residency at the International Studio & Curatorial Practice (ISCP) in New York City during the summer of 2019, sponsored by The Kettering Family Foundation. The works in this exhibition focus on figurative characters that reside or bestride three geographical spaces—Detroit, New York, and Aburi, Ghana—and how the cultures of each of these locales define citizenship and migration. Moreover, this new body of work explores how the cultures of each of these locations define citizenship, migration, hybrid spaces, and political and religious revolutions. At the core of the exhibition, is finding similarities among the three psycho-social terrains and synthesizing them into a new space. *Terra Nullius* is a Latin expression meaning "nobody's land," which Egyir uses as a metaphor to navigate this new world his work inhabits in between the three cities that have influenced the creation of this new body of works. Within this new world, devoid of political and legal constructs, its residents behave as stewards of time, resources, and space.

“It is an honor work in tandem with MOCAD and ISCP to present Conrad Egyir’s first museum solo exhibition. Egyir is a rising star in the Detroit artist community whose imaginative narratives and visually arresting paintings address contemporary American culture through the lens of his Ghanaian heritage. This cultural juxtaposition and exploration provide a robust platform for rich discourse about identity and how place can inform an artistic practice,” says guest curator Larry Ossei-Mensah.

The exhibition will feature a series of new works by Conrad Egyir. Conrad Egyir: *Terra Nullius* is organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in partnership with the International Studio & Curatorial Program. Conrad Egyir: *Terra Nullius* is coordinated by Tizziana Baldenebro, Ford Curatorial Fellow with curatorial insights from guest curator Larry Ossei-Mensah.

Exhibitions and public programs at MOCAD are supported by the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation. Lead funding for this exhibition is generously provided by The Kettering Family Foundation, with additional support provided by Jessica Silverman Gallery.

In support of this exhibition, MOCAD has partnered with Art+Culture Projects to produce a limited edition print diptych of Conrad Egyir’s earlier works. Prints will debut at the Art+Culture booth at the Armory Show and with a limited number of hand-embellished works exclusively available at MOCAD.

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Born and raised in Ghana, Conrad Egyir’s creative practice draws from a pool of uniquely coded Ghanaian texts and visually based language systems. In an exploration of relationships between his past experiences in Africa and his present residence in the United States, he is drawn to themes that define the past and present, the image and self, and predestination and free will. His practice analyses the relationships between the semiotics and historicity of these themes as a grappling coalescence of postcolonial upbringing and western higher education.

Conrad Egyir received a B.A. from Judson University, Elgin, IL for Studio Art (2015) and an M.F.A in Painting from Cranbrook Academy of Art Bloomfield Hills, MI (2018). He has been an artist in residence at the International Studio & Curatorial Program

(2019), Vermont Studio Center, in VE (2018), ACRE, in WI (2018), Ox-Bow (2018), and Talking Dolls in Detroit, MI (2017). During his graduate education he worked as an art instructor with ArtRoad, a nonprofit organization sponsored by Mercedes-Benz, that revives art education in Detroit public schools where it was once deprogrammed due to lack of funding. Egyir is represented by Jessica Silverman Gallery, and lives and works in Detroit, MI.

## **ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIO & CURATORIAL PROGRAM**

The International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP is New York's most comprehensive international visual arts residency program, founded in 1994. ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences. Over 1,400 artists and curators from more than 85 countries, including the United States have undertaken residencies at ISCP.

Image: *Joseph's Lullaby* (2019). Oil, acrylic, mounted plexi, glitter, synthetic flowers and wood on canvas 86 x 108 in. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco.

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## **ABOUT MOCAD**

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 include lectures, musical performances, films, literary readings, and educational activities for area youth. MOCAD is generously supported by individual members, private and corporate foundations, and government agencies. Learn more at [mocadetroit.org](http://mocadetroit.org).

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### **MOCAD Support**

MOCAD operations are supported by J. Christopher and Anne Reyes Foundation, Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, Hudson-Webber Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Maso Corporation, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, and National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from Quicken Loans Community Fund and Marjorie and Maxwell Jospey Foundation.

MOCAD capital support for the Future Fund is provided by the Richard and Jane Manoogian Foundation and the Mandell and Madeleine Berman Foundation. The A. Alfred Taubman Foundation and the Reyes Family Foundation

The ESB/SKS Junior Docents and other educational programs are supported by the Edith S. Briskin/Shirley K. Schlafer Foundation.

MOCAD Youth Programs are supported by the Applebaum Family Compass Fund, the Mandell and Madeleine Berman Foundation, the Vera and Joseph Dresner Foundation, the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Edith S. Briskin/Shirley K. Schlafer Foundation, Plum Market, and Heart of Neiman Marcus.

Mike Kelley's *Mobile Homestead* is commissioned by

supports the Julia Reyes Taubman Challenge Grant, a matching campaign for the Future Fund. Future Fund supporters include: Cate Strumbos + Dozer, Robert P. Holley and Martha J. Spear, Ralph Basile, Connie Jacob, Ilene Emmer, Richard H. Shoemaker and James E. Ruud, Addie Stone-Richards, Katherine D. Rines, Lynn Crawford, Alison Oehler, Jay Reeg, Gary Hawkins, and Renée Young.

MOCAD exhibitions and public programs are supported by the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supports MOCAD in experimenting with technology and new media to engage regional and international audiences both inside and outside the museum's walls. Supported programs include *Daily Rush*, an online exhibition program for experimental media and moving image; *Radix: Experience in the Age of Digital Everywhere*, MOCAD's long-term new media and technology initiative; and a series of future-focused, technology-based enhancements to the MOCAD campus.

MOCAD's Curator of New Media + Technology is supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

MOCAD's 2016-2021 Strategic Planning Initiative is funded in part by a generous grant from The Kresge Foundation.

Martin Creed's façade project, *Work No. 790: EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALRIGHT* (2007), is sponsored by generous support from the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, Spectrum Neon, and the Applebaum Family Compass Fund.

Support for the Susanne Feld Hilberry Senior Curator is provided by the Susanne Feld Hilberry Endowment for the Arts and the Ford Foundation.

The Ford Curatorial Fellows at MOCAD are supported by the Ford Foundation.

MOCAD's connectivity initiative is supported by the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Legacy Funds at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

Artangel in association with MOCAD, LUMA Foundation, and Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, with the generous support of the Artangel International Circle. Support for Mike Kelley's *Mobile Homestead* is provided by the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts.

The A. Alfred Taubman Foundation is the presenting sponsor for *Robolights Detroit*. Additional support is provided by Robert S. Taubman, The Eisner Foundation, and Dale C. Rosenbloom.

Richard Prince: *Portraits* is generously supported by the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation, with additional support by Rena and Marc Gardner.

*The New Red Order: Crimes Against Reality* is generously supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Support for Peter Williams: *Black Universe* is provided by Modern Ancient Brown.

Lead funding for Conrad Egyir: *Terra Nullius* is generously provided by The Kettering Family Foundation, with additional support provided by the Jessica Silverman Gallery.

Funding for *Crossing Night: Regional Identities x Global Context* is provided in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support for the exhibition was provided by Glenn Charles, Eric T. McKissack, André Des Rochers, and Josef Vascovitz & Lisa Goodman. Support for *States of Flux* programming is sponsored in-part by the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design at the University of Michigan.

MOCAD would like to thank our Leadership Circle (Linda Dresner and Ed Levy, Roz and Scott Jacobson, Sonia and Keith Pomeroy, Jane and Ed Schulak, Sandy Seligman, and Robert Taubman) for making these programs possible: Mike Kelley's *Mobile Homestead*, Lectures, Poetry, Performance Art, Exhibitions, Film, DEPE Space, Music, Family Day, Public Programming, Education, Literature, and Museum Operations.



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