

MOCA ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT: 2024



MOCA

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) was founded by a group of visionary artists, philanthropists, and civic and business leaders in 1979 with the mission of building a permanent forum for contemporary art in Los Angeles. With a world-class collection of nearly 8,000 objects, MOCA is committed to the collection, presentation, and interpretation of art created after 1940 in all media. The museum has achieved remarkable growth with two Los Angeles locations of architectural renown; education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; and groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time.

MOCA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

The MOCA Environmental Council is an affinity support group of The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), furthering environmental responsibility in the exhibitions and operations of the museum. The council works in active partnership with and for diverse communities, both internal and external to MOCA, to contribute to environmental justice and planetary wellbeing.

During the 2024 report period, the MOCA Environmental Council was led by Council Founders and Co-Chairs David Johnson and Haley Mellin. 2024 Council Members were Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Tim Disney, Aileen Getty, and Shari Leinwand. Expert advisors to the Council were Karl Burkart, Illina Frankiv, Dan Hammer, Lisa P. Jackson, Lucas Joppa, Jen Morris, Calla Rose Ostrander and Enrique Ortiz. MOCA Executive Director Johanna Burton is the ex-officio member of the Council and assures continuity and communication between the Council's priorities and the museum's activities and operations. Council meetings are organized and facilitated by Environmental & Sustainability Strategist Kelsey Shell and are attended by Chief of Public Engagement Learning & Impact Lisa Mark and a curatorial liaison to the Council; the 2024 liaison was former Associate Curator Rebecca Lowery.

At the close of her 5-year term, Co-Founder and Artist Co-Chair Haley Mellin cycled off of the Council. We are grateful to Haley for her leadership and for building a meaningful framework and foundation for environmental action at the museum and beyond. We are also grateful to Artist Member Njideka Akunyili Crosby, who cycled off of the Council at the end of her term, for her partnership and service over the years. We are thrilled that Andrea Bowers has joined as the new Artist Co-Chair and look forward to the exciting work ahead together. We were also delighted to welcome two new advisory board members for 2025: Clíodhna Murphy, Global Head of Environmental Sustainability for Hauser & Wirth, and John Quigley, leading environmental, strategist, organizer, and artist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In our fourth annual sustainability report, we share MOCA's progress from 2024 along with selected projects for 2025. We are deeply grateful to our exceptional staff and the Environmental Council members and advisors, past and present.

COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY BUILDING

Shifting institutional culture requires a shared vision, open communication, and collaboration. To achieve sustainable outcomes that are beneficial for all, we must work together. In line with this philosophy, the museum and its Environmental Council have focused on building community, sharing information, and developing capacity. Over the course of this year, the museum has engaged with various collectives, organizations, and foundations, including the Climate Toolkit, the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative, Manitou Fund, Non-Human Teachers, the Getty Foundation & PST ART, the Schmidt Family Foundation, and Visions2030.



Frankenthaler





For Earth Month, the Green Team Staff Experience working group initiated **Climate Action Bingo**, a museum-wide sustainability game. For each sustainable step taken—from line drying laundry to taking public transportation—participants crossed out a square on a custom Bingo board. Participants who scored a Bingo won prizes including native wildflower seeds and reusable silverware.

2025

In the wake of the devastating fires in Los Angeles, the Green Team, along with staff across the museum, are focusing efforts on **organizing mutual aid and resources for victims of the Eaton and Palisades fires**. This devastating climate disaster in our community further

underscores the urgency of this work, and the important role institutions can play in supporting and rebuilding their communities.

EXHIBITIONS



On June 23, the museum opened **Josh Kline: Climate Change**, curated by former Associate Curator Rebecca Lowery, supported by Curatorial Assistant Emilia Nicholson-Fajardo. The exhibition was an ambitious, immersive suite of science fiction installations that imagined a future sculpted by a ruinous climate crisis and the ordinary people destined to inhabit it. In this vision, catastrophic sea-level rise inundated the world's coasts, resulting in hundreds of millions of traumatized refugees. What happens in a world where the systems built to sustain and extend capitalist enterprise and global hegemony melt down their own foundations? Kline opens the door to such a future, inviting us to place ourselves within it and consider the rear view. The exhibition was on view through January 5, 2025, and was supported by the MOCA Environmental Council.

On September 15, the museum kicked off **Olafur Eliasson: OPEN**, MOCA's contribution to Getty's PST ART initiative, curated by Senior Curator José Luis Blondet, with former Associate Curator Rebecca Lowery, supported by Curatorial Assistant Emilia Nicholson-Fajardo and former Curatorial Assistant Anastasia Kahn. The Icelandic-Danish artist presented a new site-specific installation that extended his career-long exploration of light, color, geometry, and environmental awareness. A series of large-scale optical devices designed specifically for MOCA's Geffen Contemporary galleries respond to the building itself, as well as to the everchanging atmosphere of Los Angeles. These kaleidoscopes draw on an earthly and elemental sense of awe, connecting audiences to their natural surroundings and awareness of nature. The exhibition will be on view through July 6, 2025, and is supported by the MOCA Environmental Council.

On the occasion of *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN*, the Exhibition Management team, in consultation with MOCA's Environmental & Sustainability Strategist Kelsey Shell, developed a **sustainability**

clause for commission contracts. The boilerplate clause included below will be adapted for future artist agreements to ensure sustainability is a consideration in all artist collaborations from the outset:

Artist and MOCA endeavor to incorporate environmental responsibility into the ideation and execution of the Work and all related programs/events. This may include but is not limited to reconsidered travel, art shipment, material choices, installation practices, and program/event planning. This work is undertaken in the spirit of collaboration and openness toward shared values of sustainability and environmental responsibility.

As part of the museum's participation in PST ART, teams across MOCA fed into a **Climate Impact Report** for *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN*. This included shipping information compiled by the Registration team, material lists contributed by the Exhibition Production team and Studio Olafur Eliasson, travel information shared by the Curatorial team, energy data provided by the Operations team, and a narrative report written by the Environmental & Sustainability Strategist. The report, along with reports for 65+ other PST ART exhibitions, will be collectively analyzed and published by Getty as a case study in sustainable exhibition practices.

On November 15-17, MOCA presented ***Titanic Depression***, a multimedia performance by Dynasty Handbag, the subversive and dystopian alter ego of artist Jibz Cameron. The performance is a send up of James Cameron's 1997 film, *Titanic*, reimagining it as a hilariously bleak parable of human arrogance. Combining animation, video, soundscapes, improvisation, and physical comedy, Dynasty Handbag addresses issues of class and gender inequality; our collective mortality; and runaway, consumer-driven climate disaster. In Dynasty Handbag's world, the notorious iceberg melts in balmy weather before the Titanic ever reaches it, the vessel sinking anyway in a tour de force of nonsensical, collective doom—a tragicomedy of humanity's own making that no amount of metal straws or fastidiously-sorted recycling will fix. The performance was organized by Alex Sloane, Curator of Performance, and Amelia Charter, Producer, with Michele Huizer, Programming Assistant, and was underwritten by the MOCA Environmental Council.

2025

In Fall 2025, MOCA will present the US premiere of ***Les Oiseaux***, a new choreographic work for six dancers by Lenio Kaklea. Drawing on philosopher Vinciane Despret's text *Living as a bird* (*Habiter en oiseau*) and Rachel Carson's early ecological manifesto, *Silent Spring* (1962), the performance focuses on studies of birds—their movements, sounds, and social behaviours—and how birds are impacted by human-made environmental disaster. Through the performance, Kaklea uses movement, sound, and video to draw attention to the steady disappearance of bird species over the last forty years, which has in turn become a symbol for the widespread loss of environmental and ecological biodiversity. This MOCA Co-commission

will be presented as part of Wonmi's WAREHOUSE Programs and is supported by Nora McNeely Hurley and the Manitou Fund.

THE ERIC AND WENDY SCHMIDT ENVIRONMENT & ART PRIZE



This past Spring, MOCA announced the **Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize**, a juried prize that supports artists whose practices address critical intersections in art, architecture, design, climate, conservation, sustainability, and environmental justice. Twenty-five jurors across fields including climate science, contemporary art, and community practice put forth artists for consideration who were invited to submit a proposal.

After receiving thirty-one exceptional proposals, a five-person jury selected the inaugural winners of the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize. Inaugural jury members for 2024 were: Johanna Burton, Maurice Marciano Director of MOCA; Maria Seferian, President, Hillspire and Board Chair, MOCA; Dan Hammer, Managing Partner at Ode, Co-founder at Clay, and Advisor to the MOCA Environmental Council; John Kenneth Paranada, Curator of Art and Climate Change, Sainsbury Center; and Carson Chan, Director of the Emilio Ambasz Institute for the Joint Study of the Built and the Natural Environment, MoMA.

On October 30, MOCA announced that the inaugural Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize would be awarded to **Julian Charrière** (b. 1987 in Morges, Switzerland; lives and works in Berlin, Germany) and **Cecilia Vicuña** (b. 1948 in Santiago, Chile; lives and works in New York, NY, and Santiago, Chile). The Prize was originally intended to be awarded to one artist, but after productive deliberations, the jury selected both Charrière and Vicuña for their unique yet complementary approaches to addressing environmental issues through art. Curatorial, Exhibition Management, and Exhibition Production teams will work with Charrière and Vicuña on the conceptualization and realization of their projects, to be unveiled at MOCA in 2026. Project conversations will foreground sustainable considerations from the outset, including material lifecycle, design for deinstallation, reduced travel, and more responsible packing and shipping.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS & EDUCATION



This year saw a continuation of the MOCA Climate Conversations series, as well as the introduction of Sustainable Skillbuilding workshops, and stellar stand-alone programs exploring ecology and plant intelligence. Environmental lenses were also brought to bear on MOCA's evergreen education offerings, including Family Projects, Sunday Studio, and MOCA Teens workshops. Environmental programming and education in 2024 was made possible through the generous support of Nora McNeely Hurley and the Manitou Fund.

The **Sustainable Skillbuilding** series features free all-ages workshops that pop up at MOCA events. These offer a hands-on entry point to climate action through practical learnings and skills. The first season included:

- April: Composting with CompostableLA at the Plant Sale
- June: Visible Mending with Dizzy Studios at Sunday Studio
- October: Pottery Remix with Remainders Creative Reuse at GAAAA
- December: Let's Get in a Pickle Together with Picklé at Sunday Studio

On April 21, **The Plant Sale** returned to MOCA for its second year. Artist Alika Cooper's itinerant collaborative event brought together artists and growers from across the Los Angeles basin to celebrate and sell plants & related wares.

On July 13, MOCA hosted **Optimism in Action: a Climate Solutions Workshop with Pachamama Alliance**, which explored how collective behavioral shifts and regenerative thinking can defuse the existential threat of climate change within a generation. Led by Will Grant, Director of Community Action and Strategy for Pachamama Alliance, this workshop offered tools to turn climate despair into action.

On September 21, the Public Programs team organized a screening of the 1979 documentary **The Secret Life of Plants**, a cult film which introduced the concept of plant intelligence into popular culture with an original score by Stevie Wonder. The screening was a co-program with

Los Angeles-based environmental storytelling non-profit Non-Human Teachers, and was introduced by a delightfully inventive presentation by their Executive Director Christian Cummings on the field of plant intelligence since 1979.



The season culminated with **A Climate Symposium: Landscapes on the Edge**, a half day symposium on October 21 which gathered speakers from the wider Los Angeles basin to discuss climate history, public policy, activism, environmental justice, and ecological conservation. This symposium addressed themes brought forward by *Josh Kline: Climate Change*, including the impacts of geography, capitalism, and chaotic weather on global and local communities. While Kline's work is explicitly science fiction, the afternoon of talks presented an opportunity to hear from experts working in the field engaging with hard science and real data. The day was divided into three sections:

- CAUSES outlined the history of the climate crisis with a keynote from [Dr. Veerabhadran "Ram" Ramanathan](#), who discovered the greenhouse effect of chlorofluorocarbons in 1975 and made critical contributions to the discourse of Global Warming, garnering the Blue Planet Prize.
- EFFECTS explored the present-day and near-future impacts of the climate crisis including heat, rampant consumerism, environmental injustice, and destructive weather with presentations from [Dr. Rong Fu](#), [Dr. Alesia Montgomery](#), [Dr. Mark Stoll](#), and [Dr. Bharat Jayram Venkat](#).
- STRATEGIES laid out educational, activist, mitigation and adaptation strategies to create a different future with presentations from [Dr. Edward Barbier](#), [Dr. Peter Kalmus](#), [Dr. Aradhna Tripathi](#), and [Justin Winters](#).

The program was jointly organized by MOCA Environmental Council Co-Founder Haley Mellin, artist Josh Kline, and Environmental & Sustainability Strategist Kelsey Shell, with support from Programming Associate Alitzah Oros. The program was moderated by Haley Mellin, with Josh Kline joining for group discussions at the end of each section of the program.

The Education team presented the Family Project ***Planting the Plaza: Envisioning a Greener LA*** alongside the exhibition *Josh Kline: Climate Change*. The project invited visitors to grow an imaginary garden and visualize a greener future. Visitors were encouraged to tap into their inner environmentalist and artist by creating paper foliage inspired by native plants. By adding their creation to a growing paper mural, visitors collaboratively built an uplifting and expansive vision of a speculative future. Following up on last year's enriching artist collaborations with Debra Scacco & Joel Garcia and Aidan Koch, **the MOCA Teens** worked with interdisciplinary artist **iris yirei hu** to explore seeds and their ethnobotanical relationship to our lived experiences. They worked collaboratively on a zine, to be published in early 2025.

2025

On February 16, MOCA **culture:LAB** launched a residency and screening series with **Womxn In Windows** titled *home—land*, which negotiates themes of land, diaspora, and displacement through the lens of cross-generational ecofeminisms. Womxn in Windows is a platform for sharing the ideas of diverse and underrepresented womxn (cis, trans and non-binary inclusive) through moving image. The first program, *American Gurl*, is a presentation of 6 short film works from artists **Melvonna Ballenger, Shenny De Los Angeles, Ella Ezeike, Solange Knowles, Alima Lee, and Cauleen Smith**.

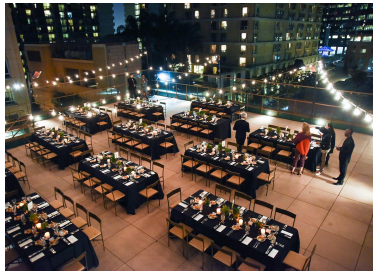
Future activations include a screening of **Raven Jackson's *All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt*** on March 9. A lyrical, decades-spanning exploration across a woman's life in and connected to the land of Mississippi, the feature debut from the award-winning poet, photographer, and filmmaker is a haunting and richly layered portrait, a beautiful ode to the generations of people and places that shape us. In the film, the landscape is a central character, its evolution captured through plants, animals, and ever-shifting environments. The sounds of birds, the texture of the soil, and quality of water are as central to the film as the dialogue and narrative.

On February 28, MOCA launched **Resilience & Rebuilding**, an online programming series exploring the impacts of the wildfires in Los Angeles, what we can learn from other climate disasters, and how we can more responsibly rebuild. The series will evolve over the spring season alongside rebuilding efforts, in response to what conversations and information our community needs.

On April 4, as part of First Fridays at Geffen, the MOCA Climate Conversations series will return with ***Like Lichen***, a program hosted in connection to *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN*. The conversation between anthropologist and slowness expert Joe Dumit and lichenologist Thorsten Lumbsch will explore slowness in perception, experience, biology, and field work. It will be moderated by Christian Cummings, Executive Director of the environmental storytelling nonprofit Non-Human Teachers.

Sustainable Skillbuilding will pop up at the Spring Sunday Studio on March 23 with a hands-on natural dye workshop led by **Berbo Studio** exploring the intersection of ecology and creativity through native plants. It will also have a presence at the **Plant Sale** on April 19, which will return for its third year at MOCA, with a tea workshop with **Blue Hour Goods** that is focused on the healing properties of native plants. Three additional Sustainable Skillbuilding workshops will take place in conjunction with the Summer Sunday Studio in June, Grand Avenue Arts All Access in October, and the Winter Sunday Studio in December.

REDUCED WASTE CYCLES



Waste reduction efforts took place across all departments of the museum, from opening dinners and public programs, to reconsidered procurement practices and exhibition design. The Events and Advancement teams organized **climate-responsible events** including artist dinners, member openings, the Women in the Arts luncheon, and the MOCA Gala. Environmental considerations for events included low-carbon menus; reusable service-ware when possible, and recyclable and compostable options when needed; event recycling; reduced food waste through leftover donation and composting; and invitations printed on 100% post-consumer waste paper.

In an effort to streamline green event planning, the Green Team Sustainable Events & Programs working group updated the **Events & Ops Guide**, a resource for organizing events and programs at the museum, to highlight sustainable rental options, plant based caterers, food donation partners, and more.

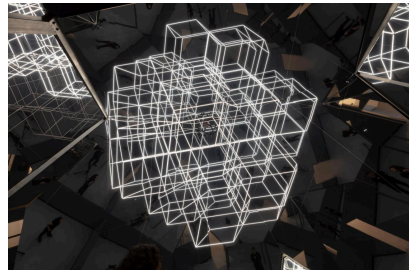
The Exhibition Production team diverted wood and acoustic foam used in *Paul Pfeiffer: A Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom* from landfill through reuse. The redwood from the *Vitruvian Figure* installation was reused by the exhibition's contractor; the acoustic foam panels in *Three Figures in a Room* were reused by MOCA staff in creative projects. They also developed **material recirculation plans** for *Josh Kline: Climate Change* and *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN*. It is essential to start these conversations early—the best time to account for material

end-of-life is during exhibition planning, not deinstallation.

2025

The Exhibition Production team donated materials from *Josh Kline: Climate Change* to **Habitat for Humanity** after deinstall in January. Sixty sheets of orange-stained OSB plywood and two hundred sheets of four-inch by eight-inch tempered hardboard will be reused to build homes for people who can not afford a traditional home in Los Angeles. The Exhibition Production team will also continue working on a **reuse plan** for materials from *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN*. This includes recycling aluminum structures from large scale works and identifying creative reuse partners for the delightfully reflective Flex Mirror material stretched across the aluminum armature.

DECARBONIZATION



Over the course of the year, teams across the museum worked together to reevaluate temperature and humidity ranges in the galleries in an effort to reduce emissions. As a result, MOCA is piloting wider climate control parameters in alignment with the **Bizot Green Protocol** to reduce energy consumption. This pilot is taking place during the run of *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN* and is a major step forward in MOCA's approach to museum environments. This project was researched and implemented in collaboration among the Registration, Operations, and Advancement teams.

To enable this pilot program, the MOCA Operations team installed a **digital energy management system** (DEMS) for the existing HVAC system to allow for more responsive temperature control at The Geffen. This purchase was supported through a grant from the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative that was matched by Suzanne and David Johnson, Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the MOCA Environmental Council. The DEMS controls the sixteen rooftop HVAC units at The Geffen and the upgrade is expected to result in a reduction of nearly 80,000 kWh annually, or approximately 25% in energy savings.

As part of the museum's ongoing goal to decarbonize its infrastructure, MOCA's two propane-powered forklifts will be replaced by **all-electric forklifts**. This upgrade, made possible through the generosity of Nora McNeely Hurley and the Manitou Fund, will reduce dependence on fossil fuels and will improve indoor air quality at the museum.

2025

After five institutional carbon calculations, the museum will shift its benchmarking focus from annual calculations to studies of the impacts of exhibition planning and design. In 2025, departments across the museum will feed into an impact report for a permanent collection show at Grand Avenue, which will include building energy, art transit, travel, materials, and community engagement. This report will add to a **growing dataset analyzing the impacts of diverse exhibitions** and exhibition decision-making at MOCA. The 2025 report will be analyzed alongside existing reports for *Pipiloti Rist: Big Heartedness Be My Neighbor* and *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN*, as well as planned reports for Schmidt Prize projects. The museum will conduct full institutional calculations in 2027 and 2030 to chart progress towards its reduction goals.

Following the close of *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN*, MOCA staff will **evaluate the impacts of the updated museum environments pilot**. Registration, Operations, Curatorial, and the Director's Office will develop guidelines for gallery temperature and relative humidity ranges moving forward based on these findings. The intention behind this shift is not to create a new set of rules, but rather to **adopt a more responsive, common-sense approach** that takes into account the needs of the objects on view and the exterior temperature in Los Angeles during the run of each exhibition.

RESOURCE SHARING & ART WORLD SUSTAINABILITY



Publicly communicating our efforts, successes, and learning opportunities is an essential part of MOCA's environmental mission. This means equal parts transparent sharing and active listening to our community. As part of Getty's PST ART initiative, MOCA co-organized the **Climate Convening of Los Angeles Museums (CCLAM)** with other sustainability leaders

participating in PST ART. The group meets quarterly to discuss common concerns and to share resources on art world sustainability. CCLAM includes representatives from the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, Armory Arts Center, ArtCentre School of Arts, Getty, Hammer Museum, Huntington Gardens, ICA LA, and LACMA. The group was convened by Laura Lupton and Debra Scacco of LHL Consulting, the Climate Impact Program leads for PST ART.

MOCA's Environmental & Sustainability Strategist Kelsey Shell has spoken about the museum's sustainability efforts through educational tours at the museum, webinars, online roundtables, and at convenings, including:

- March: Nevada Museum of Art
Virtual Roundtable: "Implementing Sustainability"
Organized by Senior Curator of Contemporary Art Apasra DiQuinzio in connection to her forthcoming exhibition *Into the Time Horizon* (2026)
*Transcript to be included in exhibition catalogue
- April: Art Bridges Convening
Art Unbound: Rethinking Art Accessibility & Management
Panel: "Tackling Climate Change: A Conversation on Leveraging Funding Opportunities"
Bentonville, Arkansas
- December: International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CiMAM) Annual Conference, hosted jointly by MOCA, LACMA, and The Hammer
Sustainable Futures: How? When? For Whom?
Panel: "What is our Agency?: The Contemporary Art Museum and Climate Crisis"
Presentation title: "Cultivating Empathy in Museum Sustainability Practices"
Los Angeles, California

2025

In the year ahead, MOCA teams aim to develop deeper collaboration with CCLAM on inter-institutional projects and resources, particularly as it relates to fire relief in the LA community. Environmental & Sustainability Strategist Kelsey Shell will also participate in NEXT IN Museums Innovation Summit in Madrid, Spain on April 23, in a panel discussion about art world sustainability, and the American Association of Museums conference in Los Angeles on May 7 as part of a panel organized by the Climate Toolkit.

CLOSING THOUGHTS ON THE YEAR AHEAD

2024 was a big year for climate action at MOCA with artist-driven climate storytelling projects including *Josh Kline: Climate Change*, *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN*, and *Titanic Depression*; the launch of the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize; meaningful emissions reductions through HVAC upgrades and the adoption of the Bizot Green Protocol; engaging public programs like *A Climate Symposium: Landscapes on the Edge* and the introduction of the *Sustainable Skillbuilding* workshop series; and an ever-deepening culture of sustainability within the museum led by the MOCA Green Team. We are grateful for the collaborations with our artists, members, supporters, colleagues, and the greater Los Angeles community that make this work possible.

The first few months of this year have been a stark reminder of the urgency of environmental advocacy and action, in and beyond the arts. The complex firestorms that devastated our city this January further concretized MOCA's commitment to climate action and environmental justice, and we aim to be a resource and balm for our community as it rebuilds. That this climate disaster took place against a backdrop of rampant environmental deregulation only makes this mission more critical. In the year ahead, we will continue to encourage discourse, difference, imagination, and collaboration; at MOCA we believe in the enduring power of art and of museums as a space for reflection and growth, something we need now more than ever.