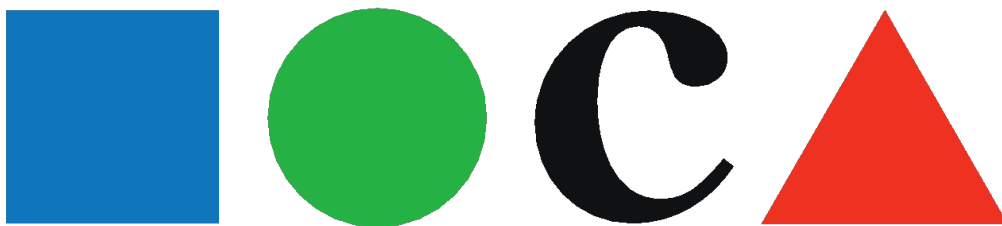


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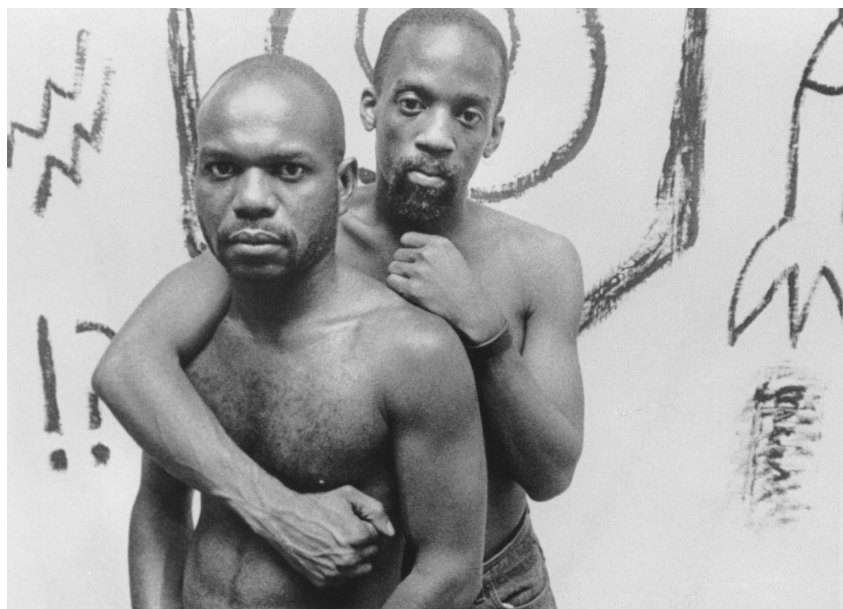


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2015

THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES, PRESENTS *TONGUES UNTIED*, A LOOK BACK AT ART FROM THE AIDS CRISIS AND MOCA'S HISTORY OF QUEER PROGRAMMING

EXHIBITION COINCIDES WITH 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

June 6–September 13, 2015
MOCA Pacific Design Center



LOS ANGELES—The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, presents *Tongues Untied*, an exhibition titled after the landmark film by poet, activist, and artist Marlon Riggs. *Tongues Untied* presents a selection of works from the museum's permanent collection by John Boskovich, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and others,

alongside Riggs's deeply personal and lyrical exploration of black gay identity in the United States. Made during a historical period marked by the onset of the AIDS crisis, the works navigate desire, love, loss, and mourning to engage and question sexual and political repression, expression, and deviation.

Tongues Untied's centerpiece and title-work is a 1989 feature-length video essay that mixes documentary and archival footage, personal testimony, dance, poetry, and music. Riggs's (b. 1957, Fort Worth, Texas; d. 1994, Oakland) semi-autobiographical coming-of-age story is told through a multiplicity of perspectives, including those of the late writers Joseph Beam and Essex Hemphill, and gives voice to a collective expression of rage, pleasure, pain, and humor in equal measure. *Tongues Untied* is an elegiac, erotic, and challenging portrait of "black men loving black men" in the face of racism, homophobia, and the attendant alienation experienced in being African-American, gay, and a gay African-American. During public hours the film will screen every hour on the hour.

When the film was broadcasted on PBS on July 16, 1991, it was met with both critical acclaim and condemnation from cultural conservatives. Two-thirds of the network's affiliates declined to air the film; right-wing Presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan illegally excerpted a section of the film during his election campaign and labeled it "pornographic and blasphemous art." In response, Riggs penned an op-ed for *The New York Times* in which he incisively critiqued the Republican leadership's persecution of racial and sexual difference by stating that "the vilest form of obscenity these days is in our nation's leadership." Riggs produced five more films before his untimely death due to complications from AIDS.

Also included in the exhibition: John Boskovich's *IT Series* (1992-96), a collection of thirty-eight matted and framed Polaroid photographs of the artist's apartment. The series presents domestic images—such as a television screen, friends, objects, and encounters—together with affirmations from a self-help book. Made over a period of years the work in many ways chronicles and culminates with the AIDS-related death of Boskovich's partner. Felix Gonzalez-Torres's "*Untitled*" (*A Corner of Baci*) (1990) consists of forty-two pounds of Perugina Baci chocolates spilled in a corner. Viewers are encouraged to take a piece and the work is replenished weekly. An allegory for loss (of weight, of hope, of friends and lovers) and renewal, the work—like Boskovich's series of photographs and Riggs's film—is also a form of portraiture.

The exhibition is accompanied by a selection of archival materials from MOCA's queer-related programming during the plague years of the AIDS crisis. This programming included a citywide bus shelter project by artist collective Gran Fury, and *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith*, a solo theater piece conceived and performed by Wooster Group member Ron Vawter at the museum's Ahmanson Auditorium in 1992. The archival display will be accompanied by Leslie Thornton's short film *The Last Time I Saw Ron* (1994).

Tongues Untied is organized by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and Curatorial Assistant Rebecca Matalon, and coincides with the 30th anniversary of the City of West Hollywood.

Generous support for MOCA Pacific Design Center is provided by Charles S. Cohen.



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In-kind support is provided by Baci Perugina.

Image credit: Production still from Marlon Riggs, *Tongues Untied*, 1989, video, image courtesy of Signifyin' Works

RELATED PROGRAMS

MEMBERS' OPENING

Friday, June 5, 7pm–9pm

MOCA Pacific Design Center

Please bring your MOCA membership card to admit you and a guest.

INFO membership1@moca.org or 213-621-1794

FREE for MOCA members; no reservations necessary

SCREENING: *TONGUES UNTIED*

Saturday, June 6, 3pm

West Hollywood Council Chambers

625 N. San Vicente Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90069

MOCA presents Marlon Riggs's landmark documentary *Tongues Untied* (1989) alongside his experimental video *Anthem* (1991). These films not only gave voice to the particular concerns of African-Americans at a critical moment during the AIDS crisis, but also influenced a generation of activist filmmakers to follow. The program is introduced by Jamillah James, Assistant Curator at the Hammer Museum. In 2012, James was part of the curatorial team for *Dirty Looks: On Location*, a series that activated various spaces in New York that had previously been key sites in queer history. This event is part of the City of West Hollywood's One City One Pride programming.

INFO education@moca.org or 213-621-1745

FREE; RSVP at moca.org

Free parking validation for adjacent 5-story structure

LOS ANGELES FILMFORUM AT MOCA PRESENTS

JACK SMITH: THE WHOLE FANTASY

Thursday, July 9, 7pm

MOCA Grand Avenue, Ahmanson Auditorium

In conjunction with *Tongues Untied*, Los Angeles Filmforum at MOCA presents Jack Smith's 16mm masterpiece *Flaming Creatures* (1962-3). Despite its humble production values—derided in the Congressional Record as “five unrelated, badly filmed sequences”—this excessive celluloid celebration of polymorphous perversity was instantly recognized as a major achievement of the New American Cinema. Famously, it was just as quickly condemned by right-wing politicians; banned, seized, and censored in a number of countries, Smith's little stab at “moldiness” was eventually considered by the Supreme Court. Smith himself always insisted the film was a comedy. *Flaming Creatures* was previously presented at MOCA



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in coordination with *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith*, a solo theater piece performed by Ron Vawter in 1992. The screening will also feature Smith's earlier *Scotch Tape* (1959-62), shot on location in a rubble-strewn landscape that would later become Lincoln Center, and *I Was a Male Yvonne DeCarlo* (1967-70s), an unruly assemblage which has been rarely screened.

INFO education@moca.org or 213-621-1745

TICKETS \$12 general admission, \$7 students with valid ID

FREE for MOCA & Los Angeles Filmforum members; must present current membership card to claim free tickets.

WALKTHROUGH: *TONGUES UNTIED*

Sunday, July 26, 3pm

MOCA Pacific Design Center

Exhibition organizer Rebecca Matalon conducts a walkthrough of *Tongues Untied* and highlights the museum's history of AIDS- and queer-related programming.

INFO education@moca.org or 213/621-1745

FREE; RSVP at moca.org

Please check moca.org for updates on related programs.

RELATED PROGRAMS FROM THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD

During the 30th anniversary year of the City of West Hollywood, the municipality presents a number of projects and initiatives that celebrate its activist origins. These include **One City One Pride**, May 22–June 30, 2015; **Art, AIDS, WeHo**, June 6–September 13, 2015, an exhibition of art impacted by the AIDS crisis; and **Dancers We Lost**, June–September 2015, a commemorative street banner campaign. For schedule and information visit weho.org.

ALSO OPENING AT MOCA

Matthew Barney: *RIVER OF FUNDAMENT*

September 13, 2015–January 18, 2016

The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

Nearly 7 years in the making, *Matthew Barney: RIVER OF FUNDAMENT* is Barney's largest filmic undertaking since his renowned five-part epic *The CREMASTER Cycle* (1994–2002). The eponymous exhibition brings together 14 large-scale sculptures weighing up to 25 tons, drawings, photographs, and vitrines that were inspired by or made in conjunction with the film. MOCA's presentation of the exhibition will include new works made since the film's premiere, which exemplify Barney's continued exploration of its themes. These works serve as physical manifestations and remnants of the ideas and performances throughout the titular symphonic film collaboration with composer Johnathan Bepler. *Matthew Barney: RIVER OF FUNDAMENT* is largely inspired by Norman Mailer's epic novel *Ancient Evenings* (1983), and draws its fantastical imagery from a wide range of sources including Mailer's life and work, ancient Egyptian mythology, and the rise and fall of the American auto industry.



THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA)

About MOCA: Founded in 1979, MOCA's vision is to be the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth with three Los Angeles locations of architectural renown; a world-class permanent collection of more than 6,800 objects international in scope and among the finest in the world; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

Hours: MOCA Grand Avenue (located at 250 South Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles) is open Monday and Friday from 11am to 5pm; Thursday from 11am to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm; and closed on Tuesday and Wednesday. The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (located at 152 North Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012) has the same hours as MOCA Grand Avenue during exhibitions. Please call ahead or go to moca.org for the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA exhibition schedule. MOCA Pacific Design Center, located at 8687 Melrose Avenue; West Hollywood, CA 90069, is open Tuesday through Friday from 11am to 5pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm; and closed on Monday. The MOCA Store at 250 South Grand Avenue is open Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 10:30am to 5:30pm; Thursday from 10:30am to 8:30pm; and Saturday and Sunday from 10:30am to 6:30pm.

Museum Admission: General admission is free for all MOCA members. General admission is also free for everyone at MOCA Grand Avenue and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm, courtesy of Wells Fargo. General admission is always free at MOCA Pacific Design Center. General admission at MOCA Grand Avenue and the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA is \$12 for adults; \$7 for students with I.D. and seniors (65+); and free for children under 12.

More Information: For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call 213 626 6222 or access MOCA online at moca.org.

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