



THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MOCA FORMS ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

A FIRST FOR A MAJOR U.S. ART MUSEUM



The Aileen Getty Plaza at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA.

LOS ANGELES—The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) announces the creation of an Environmental Council, the first for a major art museum in the United States. The Council is focused on climate, conservation, and environmental justice in furtherance of the museum’s mission. In development since Klaus Biesenbach became the Director of MOCA in 2018, the museum will unfold important initiatives made possible by the Council within the first year, including financial commitments and expertise to work toward institution-wide carbon negativity, carbon-free energy, environmentally-focused museum quality exhibitions, educational programming, related artist support, and reductions in emissions and consumption. MOCA plans to publicly share the Council’s efforts and progress as a platform for public dialogue and engagement on this urgent topic.

MOCA Environmental Council Founders and Co-Chairs are David Johnson and Haley Mellin. Founding Council members are Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Aileen Getty, Agnes Gund, Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and Brian Sheth. Expert advisors to the Council include Illina Frankiv, Dan Hammer, Lisa P. Jackson, Lucas Joppa, Jen Morris, Calla Rose Ostrander and Enrique Ortiz. MOCA Executive Director, Klaus Biesenbach, and MOCA Deputy Director, Advancement, Samuel Vasquez will be ex-officio members of the Council and assure continuity and communication between the Council’s priorities and the museum’s activities and operations.

The Council will support artists working on critical environmental issues by financially supporting meaningful exhibition and educational programming. An upcoming exhibition with the artist Olafur Eliasson (2024) will be supported by the Council. In preparation for future exhibitions, Biesenbach conducted virtual studio visits this summer with artists to discuss their work and issues of climate, synthetic biology, and environmental justice. These virtual studio tours are currently available on MOCA’s YouTube channel ([Anicka Yi](#) and [Olafur Eliasson](#)). As the

creative work of artists is pivotal to both awareness and action, the museum looks forward to this programming on climate engagement and pressing ecological issues in Los Angeles and globally. In an initial step forward, MOCA's upcoming exhibition *Pipilotti Rist: Big Heartedness, Be My Neighbor*, the first West Coast survey of the internationally renowned Swiss media artist, will be carbon neutral.

MOCA Director Klaus Biesenbach said, "I am grateful and excited MOCA will be the first U.S. museum to have an Environmental Council supporting the museum's meaningful understanding and engagement on environmental issues that have been a priority of mine since I joined the museum."

Environmental Council Co-Founder David Johnson said, "MOCA—through this new Environmental Council—is committed to institutional environmental responsibility and with an understanding that art is a force for global discourse, to support artists who channel that force for the environment. I couldn't be more delighted to work with my co-founder Haley, the other founding members and advisors."

Environmental Council Co-Founder, artist, and conservationist Haley Mellin said, "Art and conservation are about legacy and permanence. Our actions today are a method of committing to the long-term wellbeing of our planet."

MOCA Deputy Director, Advancement Samuel Vasquez said, "The founding of MOCA's Environmental Council cements our commitment to climate awareness and responsibility. We look forward to leveraging the transformative power of art to protect our world and museum for future generations."

FOUNDING COUNCIL AND INITIATORS:

Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani is the Chairperson of the Qatar Museums, Doha Film Institute, Reach Out to Asia, and Qatar Leadership Centre. She serves her country in multiple fields – among them education, culture, leadership, and philanthropy – and facilitates conversations across borders. As a public servant, Sheikha Al Mayassa's objective is to invest in Qatar's local community and celebrate the country's diversity using the visual arts as a vehicle for communication. Through her public work and support of the Qatar Vision 2030, she is building an exciting creative future for the country.

Njideka Akunyili Crosby is a Nigerian-born artist currently living and working in Los Angeles. She was a participant in La Biennale di Venezia, 58th International Art Exhibition, *May You Live In Interesting Times*, curated by Ralph Rugoff (2019). Recent solo exhibitions include *Njideka Akunyili Crosby: "The Beautiful Ones,"* The National Portrait Gallery, London (2018-19) and *Counterparts*, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX (2018-19), Baltimore Museum of Art, MD (2017-18). She is the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate of Art from Swarthmore College in 2019, a 2017 MacArthur Fellowship, and was awarded Financial Times' Women of the Year in 2016.

Aileen Getty established the Aileen Getty Foundation (AGF) to support a wide range of endeavors around the world that enhance the environment, communities, and the lives of individuals. In recent years, Aileen shifted the foundation's focus to organizations and individuals committed to responding to the climate emergency and treating our planet and its inhabitants with kindness and respect. As an extension of Aileen's climate-focused work, in 2019, she co-founded the Climate Emergency Fund (CEF) to support activists who are pushing for urgent climate action. She currently serves on the Advisory Board of CEF. Aileen devotes her energies to addressing the climate emergency and has served for several years on MOCA's Board of Trustees.

Agnes Gund is president emerita of the Museum of Modern Art and chair of its International Council. She is also chair emerita of MoMA PS1. Ms. Gund is founder and chair emerita of Studio in a School, a non-profit organization she established in 1977 in response to budget cuts that virtually eliminated arts classes from New York City public schools. A philanthropist and collector of modern and contemporary art, Ms. Gund serves on the boards of the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, and the Morgan Library & Museum. She is co-founder and chair of the Center for Curatorial Leadership. In 2017, she launched the Art for Justice Fund in partnership with the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors to support criminal justice reform. Ms. Gund received the National Medal of the Arts from President Clinton (1997), the J. Paul Getty Medal (2018), and the inaugural Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Woman of Leadership Award (2020).

David Johnson is the founder of Act 4 Entertainment, a film entertainment and new media content company. He lives in Los Angeles. In the environmental field, David executive produced *Company Town* and is currently in production on *Canary*, a documentary about the life of climate scientist Lonnie Thompson. He was previously a partner of the international law firm of White & Case. David is a Life Trustee and former Board of Trustees Co-Chair of MOCA. David is a board member and former Chair of Public Counsel Law Center and serves on the boards of California Institute of the Arts, Demos, Human Rights Watch (California), the Smithsonian National Board, Voices of a People's History of the United States, and the Yale School of Drama.

Haley Mellin is a painter and conservationist based in California. She founded the Art into Acres initiative, which connects single artworks in conserving large-scale forests for climate and biodiversity, supporting the conservation of 22 million acres of new protected areas. The initiative supported the first carbon-neutral exhibition in a US museum at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in 2019, and the first carbon neutral full-museum exhibition at the Guggenheim in 2020. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Journal*, New York and *Bischoff Projects*, Frankfurt. She attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, is the recipient of a Doctorate of Art from New York University, and received a New Museum Rhizome grant.

Brian Sheth is a private equity leader, philanthropist and passionate conservationist based in Austin. He is President of Vista Equity Partners and founder of the Sheth Sangreal Foundation. He is the Founding Board Chair of Global Wildlife Conservation, which is dedicated to wildlife conservation and biodiversity. The Sangreal Foundation's process-driven systematic approach connects people together, provides best practices and essential resources to deliver effective and measurable global impact. It has a strong focus on the health and biodiversity of our planet, the emotional wellbeing of children, music and arts education, and the support for veterans and their families. He believes in building strong coalitions with business leaders, other process-driven NGOs and citizens to ensure that no one stands alone while protecting life in a changing world.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL:

Klaus Biesenbach is the Maurice Marciano Director of The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). He was previously Chief Curator-at-Large at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and Director of MoMA PS1 in New York City. He founded Kunst-Werke (KW) Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin and the Berlin Biennale. He co-founded MoMA's Department of Media and Performance Art in 2009. Throughout his career, Biesenbach has organized programs and exhibitions addressing environmental topics, including the large-scale ecological festival EXPO 1 in 2013 and rescue efforts and art programs after Hurricane Sandy in Rockaway, New York with the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy in 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2018.

Samuel Vasquez is the Deputy Director, Advancement at The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA). Previously, Samuel oversaw the opening of The Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) and established it as the first fully solar-powered art museum in the US. He is committed to establishing equitable communities and sustainable practices for arts organizations and the cultural sector at large and believes that art is a catalyst for change.

SPECIALISTS/ADVISORS TO THE COUNCIL:

Illina Frankiv is a Global Senior Energy Program Manager at WeWork, where she created their first Energy Program. She specializes in energy management, renewable energy, and sustainability reporting for large corporations. With a strong belief in the clean energy future, she contributes to the movement by sitting on the Advisory Board, chairing the Supply Chain and International Committee, and acting as Faculty at the Renewable Energy Buyers Alliance (REBA). She summited Mt. Everest without a guide in 2018; becoming the 4th Canadian female to summit Mt. Everest via Tibet.

Dan Hammer is a founder and Partner at Earthrise Media and a Climate Fellow and Senior Advisor at X. He is the winner of the inaugural Pritzker Environmental Genius Award. Dan earned his PhD in environmental economics from U.C. Berkeley, where he was a Fellow at the Berkeley Institute for Data Science and won the 2019 Mark Bingham Prize for Excellence by a Young Alumnus. He previously served as a Senior Policy Advisor in the Obama White House and a Presidential Innovation Fellow at NASA. Dan was the Chief Data Scientist at the World

Resources Institute, where he co-founded Global Forest Watch. He has been a National Geographic Fellow, a Watson Fellow, and a Lang Opportunity Scholar.

Lisa P. Jackson is the vice president of environment, policy, and social initiatives at Apple, where she leads the company's work to address climate change and other environmental issues along with programs on education, policy and accessibility, and their Racial Equity and Justice Initiative. From 2009 to 2013, Lisa served as Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency. Appointed by President Barack Obama, she focused on reducing greenhouse gases, protecting air and water quality, preventing exposure to toxic contamination, and environmental justice. She serves on the boards of Tulane University, SF Film, The American Film Institute, Conservation International and Emily's List.

Lucas Joppa leads sustainability efforts at Microsoft as the company's first Chief Environmental Officer. He works to advance Microsoft's core commitment to sustainability through ongoing technology innovation, program development, policy advancement, and global operational excellence. With a combined background in both environmental science and data science, Lucas is committed to using technology to help transform how society monitors, models, and ultimately manages Earth's natural resources. He founded Microsoft's AI for Earth program in 2017—a five-year, \$50 million cross-company effort dedicated to delivering technology-enabled solutions to global environmental challenges.

Jennifer Morris is Chief Executive Officer of The Nature Conservancy, a global conservation organization working with partners around the world to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. Jennifer leads nearly 4,000 global staff whom seek to transform business practices, shape government policies, and leverage rigorous science to prove and scale on-the-ground conservation work. Jennifer brings more than 25 years of conservation leadership experience to her role as CEO. Previously, she was president at Conservation International, where she developed some of CI's most enduring programs, partnerships, and innovative strategies using business development as a tool to protect nature for the well-being of humanity. Jennifer is a passionate storyteller, avid outdoors enthusiast, and mentor to the future generations of conservation leaders.

Enrique Ortiz is a tropical ecologist (Princeton University), born and raised in Peru. Enrique is perhaps better known for his activism and leadership in Latin America on the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems. He has published extensively and is a frequent contributor to newspapers and environmental journals. He is a founder and board member of several innovative and successful Latin American NGOs. Enrique currently serves as President of the board of Amazon Conservation-ACCA, a leading Peruvian NGO. For over two decades he has worked for private philanthropy foundations supporting biodiversity conservation in the Andes and the Amazon regions, resulting in over 30 million acres of protected areas. He is currently the Senior Programs Director of the Andes Amazon Fund.

Calla Rose Ostrander is an independent Strategic Advisor dedicated to the well-being of people and planet. She specializes in climate change and agricultural policy, science communications, and movement building. Since 2013 she has worked to support the advancement of carbon farming, compost production and climate beneficial material economies in California, Calla has supported the successful scaling of regenerative agriculture to the state scale. Between 2008-2013 Calla served as the Climate Change Projects Manager for the City & County of San Francisco where she created and managed internal sustainability and GHG reporting systems and inventories, the San Francisco Carbon Fund, and community wide climate planning.

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About MOCA: Founded in 1979, MOCA is the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth; a world-class permanent collection of more than 7,000 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.

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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