



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 11, 2023

**MOCA PRESENTS FIRST SOLO MUSEUM EXHIBITION FOR LOS ANGELES–BASED ARTIST
EDDIE RODOLFO APARICIO THIS NOVEMBER**

EXHIBITION MARKS RETURN OF THE MOCA FOCUS SERIES

November 12, 2023–June 16, 2024
The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA



Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio, *La ceiba me salvó / The Ceiba Saved Me*, 2020, cast rubber with ficus tree surface residues on found cloth; glazed stoneware; twine; and wooden support, approx. 122 × 86 × 5 3/4 in. (309.9 × 218.4 × 14.6 cm). Collection of Michael Sherman and Carrie Tivador. © Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio, image courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles and Mexico City. Photo by Ruben Diaz.

LOS ANGELES—The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) is pleased to present *MOCA Focus: Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio* from November 12, 2023, through June 16, 2024, at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA. The first solo museum exhibition for Los Angeles–based artist Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio (b. 1990, Los Angeles), the exhibition explores Aparicio’s engagements with the Salvadoran communities in which he was raised, his formal experimentation with natural materials—including rubber, amber, glass, and clay—and his approach to social justice as a form of ecological justice. Admission to *MOCA Focus: Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio* is free courtesy of Carolyn Clark Powers.

MOCA Focus: Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio features artworks dating from 2016 to the present and includes the debut of three new large-scale sculptures specially commissioned for The Geffen Contemporary. Organized by Curator Anna Katz with Curatorial Assistant Anastasia Kahn, the exhibition marks the relaunch of the MOCA Focus series, which presents an artist's first solo museum show in Los Angeles and centers on new or discrete bodies of work.

"We are delighted to relaunch the museum's esteemed MOCA Focus series with an ambitious exhibition highlighting key elements of Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio's prolific practice, which often explores the interconnections between Central America and Los Angeles," said Johanna Burton, The Maurice Marciano Director. "Between the 1990s and mid-2000s, the historic MOCA Focus exhibition program was central to MOCA's mission to champion the art of our time and our identity as the only artist-founded museum in L.A. We are thrilled to reaffirm our dedication to providing artists with vital opportunities to collaborate with curators, exhibition specialists, and educators in the development, presentation, and interpretation of their work. With his ceaselessly imaginative and ambitious approach, Aparicio embodies the essence of Los Angeles, his birthplace, and brings forth a distinctive and original perspective at this auspicious stage in his career."

For this MOCA Focus presentation, Aparicio debuts three large-scale sculptures commissioned by MOCA and installed throughout a 3,500-square-foot gallery at The Geffen Contemporary. Two are primarily composed of prefossilized amber, a naturally occurring tree resin, and extend Aparicio's project of reckoning his art with his heritage in the context of Salvadoran Civil War (1979–92) and the subsequent mass migration of Central American refugees to Los Angeles. *Sepultura de semillas (Epitafio para la tumba de Adolfo Báez Bone)*, 2021–23, resembles large amber boulders embedded with sundry objects Aparicio gathered from Salvadoran neighborhoods in Los Angeles—cigarettes, car parts, dishware, twigs, leaves, and other bits of flotsam and jetsam—as well as archival documents related to the Central American solidarity movement. The site-specific installation *601ft² para el Lago Suchitlan / 601 sq. ft. for Lake Suchitlan* (2023) will be created by pouring liquid amber onto the floor, where it will solidify into a shape evoking El Salvador's Lake Suchitlán reservoir. The work also includes facsimiles of documents from the nonprofit Central American Resource Center (CARECEN).

"Aparicio deploys a wide range of natural materials and found objects to give shape to lived experiences of diaspora and solidarity often left out of the official historical record," said Katz. "Deeply rooted in the visual and cultural character of Los Angeles, Aparicio's work creates counter-archives of the communities he grew up in and implores us to consider the most critical issues of our city and our moment—from political speech to the immigration crisis—according to long arcs of nature and history."

The foundation of Aparicio's practice is "total material non-neutrality," which the artist initially realized through his *Caucho (Rubber)* series (2016–ongoing). *MOCA Focus: Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio* showcases a range of *Caucho* works, in which Aparicio casts the trunks of Los Angeles trees, frequently the ficus, slated for removal in rubber—the internal fluids of the *Castilla elastica*, a species native to El Salvador. The resulting impressions are textured with residual bark, exhaust particles, and graffiti marks. The casts couple with collages of found clothing and ephemera from the Pico-Union, Highland Park, and Westlake neighborhoods of Los Angeles, and are embellished with painted references to the presence and expression of the Central American diaspora in popular culture and the built environment. In this body of work, Aparicio invokes rubber's history as a vital pre-Hispanic Indigenous technology and its status as a material of imperialist trade, giving shape to immigrant communities' connections to land and place. At the core of Aparicio's practice is a commitment to the cultural and scientific knowledge of often marginalized and even vilified Central American immigrant communities, making MOCA's location in downtown Los Angeles, the heart of the Salvadoran diaspora, particularly resonant.

MOCA Focus: Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio is accompanied by a fully illustrated publication featuring approximately thirty full-color plates and an essay by Katz, which situates Aparicio's work within art history and social discourses of the present day. The catalogue is designed by Polymode Studio and inaugurates the Nimoy Emerging Artists

Publication Series (Nimoy Series), which provides artists with a crucial publishing opportunity at a breakthrough moment in their careers. The Nimoy Series is made possible thanks to generous support from Susan Bay Nimoy and her late husband, Leonard Nimoy, through the Nimoy Fund for Emerging Artists.

MOCA Focus: Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio is organized by Anna Katz, Curator, with Anastasia Kahn, Curatorial Assistant, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

Support for *MOCA Focus: Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio* as of September 11, 2023:

Major support is provided by Nora McNeely Hurley and Manitou Fund and the MOCA Environmental Council.



Additional support is provided by

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This exhibition is carbon calculated. The museum reduced greenhouse gas emissions through planning efforts and balanced the remaining emissions through Strategic Climate Fund donations. Support provided by the MOCA Environmental Council.

ABOUT EDDIE RODOLFO APARICIO

Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio (b. 1990, Los Angeles; lives and works in Los Angeles) received an MFA from Yale University in 2016 and a BA from Bard College in 2012. His work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Los Angeles State Historic Park, Clockshop (2021); Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles (2020); Páramo, Guadalajara (2019); The Mistake Room, Los Angeles (2018); and Green Gallery, New Haven, CT (2016). He has been included in group exhibitions at the Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts (2023); Denver Art Museum (2022); Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York (2022); Hauser & Wirth, New York and Los Angeles (2022); American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York (2022); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2021); El Museo del Barrio, New York (2021); Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas (2020); Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (2019); Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City (2018); Smack Mellon, Brooklyn (2017); and Abrons Art Center, New York (2016) among others.

Aparicio is a recipient of a Nancy Graves Grant for Visual Artists (2021); Alonzo David Fellowship (2018); California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Artists (2018); Schell Center for International Human Rights Fellowship, Yale University (2015); National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (2014); Elizabeth Murray and Sol LeWitt Studio Arts Award, Bard College (2012). He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2016. Aparicio's work is in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

ABOUT MOCA FOCUS

Between 1992 and 1999, Focus exhibitions offered an important platform for artists to present their work in their first solo museum presentation in Los Angeles. Dedicated to exhibitions of distinct bodies of work in a broad range of media, the series featured a roster of distinguished local and international artists, including Renée Green (1993), Franz West (1994), Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1994), Hiroshi Sugimoto (1994), Margaret Honda (1994–95), Toba Khedoori (1997), Catherine Opie (1997–98), and Jorge Pardo (1998). In the mid-2000s, the refreshed MOCA Focus series shifted to feature primarily emerging Los Angeles-based artists, presenting the first L.A.

museum solo exhibitions for Eric Wesley (2006), Lecia Dole-Recio (2006), Alexandra Grant (2007), and Sterling Ruby (2008).

With its return in 2023, MOCA Focus revives its mission of giving artists at the forefront of contemporary art their first museum presentation in Los Angeles and acknowledges the global dialogue to which Los Angeles actively participates and contributes. Featured artists work closely with MOCA's Curatorial and Exhibition teams to develop new work or present recent work, receiving support to produce and contextualize their practice. Each exhibition is accompanied by a monographic catalogue, which documents the artist's work and includes a discursive essay written by the curator.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

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 8,000 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.

Museum Admission: General admission to MOCA is free courtesy of Carolyn Clark Powers. Special exhibitions at MOCA are \$18 for adults, \$10 for students with ID and seniors (+65), and free for children under twelve and jurors with ID. Special exhibitions are free every Thursday from 5pm to 8pm. MOCA members always receive free admission to special exhibitions. **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.

Together Thursdays courtesy of Cliff and Mandy Einstein.

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CURRENT EXHIBITIONS:

[*Mapping an Art World: Los Angeles in the 1970s-80s*](#)

MOCA Grand Avenue
On view through March 17, 2024

[*Long Story Short*](#)

MOCA Grand Avenue
On view through May 5, 2024

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS & PROGRAMS:

Wonmi's WAREHOUSE Programs

[*KINK OUT: EPHEMERA*](#)

September 9–October 2, 2023
The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

Wonmi's WAREHOUSE Programs

[*Moriah Evans, Remains Persist, 2023*](#)

October 28–29, November 2–4, 2023, 4–8 pm
The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

[*Paul Pfeiffer: Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom*](#)

The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA
November 12, 2023–June 16, 2024

[*MOCA Focus: Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio*](#)

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[*Olafur Eliasson*](#)

The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA
Opens September 2024

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