



THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

**THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (MOCA) ANNOUNCES
MOCA GALA 2025, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BVLGARI**

**HONORING MOCA LEGENDS
THEASTER GATES, FRANK GEHRY, AND WENDY SCHMIDT**

**SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2025
THE GEFFEN CONTEMPORARY AT MOCA**



LOS ANGELES—The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) is pleased to announce its **annual Gala** on **Saturday, May 31, 2025** at **The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA** in Little Tokyo, in partnership with BVLGARI. This year, MOCA's Gala will inaugurate the new **MOCA Legends** format, which honors three luminaries from art, culture, and philanthropy that have been fundamental to the museum's evolution. Honorees for 2025 are **Theaster Gates**, **Frank Gehry**, and **Wendy Schmidt**, each of whose impact has helped cement MOCA as a leading force in presenting and preserving world-class contemporary art. The special evening will also feature a performance from GRAMMY-nominated artist **Tierra Whack**. Funds raised by the MOCA Gala directly support all museum programming, staff, and operations.

“The MOCA Gala is more than just a party—it is a celebration of the voices, ideas, and people that shape the museum,” said **Maria Seferian**, Chair of the MOCA Board of Trustees.

“MOCA’s status as a leading contemporary art museum would not be possible without the incredible roster of renowned collaborators throughout our long history,” said MOCA Board President **Carolyn Clark Powers**. “We’re proud to position the MOCA Gala moving forward as a platform to recognize legends like Theaster, Frank, and Wendy, who have radically transformed everything we do.”

“For nearly five decades, MOCA has been a site of artistic innovation and experimentation, celebrating the foremost artists and thinkers of our time to nurture dialogues across disciplines. As we launch MOCA Legends for the 2025 Gala this year, we’re proud to honor Theaster Gates, Frank Gehry and Wendy Schmidt, whose risk-taking, visionary lives and work have helped to galvanize and uphold this mission,” said **Johanna Burton**, Maurice Marciano Director. “Gehry’s renovation of MOCA Geffen in 1983 prioritized adaptive reuse and a bold, open layout that would come to host Gates’ first solo museum exhibition on the West Coast almost three decades later in 2011. Schmidt’s transformative philanthropic contributions drive the newly-founded Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize, which will present its first artist projects by Cecilia Vicuña and Julian Charrière at MOCA next year. Each of the honorees are cornerstones of our legacy, and exemplify the manifold ways arts communities can be built and sustained here in Los Angeles.”

“BVLGARI is proud to support MOCA with the 2025 MOCA Gala,” said Herve Perrot, BVLGARI North American President. “MOCA’s bold spirit and dedication to contemporary creativity mirror our own passion for craftsmanship and innovation. Together, we will celebrate the MOCA Legends who are shaping culture today while reaffirming our long-term commitment to Los Angeles’ dynamic art community.”

Throughout the Gala evening on May 31, MOCA will welcome artists, philanthropists, and leading entertainment and fashion industry figures from Los Angeles and throughout the globe. The 2025 Gala will begin with a cocktail reception held in the Aileen Getty Plaza, where guests will also have access to a special viewing of *Olafur Eliasson: OPEN* before the seated dinner. GRAMMY-nominated rapper and singer Tierra Whack will give a special performance during the event. Her 2024 debut album *World Wide Whack* received critical acclaim, and *Billboard* named her one of the best female rappers of all time in April 2025.

To purchase a table or seats, make a donation, and for more information, please contact gala@moca.org or visit moca.org/gala2025.

The 2025 MOCA Gala is presented in partnership with **BVLGARI**

Image credits (left to right): Theaster Gates, 2025. Photo by Joe Perri, courtesy of *hube* magazine; Frank Gehry, © Alexandra Cabri; Wendy Schmidt, courtesy of the Office of Eric and Wendy Schmidt.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (MOCA)

Founded in 1979, MOCA is the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth: a world-class collection of nearly 8,000 objects, international in scope with deep holdings in Los Angeles art; 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 new modes of 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) 621-2766 or access MOCA online at moca.org.

ABOUT BVLGARI

[Bulgari](https://www.bulgari.com) was founded in the heart of Rome in 1884. Over the decades, the Brand has established a worldwide reputation as magnificent Roman High Jeweler and icon of Italian art of living. Through a pioneering vision, the company's international success has evolved into a global and diversified luxury purveyor of products and services, ranging from fine jewels and high-end watches to accessories and perfumes, and featuring an extended network of boutiques and hotels. Demonstrated through its numerous philanthropic partnerships, Bvlgari deeply believes in innovating the present for a sustainable future through its commitment to Social & Environmental Responsibility and giving back – to nature and to the community. In 2024 the Maison announced the creation of Fondazione Bvlgari, reinforcing its devotion to building a meaningful tomorrow through care, generosity and long-term dedication.

ABOUT THEASTER GATES

[Theaster Gates](https://theastergates.com) is an artist whose practice finds roots in conceptual formalism, sculpture, space theory, land art, and performance. Trained in urban planning and within the tradition of Japanese ceramics, Gates's artistic philosophy is guided by the concepts of Shintoism, Buddhism and Animism - most notably honoring the "spirit within things." Foundational to Gates's practice is his custodianship and critical redeployment of culturally significant Black objects, archives, and spaces. Through the expansiveness of his approach as a thinker, maker, and builder, Gates extends the life of disappearing and bygone histories, places, traditions, and loved ones.

ABOUT FRANK GEHRY

The designs of [Frank Gehry](https://www.frankgehr.com)—one of the most innovative architects working today—grace numerous metropolitan skylines around the world. Known for their deconstructivist approach and creative use of materials, his buildings incorporate a wealth of textures that lend a sense of movement to his dynamic structures. Early in his career, Gehry created both sculpture and furniture, which similarly reflected his concern with inventive forms made from unexpected materials. The *Easy Edges* (1969–73) and *Experimental Edges* (1979–82) series of chairs and tables were made of industrial corrugated cardboard, while a later Knoll furniture series (1989–92) was made from pliable bentwood. Gehry was commissioned by the Formica Corporation to use a translucent plastic laminate, ColorCore, in a series of lamps consisting of radiant snake and fish forms (1983–86). The fish has been a recurring motif in Gehry's work, recognizable in the undulating, curvilinear forms of his architecture as well as various sculpture projects, including his *Fish Sculpture* at Vila Olímpica in Barcelona, Spain (1989–92), and his *Standing Glass Fish* for the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden (1986). The first *Fish Lamps* were shown in *Frank Gehry: Unique Lamps* in 1984 at the former Robertson Boulevard location of Gagolian in Los Angeles.

ABOUT WENDY SCHMIDT

[Wendy Schmidt](https://www.wendyschmidt.org) is a philanthropist and investor who has spent nearly two decades creating innovative non-profit organizations to work with communities around the world for clean, renewable energy, resilient food systems, healthy oceans and the protection of human rights. The critical interconnections between human activity, the land we live on and the ocean we depend upon are the central drivers of

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Wendy's philanthropic work. Through their philanthropy, Wendy and her husband Eric are working toward a healthy, resilient, secure world for all.

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