

FRONT
International
Cleveland
Triennial for
Contemporary Art
1460 West 29th
Street
Cleveland, OH



FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art Announces First Group of Project Highlights for *An American City*

July 14–September 30, 2018

Press and Professional Preview Days: July 12–13, 2018

CLEVELAND, Ohio (November 29, 2017) – FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art announces project highlights for its first edition, titled *An American City*, running July 14 through September 30, 2018.

This initial group of featured projects includes FRONT commissions and exhibitions that will activate unique and unconventional spaces throughout Cleveland, spotlighting particular sites, buildings and locations that carry social, cultural or political significance in relation to the city's history and current reality. In these spaces, FRONT artists will unveil a range of projects, including site-specific works that engage the city's rich identity while encouraging a broader contemplation of people and place among both residents and visitors.

FRONT's multi-part presentation will investigate the significance and meaning of staging a large-scale international triennial in the contemporary context. Bringing together more than seventy local, national and international artists across mediums and disciplines, FRONT will partner with sites throughout Cleveland and beyond to explore artistic collaborations, intellectual exchanges and curatorial dialogues connecting the city and the Great Lakes region to broader global, political and economic networks. FRONT's ambitious program will weave critical approaches to museum exhibitions, public and educational programs, residencies, publications, and research strategies in a complex presentation.



“FRONT’s commissions offer artists an opportunity to engage broader social issues within hyper-localized and regional contexts,” said FRONT Artistic Director Michelle Grabner. “By reconstructing, reinterpreting and offering resistance to contemporary political debates, histories and aesthetic forms, these artists are shaping discourse through symbolic, personal and poetic modes of address.”

Program highlights for the Triennial include artist commissions and site-specific projects at diverse cultural sites throughout Cleveland, listed below by project title name:

THE AMERICAN LIBRARY - Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA) at Cleveland Public Library

CITY CANVAS REEXAMINED - Julian Stanczak in Downtown Cleveland

A COLOR REMOVED - Michael Rakowitz at SPACES

FISH STORY AND LOTTERY OF THE SEA - Allan Sekula at the William G. Mather Iron Ore Ship/Great Lakes Science Center

FRONT FILM PROGRAM - Transformer Station

LOVE STORY - Candice Breitz at Playhouse Square

NIGHT COMING TENDERLY, BLACK - Dawoud Bey at St. John’s Episcopal Church

VOLATILITY SMILE - Philip Vanderhyden at the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

Descriptions for each project follows:

THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA) at Cleveland Public Library

Commissioned for Cleveland in partnership with Cleveland Public Library, this installation by Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA) celebrates the richness that immigration brings to a nation. The American Library consists of approximately six thousand books displayed in open bookcases, each wrapped in colorful African wax cloth, a prominent feature of the artist’s work. Stamped in gold upon each spine is the name of a first- or second-generation immigrant to the United States who has contributed significantly to a particular field of art, science or American culture, or the name of an immigration dissenter who opposed such ideas. Open borders, freedom of speech and blended



heritage are all central themes to Shonibare's work. This new project is a sequel to the artist's 2014 installation, *The British Library*, dedicated to honoring immigrants to the United Kingdom who made similar contributions to British society. Cleveland Public Library staff will contribute the names and categories selected for inclusion in the project, which will be accompanied by a proprietary website providing information on all the names included in the bookcase. The website will serve as a portal for visitors, both virtual and on site, to upload their personal immigration stories. The work was made possible by funds from VIA Art Fund.

CITY CANVAS REEXAMINED

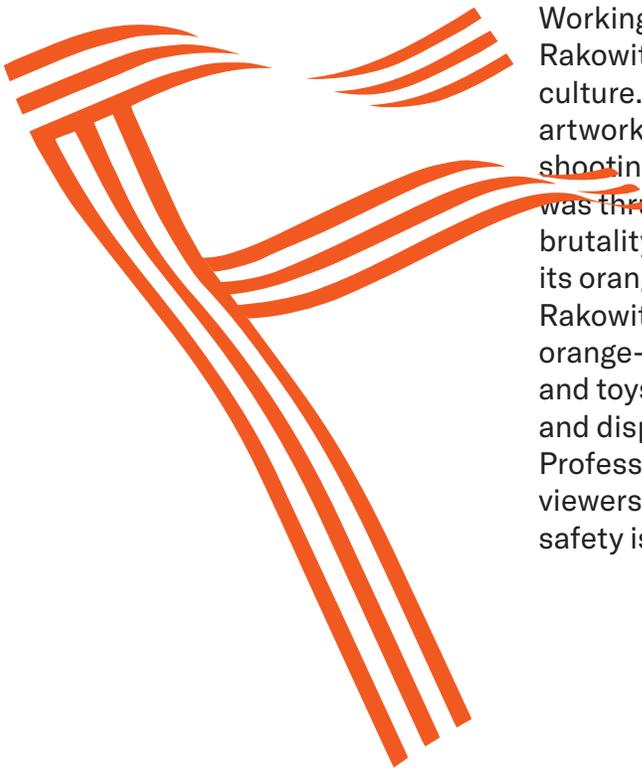
Julian Stanczak in Downtown Cleveland

This project reexamines *City Canvas*, an important public art effort undertaken in 1973–1974, which covered walls in downtown Cleveland with colorful murals by established Cleveland artists, including the late abstract painter Julian Stanczak. As an homage to Stanczak, the project will reinstate his mural on its original site at the Winton Manor on Prospect and 9th Street. While the original mural program was intended to enliven a moribund downtown, this commissioned series of outdoor works aims to explore relationships between abstraction and consumer culture, installed from the Public Square to Playhouse Square. Passersby will have the opportunity to witness a visual call-and-response between a beloved Cleveland artist and representatives of new directions in contemporary abstract painting. Additional murals will be projected using augmented reality technology, allowing visitors to envision projects that will materialize in Cleveland's downtown cityscape in future editions of FRONT.

A COLOR REMOVED

Michael Rakowitz at SPACES

Working in installation and performance, Chicago-based artist Michael Rakowitz brings to the fore issues of political conflict in American culture. His project for FRONT, titled *A Color Removed*, is a citywide artwork that contemplates the right to safety. After the 2014 fatal shooting of twelve-year-old Tamir Rice by a police officer, Cleveland was thrust into the national conversation about race and police brutality. At the time of the shooting, Rice was holding a toy gun with its orange safety cap removed. In response to this unjust tragedy, Rakowitz has designed an expansive participatory project to remove all orange-colored objects from Cleveland. Orange objects, from clothing and toys to sports equipment and household items, will be catalogued and displayed at SPACES in collaboration with the Beamer-Schneider Professorship in Ethics at Case Western Reserve University, prompting viewers to consider how it feels to live in a society where the right to safety is removed.



FISH STORY AND LOTTERY OF THE SEA

Allan Sekula at the William G. Mather Iron Ore Ship/Great Lakes Science Center

The William G. Mather, launched in 1925, was a state-of-the-art steamship that ferried iron ore, coal and grain across the Great Lakes, between Duluth, Minnesota, and Cleveland's steel mills, for the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company. Now decommissioned, it docks on Lake Erie at the Great Lakes Science Center. During FRONT, its cargo hold will host an installation of film and photography projects by Allan Sekula (1951–2013), the prominent photographer, filmmaker and writer, whose work from the 1980s onward took the sea as a defining subject. Sekula's work explores the effects of capitalism on our social structures, the workplace and the visual grammar of photography itself.

FRONT FILM PROGRAM

Transformer Station

The FRONT Film Program will manifest in a purpose-built theater inside the Crane Gallery of Transformer Station, presenting a scheduled program of both feature-length and short-form works by an international group of artists active in gallery and experimental film spaces. The selection focuses on films exploring the social and economic realities of global urban centers, including topics from the working class and industrialization, migration, global trade, privatization of public space, to homelessness and housing. Documentary, fantasy and personal fiction modes are all represented in the program of works by noteworthy filmmakers from the US, as well as across Latin America and Asia, who explore the city as subject and backdrop.

LOVE STORY

Candice Breitz at Playhouse Square

This seven-channel video installation by Candice Breitz interrogates the conditions under which empathy is produced. Evoking the global refugee crisis, the work evolves out of interviews with six individuals who have fled their countries: Sarah Mardini, who escaped war-torn Syria; José Maria João, a former child soldier from Angola; Mamy Maloba Langa, a rape survivor from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Shabeena Saveri, an Indian transgender activist; Luis Nava Molero, a political dissident from Venezuela; and Farah Abdi Mohamed, a young atheist from Somalia. In the first space of the installation, re-performed fragments from the interviews are woven into a fast-paced montage featuring Hollywood actors Alec Baldwin and Julianne Moore. In a second space, accessible only via the first, the original interviews are projected in their full duration. Suspending viewers between the gritty firsthand accounts of individuals who would typically remain anonymous in the media and an accessible drama featuring two actors who are the very embodiment of visibility, Love Story reflects on a media-saturated culture in which strong identification with fictional characters and celebrity figures runs parallel to widespread indifference to the plight of those facing real-world adversity. Love Story will be presented in the Helen Rosenfeld Lewis Bialosky Lab Theatre at Playhouse Square.



NIGHT COMING TENDERLY, BLACKDawoud Bey at St. John's Episcopal Church

For this FRONT commission, 2017 MacArthur Fellow Dawoud Bey has created a series of photographs evoking the imagined experience of escaped slaves moving northward through Cleveland and the surrounding area to Lake Erie, and boats bound for Canada. In brooding photographic prints, Bey seeks to reconstruct the experience of moving through a strange city and landscape under cover of night. Installed in St. John's Episcopal Church, a stop on the Underground Railroad in the 19th century, this commissioned project expands on the artist's continued interest in the ways in which history can be engaged, invoked and materialized in the contemporary moment in relation to African American history and experience.

VOLATILITY SMILEPhilip Vanderhyden at the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

Philip Vanderhyden has created a 24-channel video animation piece to be displayed on monitors in the Federal Reserve Bank's historic main lobby. The screens will be networked together to create a single seamless animation running the length of the room, featuring quasi-abstract animated vignettes that draw from familiar animation styles. Presented within the historical context of the bank's grand Beaux arts environment, the work explores a new narrative of the American financial system through casino-style slot-machine graphics, Hollywood-style disaster sequences and Wall Street-style "financial explainer" animations. Vanderhyden's pioneering video technique places the artist at the forefront of new ways of imagining the act and medium of painting.

FRONT acknowledges the support of presenting partners Akron Art Museum, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland Public Library, MOCA Cleveland, Oberlin College, SPACES and Transformer Station.

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Image: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *The British Library*, 2014. Hardback books, Dutch wax printed cotton textile, gold foiled names, five wooden chairs, five iPads, iPad stands, headphones, interactive Application and antique wind-up clock. © Phoebe D'Heurle. Courtesy of James Cohan Gallery, New York; *View of Candice Breitz, Love Story*, 2016, South African Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2017. 7-channel installation. Photo: Andrea Rossetti. Courtesy Goodman Gallery, Kaufmann Repetto + KOW; Allan Sekula, *Lottery of the Sea*, 2006. Video, color, sound, 179 minutes, dimensions variable, edition of 5. Image courtesy of the Estate of Allan Sekula and Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica.



About FRONT

FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art is a citywide program developed by an international team of artists, curators and scholars with the creative resources of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. In museum exhibitions and unconventional sites spread across the city, FRONT will be an expansive stage for local, national and international artists to create and share new work that is inspired by and engaged with the most important social, political, cultural and environmental issues of today.

When:

July 14–September 30, 2018

Press and Professional Preview Days: July 12–13, 2018

Where:

Cleveland and Northeast Ohio

FRONT Presenting Partners and Venues

Akron Art Museum

Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College

Canvas City Murals, Downtown Cleveland

Case Western Reserve University

Cleveland Clinic

Cleveland Institute of Art

Cleveland Museum of Art

Cleveland Public Library

Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

Hingetown, Ohio City, Cleveland

The Madison, PNC Glenville Arts Campus

MOCA Cleveland

SPACES

Steamship William G. Mather, Great Lakes Science Center

St. John's Episcopal Church, Ohio City, Cleveland

Transformer Station

Weltzheimer/Johnson House, Oberlin College

West Side Market and Ohio City Farm

Leadership

Fred Bidwell, Executive Director

Fred Bidwell is a philanthropist, collector and community leader. In 2011, he and his wife established the Fred and Laura Ruth Bidwell Foundation. In 2013, the Bidwell Foundation opened Transformer Station, a contemporary art exhibition space on Cleveland's West Side. Transformer Station alternates between serving as a venue for exhibitions curated by the Bidwells from their renowned collection of

photo-based contemporary art and as a venue for exhibitions organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art. Fred Bidwell serves on the boards of the Akron Art Museum and the Cleveland Museum of Art and on the Visiting Committee of the Allen Memorial Art Museum.

Michelle Grabner, Artistic Director

Michelle Grabner is a celebrated American painter and conceptual artist. Her work is in the collections of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Milwaukee Art Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; DaimlerChrysler Collection, Berlin; Mudam Luxembourg; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. In November 2012, Grabner was selected as one of three curators to organize the 2014 Whitney Biennial in New York. She recently curated the 2016 Portland Biennial, a statewide exhibition in Oregon. Grabner is the Crown Family Professor in Painting and Drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. With her husband, Brad Killam, she co-directs the project spaces The Suburban, in Milwaukee, and the Poor Farm, in Little Wolf, Wisconsin. Grabner serves on the board of the Milwaukee Art Museum.

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