OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2019 WITH A DYNAMIC LINEUP OF PROVOCATIVE EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS

Throughout 50th Anniversary Year, Timely, Thought-Provoking Exhibitions Tackle Urgent Issues

Major Exhibitions Include No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man
Opening October 2019

OMCA Celebrates 50th Anniversary Weekend in September 2019 with Extended Programming During a Special Friday Nights at OMCA Birthday Party on September 20

(OAKLAND, CA) September 17, 2019—The year 1969 was a radical time: the Vietnam War was at its peak, the Black Panther Party was gaining momentum, and the new Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) opened its doors as a “Museum of the People,” with a multi-disciplinary scope—art, history, and natural sciences—all focused on California.

Celebrating its landmark 50th anniversary in 2019, the Museum presents radical topics of relevance through exhibitions and programs inspiring all Californians to think critically and create a more vibrant future for themselves and their communities. Featuring exhibitions and programming that examine urgent issues of our community and our country, 2019–2020 exhibitions include No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man, the first major museum exhibition to highlight, in spectacular fashion, the festival’s values of inclusivity, community, and creativity; Black Power, a new permanent installation highlighting California’s roots in championing the Black Power movement; and a major exhibition coming in 2020 exploring feminism and the radical women in California who have kept it alive. OMCA’s anniversary year aims to provoke, inspire, and delight.

“Rather than focusing exclusively on the artifacts or art works in our collection as the basis for exhibitions—or the interests of our own curators—we are looking to the urgent issues and topics in Oakland and in California that are important and relevant to our community,” said Lori Fogarty, Director and CEO. “Our work is no longer about what we as an institution want to teach about California art, history, and natural science—it’s about making a place and making a space for people to come together at a time when, more than ever, many people feel disconnected.”

As Oakland, and the country, continue to change and evolve, the needs of the Museum have also shifted. With a focus on creating a social impact, OMCA will continue its work to create a space where voices are heard, visitors feel welcome, and topics of relevance are presented.
The Museum’s community-driven programming also continues to elevate its mission and values—in its 50th year, OMCA’s programming will be focused on five core themes: belonging, well-being, imagining, creating, and taking action.

Every Friday night for the past six years, the Museum’s Friday Nights at OMCA has brought together thousands of visitors from all backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, and genders in celebration of creativity, community, and connection. On September 20, 2019, OMCA will kick off its official 50th birthday with a special Hella Big 50th Birthday Party during Friday Nights at OMCA, featuring music by Kev Choice, DJ D-Sharp (the official DJ of the Golden State Warriors), free admission to OMCA’s galleries, Oakland-themed treats and giveaways, and more. The anniversary celebrations will continue on Saturday, September 21 and Sunday, September 22 with $5 gallery admission, giveaways, and activities all weekend long.

In addition to its 50th anniversary, the Museum will celebrate another milestone in 2019 with the 25th anniversary of its beloved El Dia de los Muertos community festival and exhibition, including an extended weekend celebration beginning October 19, 2019. The annual festival, created in partnership with the Dia de los Muertos Community Council, attracts up to 4,000 visitors each year. A new exhibition titled ¡El Movimiento Vivo! Chicano Roots of El Dia de los Muertos, highlighting the Chicano activists who introduced El Dia de los Muertos traditions to the United States, will open October 16, 2019.

OMCA’s fall programming will also include its major exhibition No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man, opening October 12, 2019. With spectacular artwork and large-scale installations from one of the most widely-celebrated cultural events in the world, No Spectators illuminates the values of Burning Man through its guiding Ten Principles: Radical Inclusion, Gifting, Decommodification, Radical Self-Reliance, Radical Self-Expression, Communal Effort, Civic Responsibility, Leaving No Trace, Participation, and Immediacy. The exhibition features many works by Bay Area artists including jewelry, costumes, “mutant” vehicles, sculptures, photography, and paintings.

In 2020, special programming will continue with the Rainin Foundation’s Open Spaces Symposium at OMCA, a program bringing together artists from a range of practices to discuss opportunities and challenges of working in public spaces. OMCA’s thought-provoking programming will continue in April 2020 with a Hella Feminist: An Exhibition, exploring lesser-known stories of feminist activism in Oakland and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Looking back at OMCA’s recent exhibitions evidences the Museum’s commitment to presenting programs of relevance to Californians. In 2016, OMCA presented Altered State: Marijuana in California in the months preceding marijuana’s legalization in California, as well as All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50, reflecting on the founding of the Black Panther Party in Oakland in 1966. Oakland, I Want You to Know…., also presented in 2016, included curated conversations about Oakland during a time of accelerated social, economic, and demographic change. As part of OMCA’s core philosophy, the Museum worked directly with community leaders, artists, and partners to bring each of these projects to fruition, from marijuana
policymakers and graffiti artists to filmmakers and founding members of the Black Panther Party.

More information about OMCA’s 50th anniversary will be available at museumca.org/50.

50th ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITIONS & PROJECTS

Friday Nights at OMCA: Hella Big 50th Birthday Party
September 20, 2019
5–10 pm
Cheers to 50 years! On this day 50 years ago, the Oakland Museum of California was established as the "Museum of the People." We’ve been learning, reflecting, creating, dancing, and bringing people together ever since. Don’t miss this very special birthday bash edition of Friday Nights at OMCA. Celebrate with us as we ring in our 50th birthday in style.

Enjoy free gallery admission until 10 pm, rock out with the Golden State Warrior’s official DJ, DJ D-Sharp, learn your fate with a custom-made fortune cookie (fun fact: the fortune cookie folding machine was invented in Oakland!), strike a pose with our community portrait project, and much more!

OMCA 50th Anniversary Weekend
September 21-22, 2019
11 am – 5pm
Join us in celebrating our 50th anniversary, all weekend long! Check out our Galleries of California Art, History, and Natural Sciences, take a “Meet the Museum” pop-up tour in the galleries, strike a pose with our community portrait project, enjoy hands-on activities in the Family Fun Zone, take home special giveaways, and more—all for just $5.

No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man
Great Hall
October 12, 2019–February 16, 2020
With spectacular artwork and large-scale installations from one of the most widely-celebrated cultural events in the world, No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man takes over OMCA in Fall of 2019. Each year the weeklong Burning Man event attracts over 70,000 people to Nevada’s Black Rock Desert. Participants create and build Black Rock City, a temporary metropolis where experimental art installations—some ritually burned to the ground—are the centerpiece for innovators, makers, and a burgeoning artistic community. The exhibition illuminates the values of Burning Man through its guiding Ten Principles: Radical Inclusion, Gifting,
Decommodification, Radical Self-reliance, Radical Self-expression, Communal Effort, Civic Responsibility, Leaving No Trace, Participation, and Immediacy. The exhibition features many works by Bay Area artists including jewelry, costumes, “mutant” vehicles, sculptures, photography, and paintings. A companion exhibition within the gallery, *City of Dust: The Evolution of Burning Man*, organized by the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, traces Burning Man’s origins from its countercultural roots in the San Francisco Bay Area to the world-famous desert gathering it is today.

This immersive and multi-sensory experience will extend beyond the gallery walls into the Museum’s public spaces—including an OMCA-commissioned 40-foot-tall outdoor temple by internationally-acclaimed sculptor David Best.


*City of Dust: The Evolution of Burning Man* is organized by the Nevada Museum of Art.

The museums especially thank colleagues from Burning Man Project, a nonprofit public benefit corporation, for their close collaboration and assistance throughout the preparation of this exhibition and tour.

Support for the Oakland presentation of this exhibition is provided by Frances Hellman and Warren Breslau and the Oakland Museum Women’s Board. Additional support is provided by Nion McEvoy & Leslie Berriman and Ruth and Roger Wu.

Lead support for the exhibition was provided by Intel and Bently Foundation. Support for the exhibition's tour is provided by the C. F. Foundation, Atlanta, Georgia and the William R. Kenan Jr. Endowment Fund.

¡El Movimiento Vivo! Chicano Roots of El Día de los Muertos

*Gallery of California Art*

*October 12, 2019–February 16, 2020*

Celebrate the 25th anniversary of OMCA’s beloved El Día de los Muertos celebration with an exhibition inspired by the Chicano activists who introduced El Día de los Muertos traditions to the United States in the 1970s. ¡El Movimiento Vivo! Chicano Roots of El Día de los Muertos will honor and explore the lesser-known origins of El Día de los Muertos and the ways these
traditions continue to inspire social and political change today.

Visitors will encounter altars, artworks, and interactive elements that show how Chicano activists used Days of the Dead traditions to foster pride in their indigenous heritage and unify their communities. Experience a Oaxacan style ofrenda and hear first-hand stories of the Chicanos who went to Oaxaca to gather El Día de los Muertos traditions from elders. Honor members of the first Chicano generation and their enduring legacy through a series of colorful ofrendas created by contemporary artists, interactive features, and intergenerational conversations captured on film. Other elements—from historical objects, a mural, and a sculpture that sparked the first El Día de los Muertos celebrations at OMCA—will immerse viewers in the evolving identities, traditions, and artistic expressions of the Chicano community, both then and now.

**25th Annual El Día de los Muertos Community Celebration**

*Saturday, October 19 and Sunday, October 20, 2019*

*12–4:30 pm*

Join us at the 25th annual community celebration honoring Day of the Dead traditions. Craft activities, tasty food, dance groups, live music, colorful ofrendas, and ceremonia bring the community together for this healing tradition. Celebrate this special two-day El Día de los Muertos extravaganza with our newest exhibition ¡El Movimiento Vivo! Chicano Roots of El Día de los Muertos and learn about Chicano activists who introduced Día de los Muertos traditions to the United States in the 1970s.

Watch demonstrations of traditional Mesoamerican arts and cooking, and browse Day of the Dead merchandise by local artisans for your home altar at our garden mercado. Enjoy live music and dance performances ranging from contemporary popular music to folkloric dance to mariachi, and join in the opening procession led by Aztec dancers and Day of the Dead committee members.

**OMCA at 50 Community Conversations: Belonging, On Film**

*November 2, 2019*

*2 pm*

A special one-day program highlighting the work of Oakland and Bay Area filmmakers as they explore what it means to belong and how they preserve the stories of their communities and culture through film. Tickets are $20 for Member and $25 for general admission.
OMCA at 50 Community Conversations: Open Spaces Symposium  
January 25, 2020  
10 am–4:30 pm  
Artists all over the world are creating powerful public art work that is meant to engage. This all-day symposium, presented by OMCA and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, showcases artists who make a difference inviting other artists and arts professional to learn, share their experiences, and discuss the challenges and opportunities of socially engaged art practice. Tickets are $20 for Member and $25 for general admission.

Dorothea Lange: Photography as Activism  
Gallery of California Art  
January 2020  
Experience the iconic life and work of Dorothea Lange, world-renowned documentary photographer, with an expanded section in the Gallery of California Art dedicated to her works. Through the lens of her camera, Lange documented American life with riveting photographs that captured some of the most powerful moments of the 20th century. Drawn from Lange’s personal archive, which was gifted to OMCA over 50 years ago, and in response to the popular 2017 exhibition Dorothea Lange: The Politics of Seeing, a number of newly added photographs will illustrate the power of photography as social activism. See how Lange’s work continues to resonate with millions and inspire new generations of artists and activists.

You Are Here: California Stories on the Map  
Gallery of California Natural Sciences  
February 2, 2020–February 28, 2022  
We all use maps in our everyday lives—to navigate public transportation, find places to eat, and visualize big data like weather patterns or political opinions. But have you ever considered the deeper stories maps tell us? In You Are Here: California Stories on the Map, you’ll discover there’s more to maps than meets the eye. Showcasing a diverse range of maps from Oakland, the Bay Area, and California—from environmental surroundings and health conditions to community perspectives and creative artworks—experience how maps can be a powerful tool to share unique points of view and imagine a better future. Explore new perspectives of familiar places through maps made by the community, and mark your own stories on the community map inside the exhibition.

OMCA at 50 Community Conversations: Food and Well-Being  
March 21, 2020  
2 pm
Food not only provides nourishment for our bodies—it also impacts our emotional and social health. Hear from prominent Oakland and Bay Area chefs as they explore where our food comes from, the practice of making a meal, and what it means when we gather and share food together. Tickets are $20 for Member and $25 for general admission.

**Hella Feminist: An Exhibition**
**Great Hall**
**April 25, 2020–August 23, 2020**
Feminism is a loaded word. Empowering to some, challenging for others. It is contentious, polarizing, political, and necessary in this moment.

OMCA’s major Spring 2020 exhibition, *Hella Feminist: An Exhibition* takes on this complex topic. Threatening laws about the legislation of reproductive rights, ongoing revelations from #metoo, and conversations around gender are real. The country is experiencing cultural shifts around the relationship between gender and power. *Hella Feminist* will grapple with these topics and more with anger, triumph, and humor—welcoming the fullness of the human experience.

Organized around three core themes—mind, body, and spirit—this exhibition invites visitors to consider how all people might work toward gender equity. Through historical artifacts, contemporary artwork, and interactive elements, *Hella Feminist* will celebrate lesser-known stories of feminist activism and examine fourth-wave feminism, focusing on Oakland and the San Francisco Bay Area. From everyday acts of resistance to significant moments in history, the exhibition will offer a space for visitors to experience this feminist evolution and take action in shaping a more just future.

**OMCA at 50 Community Conversations: Imagining the Future of Museums**
**May 16, 2020**
**2 pm**
Nationwide, museums are acknowledging the effects of colonialism and its impact on their work. Scholars, artists, and museum professionals will talk about how we build a more reflective and authentic history and how decolonization impacts our collections, our programs, and the power structures that govern our institutions. Tickets are $20 for Member and $25 for general admission.

**OMCA at 50 Community Conversations: Young People Taking Action**
**June 13, 2010**
**2 pm**
What are younger generations doing to shape the future? In this program, OMCA invites young Bay Area movers and shakers to share their perspectives on our current cultural climate. Listen to their stories, get inspired and come away with ideas about how we can create a more vibrant future.

**Edith Heath: A Life in Clay**

*Gallery of California Art*

*June 27, 2020–November 29, 2020*

Trailblazer. Rebel. Revolutionary. Discover the story of Edith Heath, founder and designer of Heath Ceramics. Heath transformed the ceramics industry, creating dinnerware from California clay for “Sunday best” and everyday use. Driven by the power of good design, and a commitment to her craft, Heath’s vision continues to live on through her stoneware and tile over 70 years later. Durable, not delicate, simple, yet stylish, Heath Ceramics is an icon of American design.

**ON VIEW**

**Black Power**

*New addition to the Gallery of California History*

*Ongoing*

Uncover the history of the Black Power movements in California with a compelling addition to the Gallery of California History. In response to the widely-popular 2016 exhibition *All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50*, this new installation will illustrate the creative ways black anti-racist activists in California supported their communities and challenged the U.S. government. Focusing on the example of the Black Panther Party, *Black Power* will bring to light the tensions between a culturally and socially progressive California and examples of economic racism and oppression in the state. This moment in California history will be represented through historic photographs, provocative objects, iconic posters, paintings and interactive prompts that encourage visitors to take action out in the world. Learn more about the Bay Area role in this national story, and the impacts this history continues to have today.

**Take Root: Oakland Grows Food**

*Gallery of California Natural Sciences*

*Through November 2019*

Unearth Oakland’s multi-layered world of food in *Take Root: Oakland Grows Food*, an exhibition exploring aspects of growing food in Oakland. Enjoy this hands-on exhibition with the entire family to understand what factors determine where, how, why, and what is grown throughout the city. Hear personal stories from farmers and growers within the community, see compelling illustrations and maps, and meet the diverse flavors of Oakland. Learn what motivations Oaklanders have for growing food—including access to healthy and delicious ingredients, environmental and social justice values, or simply the joy of tending a garden. Visitors will be
invited to share personal stories, explore interactive activities, and gain a deeper understanding of Oakland’s agriculture.

**Question Bridge: Black Males**

*On view now in the Gallery of California Art*

*Ongoing*

Hailed as one of the Bay Area's Top Exhibitions by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Question Bridge: Black Males* returns to the Oakland Museum of California's Gallery of California Art. Immerse yourself in intimate videos—woven together and arranged to simulate face-to-face conversations between participants—among a diverse group of over 160 Black men across the United States. Hear these men answer each other’s questions with exceptional honesty and vulnerability, and share stories, beliefs, and values in a personal portrayal of their lives. Encompassing themes of family, love, interracial relationships, community, education, and wisdom, *Question Bridge: Black Males* presents nuanced portraits of past, present, and future of Black men in American society. Listen, watch, learn, and start your own conversations with this profoundly moving installation.

A recent acquisition to the Oakland Museum of California’s permanent collection, *Question Bridge* is an innovative and widely exhibited video installation from artists Chris Johnson and Hank Willis Thomas in collaboration with Bayeté Ross Smith and Kamal Sinclair. Joining the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Brooklyn Museum, OMCA is proud to acquire this groundbreaking and poignant work for its collection.

**ABOUT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA**

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) tells the many stories that comprise California, creating the space and context for greater connection, trust, and understanding between people. Through its inclusive exhibitions, public programs, educational initiatives, and cultural events, OMCA brings Californians together and inspires greater understanding about what our state’s art, history, and natural surroundings teach us about ourselves and each other. With more than 1.9 million objects, OMCA brings together its multi-disciplinary collections of art, history, and natural science with the first-person accounts and often untold narratives of California, all within its 110,000 square feet of gallery space and seven-acre campus. The Museum is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year as a leading cultural institution of the Bay Area and a resource for the research and understanding of California's dynamic cultural and environmental heritage for visitors from the region, the state, and around the world.

**VISITOR INFORMATION**

The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) is at 1000 Oak Street, at 10th Street, in Oakland. Museum admission is $16 general; $11 seniors and students with valid ID, $7 youth ages 9 to 17, and free for Members and children 8 and under. There is a $5 charge in addition to general admission pricing for special exhibitions. OMCA offers onsite underground parking and is conveniently located one block from the Lake Merritt BART station, on the corner of 10th Street and Oak Street. The accessibility ramp is located at the 1000 Oak Street main entrance to the Museum. [museumca.org](http://museumca.org)