



**Oakland Museum of California Surpasses \$71 Million in Commitments,
More Than 80% of its \$85 Million Capital Campaign Goal**

***All In! The Campaign for OMCA Will Support Architectural and Landscape Enhancements,
Curatorial and Public Programming, and Grow the OMCA Endowment***

Oakland, CA—September 26, 2019—The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) announced today that it has raised more than \$71 million towards its \$85 million capital campaign, which will formally kick off its public phase at a campus groundbreaking event on September 26. The campaign, which is titled *All In! The Campaign for OMCA*, is part of a long-term vision, spearheaded by OMCA director and CEO Lori Fogarty, to expand the Museum’s role as a public gathering place, with a fulsome roster of exhibitions and programs and new spaces for the community to convene and connect. Timed with OMCA’s 50th anniversary, the campaign also includes funds for important architectural and landscape improvements to the Museum’s campus, and the creation of new amenities to support the Museum’s community engagement initiatives. Major donors to the *All In!* campaign at the \$2 million level and above include Quinn Delaney and Wayne Jordan, Susan and Steven Chamberlin, and the Simpson Family, with major grants from the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation specifically for the Museum's capital improvements, and the Bernard Osher Foundation to endow free admission for children.

Over the last ten years, OMCA has deepened its commitment to serving as an institution “of the people,” organizing exhibitions and programs that illuminate the stories of individuals and communities who are often under-represented in the country’s cultural, social, and political dialogues, but who comprise a large cross-section of the United States. This includes presentations on the Black Panthers, marijuana legalization, genocide of Native populations in California, and the LGBTQ+ community. The *All In!* campaign will ensure the continued growth of this programmatic approach into the future, and support OMCA in advancing its vision to serve as a town square and place where Californians can build a sense of belonging, together.

“At the heart of the OMCA’s *All In!* campaign is the ambition to build a museum that places civic engagement at its core, spurred by exhibitions, public events, and an environment that feels welcoming and inclusive,” said Fogarty. “It is therefore incredibly gratifying to mark the tremendous level of support, from so many people in our community, that has brought us to more than 80% of our campaign goal. I believe that museums have a distinct opportunity to serve as sites for critical engagement—engagement with our varied histories, with perspectives different from our own, and most importantly with each other. With our current campaign, we look forward to expanding this focus on engagement, by physically opening up our campus to the surrounding neighborhoods, creating new spaces for people to convene and connect, and by further developing our curatorial and public programs to embrace evermore diverse experiences, narratives, and voices.”

Campus Improvements

As part of the planning process, OMCA has hired Oakland-based landscape architect Walter Hood of Hood Design Studio as well as the architecture firm Cavagnero & Associates to support the enhancement of its seven-acre campus. OMCA has earmarked \$15 million of its campaign funds toward the renovations, and expects the work to be completed by Fall 2020. At the heart of the renovation is an investment in OMCA's iconic terraced gardens, positioned at each of the Museum's three stories and originally conceived by landscape architect Dan Kiley in collaboration with architect Kevin Roche. The gardens will be refreshed with new, environmentally sensitive plantings native to California: each terrace will represent an ecoregion of California, containing plants found throughout the state, in a free and accessible space for the public to enjoy. These new plantings will be integrated around the garden's landmark redwood, oak, and olive trees. At the same time, the Museum's curators are bringing a fresh eye to the public sculptures on view throughout the gardens. These will now feature work by 24 internationally renowned California artists such as Ruth Asawa, Bruce Beasley, Beniamino Bufano, Mark de Suvero, Viola Frey, George Rickey, and Peter Voulkos.

Equally important are a series of changes that will improve access to OMCA's campus, for all visitors. An exterior border wall along the Museum's northern side, facing Oakland's Lake Merritt, will be removed, replaced with three 20-foot openings—creating a new entrance and physically opening the campus on a major pedestrian corner. Along the Museum's 10th Street side, to the south, alterations will be made to provide direct entry into OMCA's café and public event space, to create better pedestrian access, and improve the Museum's outdoor gathering spaces. The project will also add two new ADA-accessible ramps onto the campus, for a total of three access points for all visitors. These exterior changes, along with improved wayfinding, will also improve visitors' ease of access to the Museum's galleries, creating a more unified experience on OMCA's campus.

The creation of a new, permanent stage will support the Museum's expanded outdoor performance, music, and film programs. This will include built-in lighting and audio/visual components that will improve the live performance experience for both audiences and those on stage. These improvements—along with additional enhancements to the terraces and patios, central courtyard, and seating options throughout the campus—support the Museum's vision to provide visitors with a welcoming and comfortable environment that serves a wide range of leisure and community needs. The Museum will remain open during these renovations.

OMCA: Building Social Cohesion

Approximately \$30 million of campaign funds is being put towards OMCA's curatorial, educational, and public programming initiatives, supporting operations over a five-year period. This includes OMCA's ongoing social impact research and evaluation work, which was born from a desire to measure the degree to which the Museum is succeeding in its efforts to foster understanding and connection between diverse Bay Area residents and communities. OMCA's team is currently in the midst of conducting exit surveys, focus groups, and program evaluations to achieve a baseline understanding of the Museum's social impact on its visitors.

A portion of the funds raised from *All In!* will support this ongoing evaluation process so that OMCA can better fulfill its mission by creating exhibitions and programs that deeply engage the diverse communities that comprise the Bay Area. As an institution dedicated to the art, history, and natural sciences of California, and one that was established through a public vote 50 years ago, OMCA is uniquely positioned to engage in critical dialogues on the experiences of the past, present, and future. The social impact evaluation initiative will provide critical data points that will inform the work of its curatorial and educational departments moving forward.

“In 2019, our communities are increasingly fragmented and our social discourse is plagued by a sense of seemingly irreconcilable divides. In this environment, museums have a distinct opportunity to serve as sites for critical engagement—engagement with our varied histories, with perspectives different from our own, and most importantly with each other,” added Fogarty. “Over the last several years, the Museum has taken steps to engage more deeply with the diverse constituents that comprise our communities and learn more about the ways that we can have a greater impact. These efforts have shifted the face of the Museum’s audience, so that fully 52% of visitors are people of color and 59% of visitors are under age 44.”

Endowment: Securing the Future of OMCA

The remainder of the campaign funds, approximately \$40 million, will go toward growing OMCA’s endowment and securing the Museum’s financial stability into the future. The public launch of the campaign, coinciding with the 50th anniversary celebrations, follows a several-year strategic planning and financial modeling process that recognized the changes to OMCA’s operations when it shifted from being a city entity to an independent nonprofit in 2011, as well as the broader ongoing shifts within the community that it serves. OMCA’s plans embrace the opportunity for the Museum to continue to serve as a civic center in a greater capacity, with artistic, educational, and social components geared to engaging a diverse audience.

The Museum at 50

The year the Museum was founded, 1969, was a radical time: the Vietnam War was at its peak, the Black Panther Party was gaining momentum, and the new Oakland Museum opened its doors as a “Museum of the People,” with a multi-disciplinary scope exploring the art, history, and natural sciences of California, while addressing subjects of national importance. As it celebrates its 50th anniversary, the Museum continues to present topics of relevance through exhibitions and programs, inspiring audiences—both Californians and visitors—to think critically and create a more vibrant future for themselves and their communities.

Today, OMCA is one of the largest cultural institutions in the Bay Area. As an institution created by the people and in the service to them, OMCA places the visitor experience and community engagement at the core of all its activities, which broadly include the presentation of special exhibitions, preservation and exhibition of its collections, development of a broad range of educational and public programs, and creation of community convening spaces. The museum welcomes approximately 400,000 visitors per year, including 39,000 students from all of the Northern California counties.

This year also celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Museum's *El Día de los Muertos* community festival, created in partnership with the Dia de los Muertos Committee, and attracts up to 4,000 visitors each year. For its 50th season, OMCA will present a corresponding exhibition *¡El Movimiento Vivo! Chicano Roots of El Día de los Muertos*. The Museum's special fall exhibition will be *No Spectators: The Art of Burning Man*, the first major museum exhibition to highlight the values of inclusivity, community, and creativity of this international cultural movement. Organized by the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the OMCA presentation will include exhibition components and programming that are customized to the large audience of Burning Man enthusiasts in the Bay Area and California. Later in the season, OMCA will present *Hella Feminist: An Exhibition*, a project developed by the Museum that explores lesser-known stories of feminism and activism in California.

More About Hood Design Studio

Hood Design Studio, Inc. (HDS), founded in 1992 in Oakland, CA, is a social art and design practice. The studio's practice is tripartite: art + fabrication, design + landscape, and research + urbanism. This breadth allows Hood Design Studio to understand each place in its scale and context, and to respond, not with a standard design, but with an approach adaptive to the particulars and specifics of a space. The studio strengthens endemic patterns and practices both ecological and cultural, contemporary and historic, particularly those that remain unseen or unrecognized. Urban spaces and their objects act as public sculpture, creating new apertures through which to see the emergent beauty, strangeness, and idiosyncrasies around us.

Hood Design Studio frequently roots their design work in collaboration, seeing projects thrive under the joint efforts of design teams and through engagement with constituents and local communities. The studio has received numerous awards and accolades including the AIA Award for Collaborative Achievement, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Award in Landscape Design, and the Academy of Arts and Letters Architecture Award.

More About Mark Cavagnero Associates

Mark Cavagnero Associates was founded in 1988, oriented around a strong focus on public and institutional work and a firm belief in the power of collaboration and community building. The firm's wide-ranging portfolio of built work includes large- and small-scale institutional, non-profit, commercial, residential, and office architecture— contemporary facilities that are contextual, timeless, and offer a dignified presence to the communities they serve. The organization's vision is sensitive to the ever-evolving needs of the built environment. The firm pursues design solutions that will ensure long-term benefits for the communities they work in, resulting in legacies that will last for generations. Founder Mark Cavagnero is especially sensitive to the cultural heritage and historic significance of place, deliberately honing throughout his career his talent for preserving it. Adhering to this philosophy, the firm carefully investigates the cultural roots and social patterns of each place to arrive at a response appropriate for a site's larger context. Their extensive portfolio features notable projects such as the SFJAZZ Center, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and upgrades and enhancements to the California Palace of the Legion of Honor. Mark Cavagnero Associates produced OMCA's original master plan in 1999 and designed the major renovation and expansion to the landmark building from 2008 to 2012.

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