

FotoFocus cancels 2020 biennial, awards \$800,000 to Ohio, NKY arts organizations



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Thomas Ruff in "No Two Alike" at the Contemporary Arts Center (Sept. 21, 2018-Jan.13, 2019) was part of FotoFocus Biennial 2018.

COURTESY OF FOTOFOCUS

By [Nikki Kingery](#)

Projects Editor, Cincinnati Business Courier

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FotoFocus, the Cincinnati nonprofit that champions photography and lens-based art, announced today that it is canceling its October biennial exhibition and using the event's budget to support other arts organizations during the coronavirus pandemic.

FotoFocus will immediately grant \$800,000 to more than 100 participating venues and partners that were selected to present as part of the biennial in Greater Cincinnati, Northern Columbus and Dayton. This includes eight of the region's most prominent arts venues:

- Contemporary Arts Center
- Cincinnati Art Museum
- Taft Museum of Art
- Wave Pool
- Weston Art Gallery
- Columbus Museum of Art
- Dayton Art Institute
- The Carnegie

“After many discussions about how we should move forward with this year’s FotoFocus Biennial, we kept coming back to the same conclusion: The best thing we can do to help the arts survive this crisis is reconfigure our grantmaking,” [Mary Ellen Goeke](#), FotoFocus executive director, said in a news release. “We are about to move into our second decade and we need our community with us. We hope this money will help our partners get by at the time they need it most.”

The \$800,000 is inclusive of all grants that would have originally gone to these venues for Biennial programming, plus an additional 10% for each grant in honor of FotoFocus’s 10th anniversary.

As part of this pledge, FotoFocus will support 15 academic institutions with grants totaling more than \$177,000, including these Greater Cincinnati universities:

- Art Academy of Cincinnati
- Miami University
- University of Cincinnati
- Xavier University
- Northern Kentucky University
- Thomas More University

Smaller arts venues that will be supported by the FotoFocus grant include:

- Art Beyond Boundaries in Over-the-Rhine

- Basketshop Gallery in Westwood
- Clay Street Press in Over-the-Rhine
- Kennedy Heights Art Center in Kennedy Heights
- Manifest Gallery in East Walnut Hills
- PAR-Projects in Northside
- Visionaries + Voices in Northside

Since it was founded in 2010, FotoFocus has supported photography and lens-based art across Greater Cincinnati. This includes curating major events like the FotoFocus Biennial, as well as flying out artists such as [Philip-Lorca diCorcia](#), [Laurie Simmons](#), [Roe Ethridge](#) and [William Wegman](#) to give free public lectures to the region.

The next FotoFocus Biennial will take place Oct. 1-8, 2022, with a new theme.