

Creative Time and FotoFocus Unite for *The Convening* in Cincinnati

Weekend of Talks and Performances (October 20 & 21,
2023), Anticipating Charles Gaines' 2024 *The American
Manifest* Exhibition

CREATIVETIME+FOTOFOCUS THE CONVENING

(CINCINNATI, OH — JULY 25, 2023) — [Creative Time](#) and [FotoFocus](#) are pleased to announce their partnership for *The Convening*, a special series of public talks and performances in Cincinnati, featuring artists, critics, curators, and other distinguished guest speakers. A welcome event and performance will take place at Mecca OTR on **Friday, October 20, 2023**, followed by a full day of discussions held at two venues: the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center and Contemporary Arts Center, on **Saturday, October 21, 2023**.

Structured loosely around three earth-based thematics—land, waterways, and trees—*The Convening* will bring together national and local artists, activists, and thinkers whose work considers histories of land, particularly American histories that coalesce in the Cincinnati region. Through discussions, workshops, and performances, participants will explore issues of land sovereignty, access, and stewardship as well as the histories and enduring legacies of forced migration in the United States.

The Convening is the culmination of both organizations' groundbreaking efforts to lead urgent discussions around art and politics. Since 2009, Creative Time has organized gatherings that address the most pressing issues of our times, from the [Summit](#) and *In Situ*, to the recent symposium, *Moving Chains: Toward Abolition*, which served as a platform to consider how freedom can be defined beyond the confines of property and ultimately questioned the compatibility of abolition and the law. Since 2015, FotoFocus has held annual symposiums addressing photography's centrality to critical issues, such as culture wars, feminism, and the spread of disinformation through digital technologies. *The Convening* is a significant collaborative effort designed to discuss thinking about land-use and self-determination through contemporary art practices, including photography.

“For nearly 10 years, FotoFocus has organized impactful discussions in Cincinnati highlighting photography’s relevancy to the pressing issues of our time. We are excited to combine curatorial forces with Creative Time, expanding these conversations to include different perspectives. Through this partnership, we aim to inspire critical conversation and create a platform for perspective-changing ideas,” said **Katherine Ryckman Siegwarth, FotoFocus Executive Director**.

“Creative Time is thrilled to partner with FotoFocus to engender transformational conversations deeply rooted in the Cincinnati region that resonate across the country. This program draws from histories of the land and envisions possible futures through the work of creative visionaries both locally and far afield,” said **Justine Ludwig, Creative Time Executive Director**.

The Convening is a prelude to the forthcoming Charles Gaines’ multi-city public art project, [*The American Manifest*](#), culminating in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 2024. Commissioned by New York-based Creative Time with support from Cincinnati-based FotoFocus, *The American Manifest* is a series of monumentally-scaled works spanning multiple sites in New York City and Cincinnati, from 2022 through 2024. *The American Manifest* offers a multifaceted engagement with history, implicating northern “free” states in their dual roles of both maintaining and abolishing slavery.

Divided into three chapters, the project launched in New York in summer 2022 with a sculptural installation in Times Square, *Roots*, evoking the area’s pre-colonial landscape, and performance of *Manifestos 4: The Dred and Harriet Scott Decision*. The second chapter, *Moving Chains*, is currently on view on New York’s Governors Island through the fall of 2023. The 110 foot-long kinetic sculpture evokes the hull of a ship, reverberating with the low rumble of nine colossal chains rotating overhead. *Moving Chains*, which illuminates the exchange of people, capital, and goods cycling between the north and south that made up the slave trade, will debut in Cincinnati on the banks of the Ohio River in 2024.

The event is free and open to the public, in line with Creative Time and FotoFocus’ missions. *The Convening’s* full speaker lineup and details will be announced later this summer. For the latest information, please visit the event website at FotoFocus.org/Symposium.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Creative Time and FotoFocus are grateful to *The Convening’s* supporting partners:

Contemporary Arts Center

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

Terra Foundation for American Art

Wave Pool

ABOUT CREATIVE TIME

Since 1974, Creative Time has commissioned and presented ambitious public art projects with thousands of artists throughout New York City, across the country, around the world—even in

outer space. The organization's work is guided by three core values: art matters, artists' voices are important in shaping society, and public spaces are places for creative and free expression. Creative Time is acclaimed for the innovative and meaningful projects they have commissioned, from Tribute in Light, the twin beacons of light that illuminated lower Manhattan six months after 9/11, to bus ads promoting HIV awareness, to Paul Chan's production of Waiting for Godot in New Orleans, and much more. In partnership with a variety of well-known cultural institutions and community groups, Creative Time has commissioned art in unique landmark sites from the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, Times Square, Rockefeller Center, Governors Island, and the High Line, to neglected urban treasures like the Lower East Side's historic Essex Street Market, Coney Island, and New Orleans's Lower 9th Ward. Creative Time is committed to presenting important art for our times and engaging broad audiences that transcend geographic, racial, and socioeconomic barriers.

ABOUT FOTOFOCUS

FotoFocus is a Cincinnati-based nonprofit arts organization that champions photography and lens-based art through exhibitions and public programming. Since 2010, the organization has engaged art and educational institutions throughout the region to support and expand the cultural dialogue around the medium that has come to define our time. With an emphasis on intellectually and academically rigorous programs, the organization provides uniquely enriching access to lens-based art, film, and practices inspired by photography. FotoFocus has collaborated with organizations, curators, academics, and more than 2600 artists and participants, to present over 750 exhibitions and programs.

Signature FotoFocus programming includes the **FotoFocus Biennial**, which took place October 2022 with the theme, *World Record*. Past editions have presented work across the Cincinnati region by historic and contemporary artists, including Berenice Abbott, Eugène Atget, Roe Ethridge, Zanele Muholi, Karl Blossfeldt, Francis Bruguière, Thomas Ruff, and Akram Zaatari. Other landmark events include the **FotoFocus Symposium**, which has contributed significant dialogue and insight to culturally relevant topics including the controversial Mapplethorpe exhibition, and the **FotoFocus Lecture and Visiting Artist Series**, which has brought globally renowned artists such as Zoe Leonard and William Wegman to Cincinnati.

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