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**FotoFocus Announces Over 100 Projects and 87
Participating Venues for 2024 FotoFocus Biennial:
*backstories***

America's Largest Photography Biennial Returns in October with Exhibitions,
Art Installations, Performances, and Screenings



Meryl McMaster, *Between the Start of Things and the End of Things III*, 2019. Digital C-print, 40 x 60 inches. Courtesy of the artist. From *Stories of the Infinite Sky* at Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park and Museum

(Cincinnati, OH — April 23, 2024) — FotoFocus is pleased to announce its list of Participating Venues and projects for the **2024 FotoFocus Biennial**, taking place during the **month of October** with an Opening Weekend **September 26–28, 2024**. The largest of its kind in America, extending across museums, galleries, universities, and public spaces in Greater Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Northern Kentucky, the FotoFocus Biennial celebrates photography and lens-based art that unites artists, curators, and educators from around the world. The Biennial returns with 108 projects presented at 87 venues, making 2024 the largest program in its history.

Engaging photography and lens-based art projects will be presented at museums, galleries, schools and universities, theaters, nonprofit cultural centers, parks, hotels, and libraries, among other venues, including major new artist commissions and site-specific installations, solo exhibitions, group exhibitions, public art projects, performances, and film screenings. FotoFocus is partnering with 16 new venues

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including Century Design Workshop; Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library: Walnut Hills Branch; Cincy Nice at Peebles Gallery; Crome Architecture; DAAP Library; Dana L. Wiley Gallery; Edward A. Dixon Gallery; Gallery at 1435 Main; German Village Society; The Gund at Kenyon College; Miami University: Performing Arts Quad; Over-the-Rhine Museum; University of Cincinnati Niehoff Center for Film and Media Studies at the Esquire Theatre; University of Dayton: Roger Glass Center for the Arts Gallery; The Welcome Project; and The Well.

All programming for the 2024 FotoFocus Biennial has been developed with, and overseen by, the FotoFocus creative team, comprising: **Katherine Ryckman Siegwarth, Executive Director**; **Kevin Moore, Artistic Director and Curator**; and **Carissa Barnard, Director of Curatorial Strategy**.

The theme of this year's Biennial is **backstories**, referring to past experiences that may have happened out of view or gone unnoticed—histories untold or that have lacked perspective. These stories fill in blanks and reclaim narratives, whether personal, historical, or political, providing essential context for art and images. Programming will ponder the relationships between artists, subjects, and the circumstances surrounding them.

"We are delighted to welcome hundreds of artists, educators, curators, and visitors, both local and international, to the largest FotoFocus Biennial to date," said **FotoFocus Executive Director Katherine Ryckman Siegwarth**. "The 2024 edition presents exciting updates, from new participating venues to the inaugural Call for Entry initiative showcasing regional talent that centers our locality in a nuanced way."



Larry Roberts, *Haifa Soldier Shabbat Flower*, 1985. Black and white photograph, 12 x 16 inches. Courtesy of the artist. From *The Faces of Israel: A Photographic Conversation* by Larry Roberts at the Cincinnati Skirball Museum

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The thematic direction of *backstories* echoes throughout 15 **Biennial Featured Projects**, including an unprecedented exhibition shedding light on Ansel Adams' earliest works at the **Cincinnati Art Museum**; the first American survey of work by Barbara Probst at the **Contemporary Arts Center**, as part of an international tour; the first comprehensive museum presentation by Nigerian-British photographer Rotimi Fani-Kayode at the **Wexner Center for the Arts**; three exhibitions by Columbus-raised Ming Smith at the **Columbus Museum of Art** and Wexner Center for the Arts; and a solo exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Center of Chip Thomas. Group exhibitions include ***Southern Democratic*** at **The Carnegie**, a meditation by 15 contemporary artists on William Eggleston's *Election Eve* photographs; and ***Memory Fields*** at the **Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Art Gallery**, examining connections between culture, place, and memory.

FotoFocus also introduces a new initiative for this year's Biennial: **Call for Entry Selections**. These six projects, produced by independent, regional creatives in response to the theme of *backstories*, celebrate the emerging and distinct talents of the community. Selections include ***Digressions*** and ***Another First Impression*** at the **Art Academy of Cincinnati: SITE1212**, exhibitions highlighting life in the Midwest; ***Humphrey Gets His Flowers*** at AAC: SITE1212 and ***The Trail of the Dead*** at Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Art Gallery, both cathartic explorations of personal histories; an intimate portrayal of refugee families in ***More Than Meets the Eye*** at **Purple People Bridge**; and ***Artist Run***, a photographic archive and tour of Cincinnati's historical artist-run spaces.



Left: George Rockwood, *Trio of men from behind*, c. 1880s. Cabinet card, 6½ x 4¼ inches. Courtesy of private collection. From *Posteriors: Sitters' Backs in 19th-Century Photography* at DAAP Library. Right: Felipe Rivas San Martín, *Untitled VII*, from *A Non-Existent Queer Archive*, 2023. Generated with AI, 18½ x 14 inches. Courtesy of Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson. From *Spotlight: Felipe Rivas San Martín* at 21c Museum Hotel

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Histories come to life through new perspectives in exhibitions including **Michael Lowe Gallery's *Blank Generation***, a visual journey into the cultural frisson of the 1970s and 80s in New York City; a group exhibition, ***Revival*, at 21c Museum Hotel** exploring historical sources in contemporary art, including Isaac Julien's poetic meditation on Frederick Douglass; **Cincinnati Museum Center's** presentation of the city's Black history through the lens of Black photographers and photo collections from the 1800s–2000s; visual documentation by Steve Plattner of 1,000 surviving Native American Earthworks in Ohio Valley at **Meyer Gallery at DAAP Galleries**; and African American beauty and visual culture from the 1890s traced to the present through documentary, commercial, and fine art photography at the **Taft Museum of Art**.

Projects exploring identity include **The Welcome Project's *Defend the Sacred***, highlighting BIPOC artists using photography as a form of resistance, resilience, and cultural preservation; four artists using self-portraiture to embrace the complexity of the Asian American Pacific Islander experience presented at **Mount St. Joseph University**; an exhibition showing works by Michelle D'Cruz and HATSUE at **Reed Gallery at DAAP** that highlight how immigrant backstories shape individuals into impactful leaders; **Dayton Art Institute's** presentation of Lara Shipley and Antone Dolezal's works combining folklore, history and present-day photos of the Ozark community to engage mythology of the Spook Light; and Gee Horton's exploration of the inner child at **Kennedy Heights Art Center**, weaving personal narratives and collective experiences through photography, collage, and mixed media.

Many projects examine the influences of generations of families and communities on identity and histories, such as ***Call Me When You Get Home* at Northern Kentucky University**, presenting works by Marissa Nicole Stewart that explore generational worldbuilding within a Black matriarchal household; an open call exhibition at the **Clifton Cultural Arts Center** exploring generations as vessels carrying social ideas and cultural shifts; Cara Lee Wade's show at **Sinclair Community College** exploring her relationship to her grandmothers and their battles with Alzheimer's; Judi Bommarito's ***Reclaiming Your Outside Voice* at University of Cincinnati Clermont College Art Gallery**, a photographic journey about the relationship between mother and daughter shaped by the challenges of mental illness; a student-curated show at the **Art Academy of Cincinnati** highlighting artists Vikesh Kapoor, Tomiko Jones, and André Ramos-Woodard to tell multi-generational stories related to intimate spaces, objects, and portraiture; and a series about John E. Dowell's spiritual revelations, illustrating his ancestral visions of freedom through the cotton field on view at **Solway Gallery**.

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Audra J. Shields, *Dabbelts Sunday Morning*, 2019. Pigment ink on Hahnemuhle paper, 12 x 18 inches. Courtesy of the artist. From *We > Me: 17 Artists Explore Hamilton Neighborhoods* at Fitton Center for Creative Arts

“Now in its seventh edition, the Biennial continues to emphasize the importance of the photographic medium in promoting critical dialogue,” said FotoFocus **Artistic Director and Curator Kevin Moore**. “Photography has the power to enrich our understanding of the world and these diverse projects utilize the medium to reveal untold stories, reclaim misinterpreted narratives, and bring us together through storytelling.”

The 2024 Biennial includes a number of projects dedicated to the Caribbean Diaspora, including **Willy Castellanos: Exodus. Alternate Documents (1994–2024)** at the **Annex Gallery**, documenting the 1994 departure of 35,000 Cubans who left the island on hand-built rafts; **Herndon Gallery at Antioch College**’s presentation of artist Juan-Si González’s visual chronicle of his trip around the United States to towns that bear the name of his country, Cuba; photographic documentation of the Caribbean and its diaspora from emancipation to now at the **Columbus Museum of Art**; and an immersive encounter with the Caribbean and its diaspora through four films by Puerto Rican and Dominican filmmakers at the **University of Cincinnati Niehoff Center for Film and Media Studies at the Esquire Theatre**.

Additional films presented during the Biennial include a captivating documentary produced by **Voyageur Media Group** at the **Cincinnati Museum Center: Reakirt Auditorium** examining the social, economic, and cultural impact of photography in Cincinnati as it became a major commercial center; Matthew Shelton’s photographs of Hunting Island, South Carolina abstracted through animation at **The Lodge KY**; a site-specific public artwork by Diane Fellows projected onto the **Miami University Performing Arts Quad**; **Excavated: From Soil to Stars** at the **National Underground Railroad Freedom Center**, a film tracing the journey of the sun as it rises and falls over Maysville, Kentucky, where an 1800s slave pen

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was excavated in 2002; and the **Unorthodox Film Festival** at the **Wexner Center for the Arts** showcasing creative nonfiction filmmaking and adventurous contemporary and historical films.



Gina Osterloh, *Pressing Against Looking, Movement*, 2019. Archival pigment print, 34 x 43 inches. Courtesy of the artist. From *Rewritten: Photographers Reshaping the Narrative* at Wright State University: The Robert and Elaine Stein Galleries

Other projects showcase histories and alternative methods in the medium of photography itself, including Michael Reese's mixed-media cyanotypes at the **Rosewood Arts Center**, exploring celestial mapping, symbols, and docs used by enslaved people in the American South; **Verso** at the **Cincinnati Art Galleries** analyzing rarely exhibited backmarks used as a marketing strategy for 19th-century photographers; **German Village Society's** presentation of Tony Mendoza's ongoing body of work since the 1980s coupled with short autobiographical stories; and a series of A.I. generated photographs of homosexual couples by artist Felipe Rivas San Martín to create records of untold queer history on view at **21c Museum Hotel**.

The projects mentioned above are just a snapshot of the incredibly diverse programming for the 2024 Biennial, which also includes food-related exhibitions, outdoor interventions, spotlights on individual artists, retrospectives, nature-focused projects, and community-oriented shows. To view the complete list of 2024 FotoFocus Biennial projects and Participating Venues, visit [the FotoFocus website](#).

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2024 FOTOFOCUS BIENNIAL PARTICIPATING VENUES

- 21c Museum Hotel Cincinnati
- Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Art Gallery
- The Annex Gallery
- Antioch College: Herndon Gallery
- Archive of Creative Culture
- Art Academy of Cincinnati: Chidlaw Gallery
- Art Academy of Cincinnati: McClure Gallery
- Art Academy of Cincinnati: Pearlman Gallery
- Art Academy of Cincinnati: SITE1212
- Art Beyond Boundaries Gallery
- ArtWorks
- ArtWorks V² Gallery
- BasketShop
- Behringer-Crawford Museum
- Blue House Gallery
- The Carnegie
- Century Design Workshop
- Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library: Main Branch
- Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library: Walnut Hills Branch
- Cincinnati Art Galleries
- Cincinnati Art Museum
- Cincinnati Museum Center
- Cincinnati Museum Center: Reakirt Auditorium
- Cincinnati Skirball Museum
- Cincy Nice at Peebles Gallery
- Clifton Cultural Arts Center
- Columbus College of Art & Design: Beeler Gallery
- Columbus Museum of Art
- Contemporary Arts Center
- The Contemporary Dayton
- Crome Architecture
- DAAP Galleries: Meyers Gallery
- DAAP Galleries: Reed Gallery
- DAAP Library
- Dana L. Wiley Gallery
- Dayton Art Institute
- The Dayton Society of Artists
- Edward A. Dixon Gallery
- Eisele Gallery
- Esquire Theatre Gallery
- Evendale Cultural Arts Center
- Fitton Center for Creative Arts
- FLAG Studio
- Gallery at 1435 Main
- German Village Society

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- The Gund at Kenyon College
- i.imagine at Roebling Point Books and Coffee
- Iris BookCafé and Gallery
- Kennedy Heights Art Center
- Lloyd Library & Museum
- The Lodge KY
- Main Street Shop & Studio
- Manifest Drawing Center
- Manifest Gallery
- Miami University: Performing Arts Quad
- Miami University: Richard and Carole Cocks Art Museum
- Michael Lowe Gallery with Alternative Projects
- Miller Gallery
- Mount St. Joseph University: Studio San Giuseppe Art Gallery
- National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
- Northern Kentucky University School of the Arts Galleries
- Off Ludlow Gallery
- Over-the-Rhine Museum
- PAR-Projects: The Gallery at Studeō PAR-
- Purple People Bridge
- Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park and Museum
- Rosewood Arts Center
- ROY G BIV Gallery
- Ruth's Parkside Cafe
- Sinclair Community College Art Galleries
- Solway Gallery
- Stivers School for the Arts: Fifth Street Gallery
- Studio Kroner
- Taft Museum of Art
- University of Cincinnati Clermont College Art Gallery
- University of Cincinnati Niehoff Center for Film and Media Studies at the Esquire Theatre
- University of Dayton: Index Gallery
- University of Dayton: Roger Glass Center for the Arts Gallery
- Visionaries and Voices
- Wash Park Art Gallery
- Wave Pool
- The Welcome Project
- The Well
- Wexner Center for the Arts
- Women's Art Club of Cincinnati: The Barn
- Wright State University: The Robert and Elaine Stein Galleries
- Xavier University Art Galleries

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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 2,600 artists and participants, to present over 750 exhibitions and programs.

Signature FotoFocus programming includes the **FotoFocus Biennial**, most recently held in 2022 with the theme *World Record* and will return later this year. Past editions have presented work across the Cincinnati region by historic and contemporary artists, including Berenice Abbott, Eugène Atget, Baseera Khan, Karl Blossfeldt, Francis Bruguière, Zanele Muholi, Tony Oursler, Wendy Red Star, Thomas Ruff, Ian Strange, 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, William Wegman, and Roger Ross Williams to Cincinnati.

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