

FOTOFOCUS

FotoFocus Announces *Big Tent* and the Opening of FotoFocus Center

FotoFocus Center | 228 E Liberty Street, Cincinnati

On View May 29–August 22, 2026

Opening Reception Friday, May 29 | 6-8pm

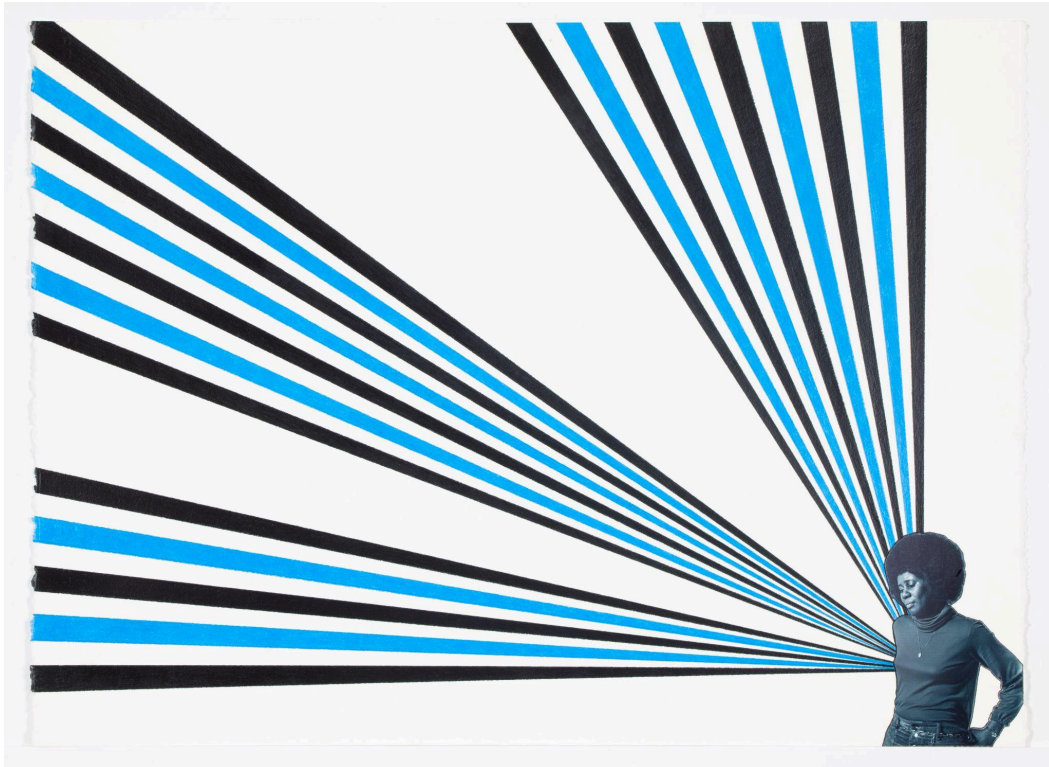


FotoFocus Executive Committee: Katherine Ryckman Siegwarth, Carissa Barnard, and Kevin Moore.

Photo: Michael Wilson

Cincinnati, OH (April 7, 2026) — FotoFocus is pleased to announce *Big Tent*, the inaugural exhibition at the new FotoFocus Center, a 14,700 square foot, purpose-built structure to house photographic exhibitions and year-round programs. Bringing together work by over fifty artists, the exhibition reflects upon the current state of American democracy while also considering the efficacy of photography to be a catalyst for meaningful change.

Partly inspired by the poem 'In This Place (An American Lyric)' by Amanda Gorman, the exhibition takes the concept of 'big tent'—commonly defined with reference to a political party's policy of permitting or encouraging a broad spectrum of views among its members—as a metaphor for the fraught yet aspirational nature of American civic life and its democratic ideals. With work spanning several decades and of vastly different photographic styles and formats, *Big Tent* demonstrates the radically diverse character of contemporary America, seeing it as a point of pride rather than shame, as cause for celebration instead of reaction.



Rico Gatson, *Alice #2*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY

Kevin Moore, FotoFocus Artistic Director and Curator and curator of *Big Tent* shared, “While *Big Tent* is something of a defiant assertion in the current political climate, it is also an accurate characterization of FotoFocus Center—a place where all are welcome and all perspectives matter. *Big Tent* is also a reference to Jose Garcia’s original Art Hub, a temporary structure we commissioned for the first Biennial in 2014—it was literally a big tent.”

Big Tent brings together photographs that span the better part of the past century, from celebrated masterworks to more recent experiments with form and contemporary meaning, to create an exhibition that celebrates the democratizing potential of photography. A consistent thread running throughout the exhibition is the genre of portraiture, specifically its long history of allowing for the possibility that ordinary people—the vast and multicultural citizenry of this country—could be made both the author and subject of art. By presenting common folk with the means for seeing themselves represented in all of their irreducible specificity, photography has carried with it a radical potential for civic empowerment. The wide variety of faces, personalities and perspectives that *Big Tent* weaves together offers up a powerful metaphor for the historical nature and contemporary promise of American democracy.



Madeleine Hordinski, "Midwestern Magic," 2024. Archival pigment print, 40 x 60 inches. Courtesy of the artist

"Since its inception over fifteen years ago, FotoFocus has examined both the representational and civic possibilities of photography," said FotoFocus Executive Director Katherine Ryckman Siegwarth. "As the inaugural exhibition in FotoFocus Center, *Big Tent* embodies the democratizing values of our organization. This is an exciting moment for FotoFocus: the opening of a new, purpose-built space allows us to invite the widest and most diverse public to engage with us through our programs and events, as we continue to deepen and expand the state of discourse around photography and lens-based media."

Big Tent includes work by Francis Alijs, Marco Anelli, Tina Barney, Gary Beeber, Dawoud Bey, Sheila Pree Bright, Elliott Jerome Brown, Jr., Chivas Clem, Andrew Dadson, Moyra Davey, John Divola, Elena Dorfman, Alyse Emdur, Mitch Epstein, Roe Ethridge, Asa Featherstone IV, Lola Flash, Stanley Forman, Robert Frank, Jill Freedman, Rico Gatson, Katy Grannan, Melvin Grier, Tina Gutierrez, Sky Hopinka, Madeleine Hordinski, Samuel James, Stacy Kranitz, Justine Kurland, An-My Lê, Builder Levy, Danny Lyon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Elaine Mayes, Jackie Nickerson, Taiyo Onorato & Nico Krebs, Catherine Opie, Trevor Paglen, Gordon Parks, Judith Joy Ross, RaMell Ross, Ruddy Roye, Tommaso Sacconi, Collier Schorr, Allan Sekula, Fazal Sheikh, Accra Shepp, David Benjamin Sherry, Cauleen Smith, Tabitha Soren, Alec Soth, Paul Strand, Ian Strange, Larry Sultan, Stephanie Syjuco, and Michael Wilson.



FotoFocus Center. Photo: J Miles Wolf

FotoFocus Center is designed by local architecture studio JOSE GARCIA DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION in the Mount Auburn neighborhood of Cincinnati, located at the northwest corner of Liberty and Sycamore Streets. Free and open to the public, the new facility embodies the core tenets of FotoFocus as it is both forward-facing and reflective. Through Garcia's inspired use of materials, several features nod towards historical architecture prevalent within the area with a contemporary interpretation, such as the usage of corbelled brick and factory-style windows. Additional features speak directly to the photographic medium, such as how from west to east the material choices shift from black to white, and the staircase feature, with its gridded windows, alludes to a viewfinder camera, while all windows allow ample light—a critical component of photography—to fill the public lobby spaces.

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 3,500 artists and participants to present over 800 exhibitions and programs.

Signature FotoFocus programs include the Biennial, which has been held in October since 2012, most recently taking place in 2024 with the theme *backstories*. Past editions have presented work across the Cincinnati region by historic and contemporary artists, including Berenice Abbott, Eugène Atget, John Edmonds, Roe Ethridge, Rotimi Fani-Kayode, David Hartt, Baseera Khan, Zanele Muholi, Tony Oursler, Barbara Probst, Thomas Ruff, Ming Smith, Ian Strange, Chip Thomas, and Akram Zaatari. Other landmark programs include the

Symposium, which has contributed significant dialogue and insight to culturally relevant topics including the controversial Mapplethorpe exhibition, and the Lecture and Visiting Artist Series, which has brought globally renowned artists such as Matt Black, Sky Hopinka, Zoe Leonard, William Wegman, and Roger Ross Williams to Cincinnati.

Press Contact

Hannah Gottlieb-Graham

ALMA Communications

Hannah@almacommunications.co