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From left to right: Leslie Bluhm, Meredith Bluhm, and Pritzker Director Madeleine Grynsztejn (Photo by Maria Ponce).

Multimedia link:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/otwzuutrmg0256g0yubd0/ALbXESVq08W5j_2vmhDtfNk?rlkey=88a6a0aofgdacndeipg7xk3z8&st=i200e11o&dl=0

MCA Chicago and Bluhm Family Announce the Madeleine Fund for Women Artists to Support Gender Equity in Contemporary Art

CHICAGO—The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (MCA) is excited to announce an endowed gift of \$5 million from Chicago-based social entrepreneur and long-standing MCA board member, Leslie Bluhm on behalf of the Bluhm Family. Named in honor of outgoing Pritzker Director Madeleine Grynsztejn and commemorating her work in leading the MCA's renowned Women Artists Initiative, the Madeleine Fund for Women Artists will support the collection and exhibition of works by women artists. The Madeleine Fund for Women Artists was announced at this year's Visionary Luncheon, the MCA's annual celebration of extraordinary women artists and arts philanthropy in Chicago.

"I am truly honored to have this gift endowed in my name," Grynsztejn said. "The MCA has championed equity for nearly sixty years, but this fund takes a remarkable step toward codifying gender parity into the museum's activities for decades to come. This moment isn't just vital for the MCA, it's cardinal for contemporary art itself. I am proud that this work grounded in excellence and equity will continue long after my departure."

In 2015, MCA Chicago committed to parity for women artists in its galleries and on its stages through programming, talks, and performances. In 2020, the museum formalized this commitment as a philanthropic fund, the Women Artists Initiative.

From 2020–25, 54% of the MCA's solo exhibitions focused on women artists, much higher than the

national museum average of 14%. The Initiative's mandate also extends to its collection and acquisition strategy, leading the museum to acquire works by women at an annual rate of 50%. These key actions further cemented the MCA's recognized leadership in collecting historically underrepresented artists and, in turn, rewriting the story of contemporary art to incorporate artists who may have been excluded. With the endowment of the Madeleine Fund for Women Artists, the MCA ensures this work continues into the future.

"The Madeleine Fund, in honor of the MCA's extraordinary leader of 18 years, and through the Bluhm Family's exemplary generosity, is an incredible gift to the MCA," said Jamillah James, Manilow Senior Curator at the MCA. "With this support, we will be able to continue doing the important work of championing and platforming exhibitions featuring women artists and building our collection as one reflective of our ideals and commitments as an institution."

Recent exhibitions supported by the Women Artists Initiative include *Faith Ringgold: American People*, *Nicole Eisenman: What Happened*, *Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind*, *Firelei Báez*, and *From the Center: Looking at Lucy Lippard*. Recent acquisitions of works by women artists, such as Andrea Bowers, Janine Antoni, and Rebecca Morris, also align with the Women Artists Initiative.

"Madeleine's impact on museums and at the MCA specifically has been unprecedented, and my family is pleased to shine a spotlight on her efforts," Bluhm said. "By championing the work of women artists, Madeleine has helped move the art world toward greater parity and influenced the course of art history. We are thrilled to name this important endowment for her."

ABOUT LESLIE BLUHM

Leslie Bluhm is a social entrepreneur who empowers people to tackle challenges through collaborative action.

In 1991, Leslie co-founded Chicago Cares, Inc., the city's leading volunteer service organization to harness people power to meet critical community needs while fostering connection between diverse Chicagoans through the service experience. Chicago Cares is redefining volunteerism to be equity-centered and community-driven, while at the same time, catalyzing long-term volunteer engagement and investment. Chicago Cares is a trusted partner to volunteers, corporations, and neighborhood organizations on Chicago's South and West side. More than 5,000 volunteers and nearly 100 companies partner with Chicago Cares annually to build a more caring and just society.

Leslie was named one of six Chicagoans of the year by *Chicago Magazine* and was named to *Crain's* 40 under 40. She is proud to serve on the board of directors of Chicago Cares, The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, OneGoal, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Shining Hope for Communities. She also serves on the board of directors of Rush Street Interactive, Inc (NYSE: RSI). Leslie was appointed by President Biden and confirmed by the United States Senate to serve on the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service (also known as AmeriCorps).

She earned a BA from the University of Michigan and a JD from the University of Chicago Law School. Leslie and her husband David Helfand reside in Chicago and have two sons.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The MCA interweaves exhibitions, performances, collections, and educational programs while providing a place for audiences to contemplate and discuss contemporary art in pursuit of a creative and diverse future. The MCA believes in the values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) as a platform to enact structural change. The museum is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members;

private and corporate foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and government agencies. The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

[The MCA is located at 220 E. Chicago Avenue](#) is open 10 am to 5 pm Wednesday to Sunday and Tuesdays from 10 am to 9 pm. Tuesday evenings (5-9 pm) are free for Illinois residents. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is free for all youth 18 and under, members of the military and veterans, and MCA members. Free admission for anyone 18 and under is generously provided by the Lefkowsky Free 18 & Under Fund. Find more information about MCA's exhibitions, programs, and special events at mcachicago.org or [312.280.2660](tel:312.280.2660).



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