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Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART TUCSON
ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Installation image, *Cecilia Vicuña: Sonoran Quipu*, MOCA Tucson, 2023. Photograph by Maya Hawk, courtesy of MOCA Tucson.

MISSION

MOCA Tucson inspires new ways of thinking through the cultivation, exhibition, and interpretation of contemporary art.

VISION

MOCA Tucson is the pre-eminent, artist-centered contemporary art institution in the Southwest. We believe that art has the power to change the world. We cultivate critical dialogue between artists and audiences about today's world; support artists through the production and presentation of new, experimental work; and educate the artists and audiences of tomorrow.





LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends,

2023 was a year of tremendous growth for MOCA Tucson—we implemented a shared leadership and curatorial model, exponentially increased engagement, catalyzed new, generative collaborations with local organizations, and commissioned over 50 new, experimental works by today's leading artists.

MOCA endeavors to be a **highly collaborative organization**, and its new leadership and curatorial model—shared by Laura Copelin and myself (Julio César Morales)—aligns the museum's operations with this goal. We changed MOCA's bylaws to **remove traditional expectations and barriers to entry** and welcomed an **impressive new cohort of trustees**—Annamaria Biagini, Andy Burgess, Albert Chamillard, Javier Duran, Farid Matuk, Alex Miller, Anne Ranek—who are **leaders in their respective fields**, from poetry and law to art and academia.

In 2023, we reached 16,716 individuals, a **30% increase** from the prior year, and event participation increased by 20%. **We engaged 5,000 adults** through 35 public programs and **served 8,500 youth** in 80 Title I schools across Pima County. We also closed for two of Tucson's hottest months to conserve energy onsite and to allow for more focused creative visioning for the small team at MOCA. Even with this strategic closure, overall engagement increased.


Our **exhibition program** amplified artists whose work and extended practices offered **radical examinations** and **creative solutions** to our most urgent socio-cultural issues. We presented work by Raven Chacon, Na Mira, Keioui Keijaun Thomas, and Cecilia Vicuña in projects supported by national granting agencies and foundations, including **The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts**, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and the **National Endowment for the Arts**.

MOCA was also selected by the Warhol Foundation to continue serving as a regrantee partner to distribute funds to artists and collectives across Pima County – the museum's **Night Bloom: Grants for Artists program has infused \$180,000 into our creative communities** since its launch in 2020. In other news, MOCA was invited by the **Mellon Foundation** to apply for the museum's largest grant to date, which was awarded in early 2024.


Looking ahead, MOCA envisions an evolution of its physical spaces, organizational structures, and administrative processes. Our team is building a strategic plan to extend our space to artists, academic and community partners, grassroots organizations, and the public to **cultivate interdisciplinary connections in the rich context of the borderlands**. We look forward to having you with us over the next year as we realize experimental programs and imagine together what a museum of the future can be.

With excitement and gratitude,




Julio César Morales
Executive Director
& Co-Lead Curator




Kira Dixon-Weinstein
Board President

2023 EXHIBITIONS

Fundamentally interdisciplinary and experimental, MOCA's 2023 exhibitions amplified artists whose work offered **radical examinations** and **creative solutions** to our most urgent socio-cultural issues. Our 2023 exhibiting artists identified with and responded to a **diversity of critical perspectives, geographies, cultures, and histories**, and many were invited to be in residence in Tucson and to co-create public and education programs.

In the Great Hall, MOCA presented a major exhibition by **Cecilia Vicuña**, whose sprawling installation was inspired by the Sonoran Desert's communities, ecologies, and interconnections. The installation continued a new arc in the artist's work, which began in 2021 at the Guggenheim Museum, New York and continued at Tate Modern, London. Next, MOCA presented the work of **Keioui Keijaun Thomas**, whose major exhibition, commissioned performances, and community generated programming imagined new, interdependent ways to relate to the American landscape. This was the first solo museum exhibition by Thomas, and built on over a decade of the artist's work exploring the affective and material conditions of Black and trans identity.

In the East Wing Galleries, MOCA presented the first solo museum exhibition by **Na Mira**, an artist who uses intuitive and experimental processes to create immersive moving image installations. The newly commissioned work at MOCA was the most recent iteration of a video installation presented at the 2022 Whitney Biennial. Simultaneously, MOCA presented a solo exhibition by **Raven Chacon**, a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and artist. The exhibition celebrated sound as a medium for resistance and connection, amplified Indigenous women's voices, and invited local musicians to perform Chacon's scores.

In 2023, MOCA presented:

Cecilia Vicuña: Sonoran Quipu

January 27 - October 1, 2023

*Extensions of the Sonoran Quipu were presented at Tohono O'odham Community College and at the University of Arizona's Poetry Center.

Raven Chacon: While hissing

March 24, 2023 - January 21, 2024

*Chacon was awarded a prestigious 2023 MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship during the run of his exhibition at MOCA Tucson.

Na Mira: Subrosa

March 24, 2023 - January 21, 2024

*Mira will present work at the 2024 Venice Biennale following her first solo museum exhibition at MOCA Tucson.

Keioui Keijaun Thomas: Magma & Pearls: Ocean Rise and Fall Like Meteorites

October 20, 2023 - February 18, 2024

*Artists, poets, performers, community organizers, and more were invited to use the Oasis, a soft physical space within the exhibition designed to host programming and offer rest to museum visitors.

Images on the right, top to bottom: Installation view with artist, *Na Mira: Subrosa*, MOCA Tucson, 2023. Photograph by Julius Schlosburg, copyright © jpop photon, 2022.

Keioui Keijaun Thomas, *Magma & Pearls: Ocean Rise and Fall Like Meteorites*, installation view, MOCA Tucson, 2023. Photograph by Maya Hawk, copyright © MOCA Tucson.



ENGAGEMENT

2023 ANNUAL TOTALS	
Overall Engagement	16,716
Total Museum Visitors	8,726
Total Education Participants	7,990
MOCA Satellite <i>(included in total education participants)</i>	4,866

COMPARISON				
	2022	2023	% DIFF	# DIFF
Total Event Participants	3,916	4,672	19%	756
Total Education Participants	5,500	7,990	-	2,490
Overall	12,815	16,716	30%	3,901

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

MOCA continues to reach new audiences and expand its digital interactions. The museum’s **Instagram account** directly engaged nearly **50,000 users**, a 51% increase from the previous year, and now has more than **13,000 followers**. Our e-newsletters averaged a 42% open rate, a more than 15% increase from the previous year.

COVERAGE & COLLABORATIONS

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Arizona Daily Star, *Connecting the LGBTQ+ Community Through Art*
Arizona Illustrated, *Cecilia Vicuña: Sonoran Quipu*
Southwest Contemporary, *MOCA Tucson is an Incubation Space and "Not Just Arbitrators of Archives"*
Hyperallergic, *The Many Voices of Raven Chacon's While Hissing*
Art Review, *Na Mira's Fragmented Elegy to the Unfinished Work of Her Forebears*
BOMB, *Na Mira Interviewed by Katie Kirkland*
The Brooklyn Rail, *Cecilia Vicuña: Sonoran Quipu*
Southwest Contemporary, *Cecilia Vicuña's Expansive, Community-Centric MOCA Tucson Sculpture Riffs On Ancient Andean Communication Technology*
High Country News, *Artist Cecilia Vicuña's Sonoran Quipu reassembles the desert*
Border Lore, *Sonoran Quipu: Cecilia Vicuña's Map to the Desert Future*
Arizona Daily Star, *These two free intergenerational LGBTQ+ art programs return this month*
La Estrella de Tucson, *Columna: Cecilia Vicuña, la basura hecha arte y las vidas que se encuentran*

COLLABORATIONS

Act One
Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum*
Arizona State University National Sustainability Teachers' Academies
BICAS (Bicycle Inter-Community Art and Salvage)
Bookmans Entertainment Exchange
Children's Museum Tucson
CREAM Design and Print
The Downtown Clifton
The Drawing Studio
Etherton Gallery*
Fluxx Productions
Galeria Mitotera
I Am You 360
KXCI Community Radio
The Loft Cinema*
Mapping Q*
The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures
Mission Garden
Native Seeds/SEARCH
Pima Community College
Pima County Public Library
SAGA (Southern Arizona Gender Alliance)
Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities (ArtWorks)
Southern Arizona Senior Pride
Southwest Contemporary*
Splinter Collective*
Tohono O'odham Community College
True Concord Voices & Orchestra*
United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona
The University of Arizona's:
 Department of Public & Applied Humanities
 Department of Student Engagement & Career Development
 Institute for LGBTQ+ Studies
 Poetry Center
 School Garden Workshop*
 School of Art
 Southwest Institute for Research on Women (The Lighthouse Project)

*New partner

2021 EDUCATION & PROGRAMS

In 2023, MOCA produced and co-presented **35 public programs**. Overall, the museum reached nearly **5,000 individuals** through free public programs alone—a **20% increase from the previous year**. The museum's popular **Free Third Thursday** program brought over **60 local organizations**, musicians, and artists to showcase their expertise and host programs at the museum, and partnered with dozens of small businesses. In the last year, this program reached **over 1,800 community members**, with an average attendance of more than 250 people per month.

MOCA's **education programs** are an integral aspect of the museum's public programming and invite pathways for **imaginative and critical engagement in contemporary art**. In 2023, the museum continued to offer its signature programs, Minor Mutiny, Satellite, and Stay Gold. MOCA Satellite alone provided over **8,500 K-12 youth at 80 Title 1 schools** regular classroom-based arts education; this free mobile arts learning program brought teaching artists into classrooms across 8 Pima County districts to engage youth and certified educators in curriculum connected to MOCA exhibition themes and content.

“

“The students were completely engaged in the activity that combined both critical thinking and self expression.”

-MOCA Satellite participating teacher

“We learned a different style of art that I have continued to work on with my students. We are a dual language class and I was so pleased with the instructor who spoke both Spanish and English. I have registered again because it was a wonderful experience and can't wait for our next visit!”

-MOCA Satellite participating teacher

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NIGHT BLOOM: GRANTS TO ARTISTS

Night Bloom: Grants for Artists is a grant program organized in partnership with **The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts** that funds collaboratively-focused visual arts projects by individual artists and artist groups within Tucson and the broader Sonoran Desert region. Since launching the program in 2020, Night Bloom has provided **\$180,000 in direct funds to artists working in Pima County**.

The 2023 grant cohort included **10 projects** by individual artists and artist groups:

- **Art Extensions** by Linda Chappel, Melanie Lenart, Seneca Ortega, and Aray Ramon
- **Barrio Blue Moon – Monument to the Future**, by Sharayah Jimenez
- **My Body Is Built for the In Between Spaces: A Hybrid Photo Project Highlighting Trans, Queer, Gender Non-Conforming, and 2 Spirit Experiences**, by Aura Valdes and Sarah Maaske
- **Parallel H(ear)**, by Rebeca Bollinger, Patricio Coronado, and Gus Tomizuka
- **Sketching the Senses: the Sonoran Series**, by Teresa Pereira, Melinda Englert, and Ai Nan
- **Snakebite Creation Space**, by Geneva Foster Gluck and Racheal Rios
- **SPUNK by Tarp Queens**: Zeena Karina, Piranha, and Chava Drey puss
- **Tactile Cosmology**, by Amber Doe
- **Tucson Hip Hop Clinic**, by Monique Garcia and Ruben Dorame
- **VietNail**, by Anh-Thuy Nguyen



2023 GALA

Over **360 attendees** joined our celebration as we honored the incredible contributions of sociologist and researcher **Jennifer Carlson, Ph.D.**; hydrologist **Karletta Chief, Ph.D. (Diné)**; sociologist **Celestino Fernández, Ph.D.**; baker and Barrio Bread founder **Don Guerra**; and late writer and journalist **Tom Miller**.

The Gala was **sponsored by companies and individuals from across Tucson**, including The Gadsden Company, HSL Properties, Arizona Arts, Courtney Johnson, Desert Diamond Casinos, Rio Nuevo District, Tucson Lifestyle Magazine, Los Milics Vineyards, Suncliff Gin, Pueblo Vida Brewing Co., Gruet Winery, Big Marble, 2 x 2 Construction, Inc., and Sonoran Ocotillo, LLC.

Net income: \$107,316



FALL FUNDRAISERS

MOCA's fall season included a **Membership Drive** with new MOCA merchandise by artist **Yu Yu Shiratori** and a series of fundraising events, bringing together diverse audiences to support the museum's mission. The season included **Chorizo Dancehall**, a genre-hopping dance party takeover at the museum for our annual fall fundraiser, and **MOCA Travels: Nogales**, an all-day tour and art experience on both sides of the border with a celebratory dinner and live music at Holler and Saunders.



FY23 FINANCES

FY23 was a planned growth year for MOCA. The museum appointed new executive leadership in Julio César Morales, retained Laura Copelin in its leadership team, and advanced key core staff members. **Increasing much needed staff capacity was essential for meeting future organizational growth and to undergird a truly progressive vision for MOCA.**

While the museum maintained fundraising initiatives, its **focus was on expanding operations, partnerships, and audience engagement, which all increased exponentially.** MOCA's new leadership team also prioritized accessibility, establishing pay-what-you-wish Sundays at the museum and **amending board bylaws** to make dues voluntary. The latter was a year-long board governance reform process and opened MOCA's board to broader community participation – it resulted in the addition of a cohort of seven new trustees in December 2023.

MOCA **underspent on its planned budget, but fell short in board and individual giving and had some key grant awards pushed to FY24.** MOCA is working to broaden its base of support so that it does not depend on one or two major donors or foundations to sustain operations – a common challenge for nonprofits. Much of FY23 was spent crystallizing a future vision for the museum and **laying the groundwork for a transformational multi-year grant from the Mellon Foundation** – the largest grant MOCA has been awarded to date – which was applied for in 2023 and received in early 2024.

FY23 demonstrated the importance of greater organizational capacity, and also the importance of time, care, and a diversity of perspectives in board and staff to realize critical growth and a progressive and sustainable vision for the museum.

	2021	2022	2023
Revenue	\$761,339	\$817,419	\$814,140
Expense	\$803,832	\$821,848	\$911,891
Net	-\$42,493	-\$4,429	-\$102,002

FOUNDATION SUPPORT

In 2023, MOCA earned **resounding support from local and national foundations and granting agencies**, receiving more than \$250,000 from existing and new supporters. Major support for MOCA's exhibitions and programs continued to be provided by the **National Endowment for the Arts and The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts**, who also funded the museum's regranting initiative, Night Bloom, which directly funded 10 projects by individual artists and artist groups for community-oriented and experimental art projects. Alongside MOCA's exhibitions, the museum's educational initiatives were supported in large part by the **Windgate Foundation**, who funded MOCA Satellite, and **E.A. Michelson Philanthropies**, who funded the museum's intergenerational programs Stay Gold and School of Drag.

FY 2023 REVENUE BY CATEGORY

Board Giving	\$56,135
Individual Gifts	\$110,903
Corporate Gifts	\$17,250
Private Foundation & Government Grants	\$265,300
Admissions & MOCA Shop	\$42,482
Membership	\$17,759
Special Events & Fundraising	\$264,196
Rentals & Fee-for-Service Programs	\$13,950
IRS Employee Retention	\$24,882
Interest & Credit Card Rewards	\$1,280

2023 MAJOR GIFTS

\$50,000+

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

\$25,000+

E. Courtney Johnson
Kasser Family
Fletcher & Liz McCusker
Arizona Commission on the Arts
Downtown Development Corporation of Tucson
LGBTQ+ Institute, The University of Arizona
National Endowment for the Arts
Windgate Foundation

\$10,000+

Anonymous
Evie Stefenson-Marquart & Edward Marquart
Amy Zuckerman
Arts Foundation for Tucson & Southern Arizona
Gadsden Company
HSL Properties
Lehmann Maupin
The University of Arizona Poetry Center

\$5,000+

Carolyn Bass
Michael Bradford
Anthony J. Canchola
Elizabeth Cherry & Olivier Mosset
Kira Dixon-Weinstein & Adam Weinstein
Randi Dorman
Terri Kessler & Lisa Lovallo
John & Kristi Lai
Arizona Humanities
Community Foundation for Southern Arizona,
LGBTQ+ Alliance Fund
Desert Diamond Casinos & Entertainment
The University of Arizona Foundation

\$2,500+

Jennifer Carlson, Ph.D.
Gerald & Marjorie Dixon
Cameron Gainer & Olga Viso
Jeanne Pickering
Leah Schrager
Casey Smith
Danny Vinik & MaryAnn Brazil
Jane & Robert Wienke

Armory Center for the Arts
ARTEZONA
Connie Hillman Family Foundation
Rio Nuevo District
Strebel Charitable Foundation Trust

\$1,000+

Anonymous
Peter Anadranistakis
Char & Alan Augenstein
Annamaria & Giuseppe Biagini
Billie Bixby
Andrés Cano
Karen Christensen & Kenneth Kay
Monika Dorman
Anne Dougherty
Celestino Fernandez
Susan Hand
Samuel Ireland
Bettie Johnson
Angela & Michael Kapp
Penny Kautz
Pablo Kyriakis
Charles Levy
Justin Martinez
Max McCauslin
Lauren & Will Pew
Anne Ranek & Paolo DeLorenzo
Peter Smith
Beatriz & Luis Soto Carrillo
Daphne Srinivasan
David Taylor
James Tharp & James Lindheim
Bill Williams
Click Family Foundation
Bookmans Entertainment Exchange
Diamond Ventures
James H. & Frances R. Allen Family Foundation
Jeff & Kerry Winkelman Donor Advised Fund
Park View / Paul Soto
Southwest Folklife Alliance
Vantage West Credit Union

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kira Dixon Weinstein, Co-President
Danny Vinik, Co-President
Lauren Pew, Vice President
Luis Soto, Secretary
Justin Martinez, Treasurer
Annamaria Biagini
Michael Bradford
Andy Burgess
Anthony J. Canchola
Albert Chamillard
Javier Duran
Farid Matuk
Alexandra Miller
Anne Ranek
Daphne Srinivasan
Evie Stefenson-Marquart
David Taylor

Randi Dorman, Emeritus
Courtney Johnson, Emeritus
Terri Kessler, Emeritus
Joanne Stuhr, Emeritus

AMBASSADOR COUNCIL

Alia Al-Rashid
Carolyn Bass
Burak Bekat
Kitty Brophy
Eli Burke
Andrés Cano
Karen Christensen
Sheila Farhang
Taylor Garcia Dickson
Lex Gjurasic
David Hausman & Patricia Gillette
Hope Hennessey
Liz Hernandez
Samuel Ireland
Rick Joy
Angela Kapp
Michael Kapp
Claudia Kappl Joy
Terri Kessler
Pablo Kyriakis
Lisa Lovallo
Edward Marquart
Grace McEniry & Jack Rodat
Olivia Miller
Alec Mitchell
Jordan Munic
Mary Okoye
Truen Pence & Nicole Sakai
Jane Poynter

Wylwyn Reyes
Stacey Richter
Devon Sanner
Akiko Senda
Yu Yu Shiratori
Casey Smith
Joe Taylor

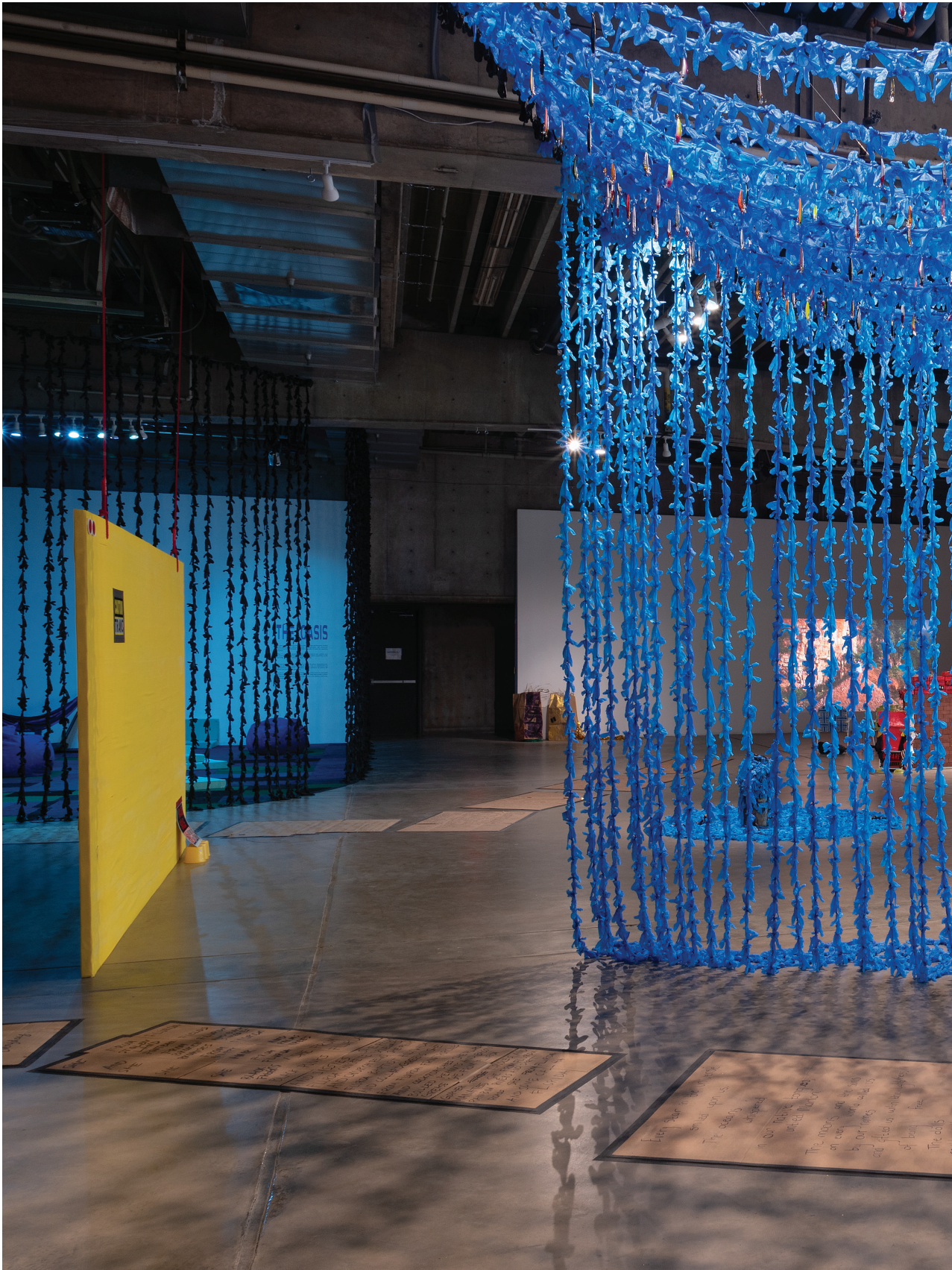
Amy Zuckerman
Elizabeth Cherry, Emeritus
John Hudak, Emeritus
Olivier Mosset, Emeritus

MOCA TUCSON STAFF

Kevin Burns, Development Manager
Laura Copelin, Deputy Director &
Co-Lead Curator
Kelly Franck, Visitor Engagement Assistant
Carrie Hess, Finance Director
Makenna Lockwood, School Programs
Coordinator
Audrey Molloy, Communications &
Development Associate
Julio César Morales, Executive Director &
Co-Lead Curator
Harrison Orr, Education Manager
Dominic Valencia, Lead Exhibition
Installation & Design
Vikó Velázquez, Facilities Assistant
Alexis Wilkinson, Curator

MOCA TUCSON TEACHING ARTISTS

Margo Alves, Minor Mutiny Teen
Leadership Program
Lex Gjurasic, Minor Mutiny Teen
Leadership Program
Alexis Campos, MOCA Satellite
Kayleigh Kozyra, MOCA Satellite
Devan Marín, MOCA Satellite
Dani Valencia, MOCA Satellite
Mel Dominguez, Stay Gold
Jack Hutchison, Stay Gold
Mariel Miranda, Stay Gold
Keioui Keijaun Thomas, Stay Gold
Dante Celeiro, School of Drag
Frank Heightchew-Howard, School
of Drag and MOCA Camp



Keioui Keijaun Thomas, *Magma & Pearls: Oceans Rise and Fall Like Meteorites*, installation view, MOCA Tucson, 2023.
Photograph by Maya Hawk, copyright © MOCA Tucson.



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Installation view, *Cecilia Vicuña: Sonoran Quipu*, MOCA Tucson, 2023. Photograph by Maya Hawk, courtesy of MOCA Tucson.