



The Museum is the medium:

for a vision; a vehicle for change; and, ultimately,
for deciding art.

The Museum of New Art (MONA) exists to support artists with space, time and opportunity: offering the chance to experiment, to test their limits and surprise even their own intentions. Equal emphasis is placed both on artistic and career development, providing the opportunity to create and exhibit in Detroit but, equally important, at other national and international sites as well.

In turn, support for MONA allows the museum to continue our risk-taking and our ground-breaking exhibitions; to work with and nurture regional emerging and established artists; to advance and inspire new work, from Detroit and elsewhere; to enhance our role in educating the region as to new trends and ideas in contemporary art; and, finally, to actively nurture the next generation of Detroit artists and cultural leaders.



Over the last 12 years, MONA projects to promote the region's art,
artists and spaces:

- 1). 1997 - **'The Museum of New Art'**, founding of Detroit's first contemporary museum.

No Taubman. No Manoogian. No Gilbert Silverman, eminent local collector of contemporary art. Detroit's art establishment -- the zillionaire patrons, the snootiest gallery owners -- are notably absent from the Museum of New Art.

This museum is neither Palladian palace nor temple to contemporary architecture. Is this place, in fact, a museum? Will it ever become one? Any art patron or admirer might ask these questions while touring the raw and rough space where Jef Bourgeau -- artist, provocateur and self-styled curator -- is launching a museum to house the art of now.

Before becoming an art museum, the little room had been a storage closet. Perhaps this is a completely suitable place for edgy, of-the-moment art -- art that by definition isn't embraced by the sort of people who wear gowns and tuxedos at museum fund-raisers.

Most visionaries are irritating to the establishment figures around them.

Tyree Guyton, the street artist known for polka dots on trees, has had his work displayed in museums and magazines around the world. But in his hometown, he has largely been regarded as a nuisance.

And placing Bourgeois within a context -- self-promoter, benign day-dreamer? -- remains very much a work in progress.

Detroit may be the last big city to get a museum of contemporary art, but it's always good to be first or last," says Bourgeois, whose soft-spoken style belies his commitment. Is MONA just a nutty dream? Maybe. But here's my confession: A decade ago, I thought the Detroit Opera House was David DiChiera's delusion. – *Laura Berman, Detroit News*

After 30 years of dreaming, the Detroit area will finally boast a contemporary art museum. And a hint of controversy along with it. For three decades area art lovers have tossed around the idea of establishing a new art museum to complement the giant, in this case the Detroit Institute of Arts, following the lead of so many cities, from Montreal and Chicago to Cleveland and Los Angeles.

But time and again big talk produced few concrete results in Motown. On Friday, however, the doors open for the first time at the Museum of New Art, a non-profit museum based in Pontiac and committed to displaying the latest in visual creativity – rules be damned. – *Craig Pearson, Windsor Star*

2). 1997-2005 - **'The Detroit International Film & Video Festival'**, bringing in 200 filmmakers each year from over 42 countries, from the USA and England to Israel, Vietnam and China – sharing the screen alongside recent Detroit filmmakers' work.

Video exhibit touches on terrorism: Museum of New Art's latest display boasts dozens of films from as many countries. – *Joy Hakanson Colby, The Detroit News*

3). 1998 - **'Aperto'**, a project allowing any local artist to hang one work at the Museum of New Art until the next artist arrived. Planned for the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1999. Repeated at MONA in 2001.



4). 1999-2000 - **'Documenta USA'**, over 200 artists were invited to fill an archival storage box with their art. Most of the artists were from the Detroit region, but the project eventually included many well-established artists such as Christo, Peter Halley, Arman, Vito Acconci, and Jenny Holzer. 2000 - **'Documenta USA'**, traveled to the UICA/Grand Rapids, where it also included artists from that region of Michigan.



5). 2000 - '**e-MONA**', first of many shows curated from artists' Internet "studios" and subsequent jpeg files, printed and installed on site.

Venture into the smaller MONA gallery for a look at e-MONA, Here's edgy; here's current. Tacked frameless on the four walls are examples of fresh art sent by email from all over the world.

Bourgeau came up with a simple idea based on the instant technology of the Internet: He put out a call for artwork to be e-mailed to the museum and got more than 1,000 responses. The show features 50 young artists from 24 countries. Their work was blown up and printed on state-of-

the art digital printers.

The collection – Bourgeau thinks it's the first ever by Internet – can be stored easily on computer discs. He says he plans to update e-MONA regularly. – *Keri Guten Cohen, Detroit Free Press*

6). 2001 - '**Documenta USA**', inaugural exhibition at 10,000 sq. foot downtown location.

In a press release that ranks as the most entertaining ever received by the Flash Art news office – part spirited manifesto and part PT Barnum-esque ballyhoo – Jef Bourgeau's Museum of New Art in Detroit (MONA) announced that it would unleash "Documenta USA" September 15 – October 27, boasting the participation of over 2,000 artists in "the largest art exposition in the world."

As part of the museum's mission, MONA proposes "to void all previous museums and to prove them invalid." Documenta USA creates an archive of all the materials used to decide an exhibition – slides, postcards, reviews, catalogues – in an attempt to eliminate the curator as the middle-man and deliver art to the public straight-with-no-chaser.

The exhibition reads like a wish list promising deliverance from the museum as mausoleum, including an exhibition that completely renews itself every 100 minutes; a gallery filled with art that visitors can touch, with work by Christo, Serrano and over 100 others; and a 48-hour open invitation to artists to hang one work on the museum wall until it is displaced by the work of another artist. – *Giancarlo Politi, Flash Art International*

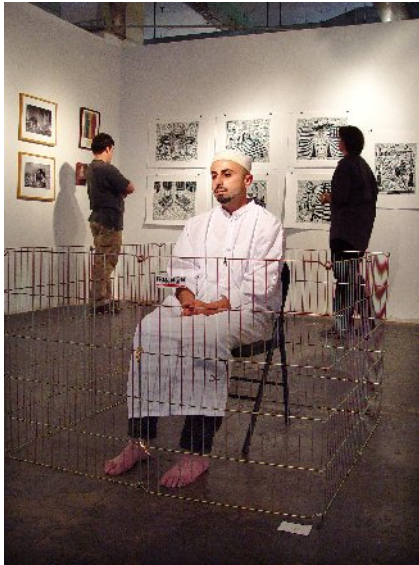
Detroit MONA's inaugural exhibition, *Documenta USA*, attempts to incorporate the audience as an integral part of contemporary art. The viewer is invited to explore the materials used in deciding how to assemble an exhibition --- to assume the role of curator and examine the slides, biographies, catalogues and critical reviews. At the same time, the museum will record and photograph visitors to *Documenta USA* and include these images in the exhibition.

"We believe that the museum visitor should not be half at arm's length from art, but be able to literally jump in and actually touch and handle the work," Bourgeau says. He adds that about 2,000 artists are participating in the exhibition that "refreshes and renews itself every 100 minutes."

A video component, *Fifteen*, includes a series of self-portraits in which artists speak to the camera about their art. A third component, called *Aperto*, runs non-stop for two days (from 1 p.m., Oct. 5 to 10 p.m., Oct. 6) and allows any artist to hand his or her work in the main gallery until the next artist arrives to take that place. – *Susan Howes, Hour*

Documenta USA, billed as "the largest art exposition in the world," is a massive analysis of the puzzle pieces that make an exhibition. Slides and pictures are displayed with no discrimination, as the audience is invited to, in effect, make their own show. As an extension of

Mona's viewer-friendly attitude, no piece is untouchable or, certainly, unapproachable and every 100 minutes pieces are changed, taking the phrase "of the moment" to a whole new level. The show also includes a video component, Fifteen, that features artists talking about their work, as well as a mural from the New York based *Head Clausnitzer* and *The Burnt Show* from California based Sacha Eckes. Still, the museum hasn't traded big names for new names. Among the exhibited works are pieces of Arman, Jenny Holzer, Sol Lewitt, Christo and sorely underrated Fluxus queen Yoko Ono, along with many others. – *Natalie Haddad, Real Detroit*



7). 2002 – '**Ground Zero**', hopes to reassert the art of intelligence and intensity into our lives, to reaffirm its obsession to penetrate and to conquer by all means the sense of the moment. The power of political art has always forced itself on us, yet it would be hard to imagine living without it. After all, the final goal of any artistic activity is the understanding of its subject, the world we live in - without which the arts lose all vitality and even their reason for being. -Jef Bourgeois, director MONA

Ground Zero, an exhibition within months of 9/11 features the work of over 50 artists from all over the country who have created works in many styles, varied media and viewpoints that depict their reactions to the world since last September and the drama of cultural clash. Jef Bourgeois, director of MONA, which has been at the forefront of Detroit's resurgence as a center of innovative arts and

culture, hopes that the exhibition can help in healing, and also examine our present and future.

Paul Lieberman, in an Article in the LA times about the exhibition, wrote: "the events of Sept 11 were an overwhelming visual experience that demanded a visual response... In the midst of chaos and destruction, art stands witness to the creative soul"



8). 2002 - '**ArtCore**', seven empty storefronts in downtown Detroit were renovated and given to artist collectives to run as galleries.

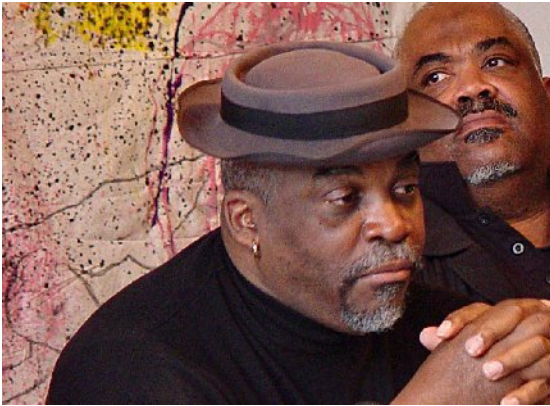
9). 2002 - '**Michigan Institute for the Arts**', a 10,000 square foot space in downtown Detroit was turned into a museum that showcased Michigan artists.

10). 2002-2008 - '**12x12**', a gallery museum was reserved within the Museum of New Art to present new work by a different artist from the Detroit region each month.

11). 2003 - **'Detroit Now'**,

The idea for "Detroit Now," the most exciting local group show to come along in years, was conceived and initiated by Jef Bourgeau, founding director of Detroit's Museum of New Art. From his vantage point at an institution level, he longed for a closer connection with the gallery scene that had always been thought of as separate and unique from any museum, let alone each other. ...And with the fine art departments of the College for Creative Studies, Cranbrook Academy of Art and Wayne State University turning out so much new talent, he didn't find it hard to have his liaison John Cynar, curator at Paint Creek Art Center, to convince Phaedra Robinson of Detroit contemporary, Aaron Timlin of Detroit Artists Market and Dick Goody of Meadow Brook Art Gallery to collaborate on a mammoth show that could fill any contemporary museum.

– George Tysh, *Metro Times*



12). 2004 - **'ArtCore'**, revived in downtown Pontiac. AKA Gallery, director Mary Harrison; The Annex (for student and emerging Detroit artists), director Ann Reinhardt; MIA (with a focus on artists from all of Michigan), director John Cynar.



13). 2006 - **'Moving Walls'**, formed a collective of Cranbrook graduates, giving them a gallery to continue their work in Michigan.

About two years ago, Bourgeau dreamed up the idea of a national and international art exhibit exchange to help promote Detroit artists. He contacted local artists, inviting them to join the project at no cost. The original [Moving Walls] five are now 12, and Bourgeau wants to keep adding more artists with varying work and experience. Up until now, all the artists have participated in each show, but in the future, selections will be tailored.

"As a museum director, usually your role is passive," said Bourgeau. "Artists come to you and you book shows that are moving around the country. In Detroit, you can't be passive. So I

decided to promote Detroit artists here and beyond. I contact galleries and nonprofits in other cities and pitch the idea of swapping artists. It's really not a hard sell."

Detroit is known as a gritty, industrial city with a great reputation for music — outsiders don't know enough about Detroit's visual arts, Bourgeau said. At home, lack of support forces many emerging artists to move to Chicago, Los Angeles or New York.

With "Changing Cities," Bourgeau wants to "circumvent the system," help Detroit artists build careers without leaving Detroit. In arranging exchanges, he decided to focus on new nonprofits, thinking they would be more receptive to the concept. When he started contacting gallery directors from a list of 2,000 garnered from 12 years as a museum director, he found a high level of interest. Not only were gallery directors curious about Detroit visual arts, but with the exchange concept, he could offer them a Detroit platform for their artists.

In the first Changing Cities exhibit in April 2007, Chicago art consultant Paul Klein curated a show of Chicago artists at MONA, a nonprofit that does not take a commission on artwork sold. The exhibit was followed by February show of Detroit works at the ThreeWalls gallery in Chicago, another nonprofit that does not take a percentage of sales. The five Detroit artists made many new connections. Birmingham resident Alison Wong, who works in oils, colored pencils and graphite, was featured in "Time Out Chicago" and began discussions on another potential show in Chicago.

Cezanne Charles, director of creative industries for ArtServe Michigan in Wixom, sees efforts like Changing Cities as "crucial to the continued success of what's being done in Michigan, helping to make a sustainable and vibrant arts community." As a practicing artist who lived in Manchester, England, and Edinburgh, Scotland, she believes Detroit is beginning to show up on the national and international radar as a viable art community. She sees a pioneer spirit in the Detroit art scene. "Changing Cities is a perfect example of someone having an idea and making it happen," Charles said. — *Elizabeth Voss, Crain's*

14). 2008-2009 - '**Changing Cities Project**', a multi-city project to exchange Detroit artists with those of other regions, at home and overseas. Successful swaps have been mounted within the last year between Chicago, Bregenz (Austria), Berlin and Beijing.



MONA director Jef Bourgeau talks about the difficulty Detroit-area artists have in selling or exhibiting their work -- a burden shared by artists in most American towns that aren't New York or Los Angeles. What he didn't expect was the enthusiasm many foreign galleries have for showing in Detroit.

"It's amazing," says Bourgeau. "I mean, given the pall that hangs over Detroit, you figure, how excited can they be? And the answer is they're really excited."

The Berlin Department of Cultural Affairs

awarded each of the Germans a grant so they could fly here for Saturday's opening.

Indeed, says Bourgeau, "A blue-chip gallery we never would have considered approaching approached us." It's a cool reminder that, never mind what we sometimes think, Detroit has more international cachet than you can shake a stick at. — *Michael Hodges, Detroit News*

*There's definitive synergy going on in this show. Kelly Frank says, surprised how strong a relationship she developed with the Berlin artists when they visited for the opening. Mary Fortuna agrees. "We hung out a lot, and took them to Fort Wayne, Eastern Market, to CityFest and the Heidelberg Project. They were in awe. We felt kind of guilty," she adds, "We didn't take them to any museums." Everyone's excited about reconnecting in Berlin in November.

The whole thing began last year as a quickie swap with Chicago art consultant Paul Klein, just to get work from our region out of city limits. But *Changing Cities* has turned into a full-



fledged international cultural exchange program. In fact, right before this article went to print, Bourgeau reported that Daimler Financial Services intends to sponsor the Detroiters' visit to Germany, paying for flights overseas, the cost of shipping and more. Company President Klaus Entenmann has embraced the idea.

Bourgeau says, "Klaus and his wife Katherin even threw a wonderful Fourth of July picnic at their house for all the participating artists. Klaus did all the cooking like a TV chef, intense and fantastic."

Talk about a departure.

– *Rebecca Mazzei, Metro Times*

15). 2009 - THE PRINZHORN PRIZE

The winners of this year's Prinzhorn Prize have been chosen because their work is conceptually and emotionally rewarding, both illuminating current artistic dynamics and offering poignant



insight into the human condition. All the Prinzhorn recipients demonstrate adventurousness, conceptual strength, and skillful execution in their work.

THE PRINZHORN PRIZE 2009:

Christo & Jeanne-Claude (Lifetime Achievement recipients)
Olaf Breuning
Nicole Eisenman
Tracey Emin
Dana Schutz
Jessica Stockholder

This is the first year for the Prinzhorn Prize.

Although a very modest counterpart to larger awards, the Prinzhorn Prize is still an active attempt to call attention to those artists whose work continues to enrich all our lives by bringing new vision to it. We are all proud of the six chosen artists achievements in the visual arts and want to encourage and acknowledge their accomplishments, and, by doing so, champion their work here in the Midwest.

The Prinzhorn is sponsored by the Museum of New Art (MONA), and nominations are invited and will be decided each year by an independent jury that will change annually.

Secondary to the awarding of the Prize, recipients are also being given an open-invitation to exhibit at the Museum of New Art in the coming months. The museum has served as Detroit's contemporary museum since 1997 and, since its founding, has been funded and supported solely by artists.



MUSEUM OF NEW ART

The Museum of New Art (MONA), contact:

Jef Bourgeau, Director
detroitmona@aol.com
248-210-7560

website: www.detroitmona.com



Italian artist Lucio Pozzi prepping his 2001 MONA exhibition, assisted by Detroitier Sioux Trujillo a recent Kresge Fellow.