

COMMONS

ARTIST

PROJECT:

blkHaUS

studios

THE COMMONS TABLE

NOV 12, 2019 -
MAR 1, 2020

Humans are natural collectors, be it of souvenirs found on vacation, heirlooms passed down through generations, or trinkets discovered by chance. The items we hold on to reflect our social, cultural, and personal values. Likewise, museums tell stories by presenting all kinds of collected objects that reflect the way they prioritize different values.

In this exhibition Folayemi Wilson and Norman Teague's Chicago-based, socially focused design studio blkHaUS studios asks: How can museums be more thoughtful regarding their communities in collection strategies? The artists propose that by understanding the stories of personal collections, museums might transform their own priorities in collecting.

Throughout the exhibition, Wilson and Teague bring the *Petal Table*, a modular artwork built for convening, to host *Conversations on Collecting* at sites around Chicago. Each conversation considers a different question and culminates in an exhibition of participants' objects, chosen to reflect their individual communities. The research done over the course of the gatherings is shared with the MCA and other collecting institutions to provide tools for museums to better reflect the communities with which they share space.

The Commons Artist Project: blkHaUS studios is co-organized by January Parkos Arnall, Interim Senior Curator, and Christy LeMaster, Assistant Curator.

MUSEUM OF
CONTEMPORARY ART
CHICAGO

220 E CHICAGO AVE
CHICAGO, IL 60611

The Commons Table

Conversations on Collecting Series

The Commons Table exhibition is structured as an open research model on topics related to collecting, community, and institutional practice. Each exhibition of *The Commons Collection* is preceded by a conversation that focuses on a question posed by blkHaUS studios. Events take place at sites throughout Chicago and are facilitated by community members whose work is related to these topics.

Due to the nature of the convenings and sites, events are limited to a small number of active participants. We welcome members of the public to join the conversation: *pre-registration is required* by emailing inquiries to publicprograms@mcachicago.org. Once confirmed, participants will receive the site address and additional instructions.

For more information about the objects on display and their collectors, visit mcachicago.org/blkhaus.

COMMODIFICATION OF MODERNISM

Wed, Sep 25

Location: An Orange Moon and Tom Robinson Gallery

Conversation Leads: Lynne and Ty McDaniel, owners of An Orange Moon

Curators: Folayemi Wilson and Norman Teague

This convening and exhibition consider how the potential for market value changes the ways we collect. What is it about modernism that has caught the imagination of design aficionados and collectors and elevated its aesthetic to elite, enduring status?

Exhibition Dates: Nov 12–Dec 8
mcachicago.org/blkhaus-modernism

NATURE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY CITIES

Thu, Oct 17

Location: Sherman Park Fieldhouse

Conversation Lead: Ann Lui, cofounder of Future Firm

Curator: William Hill, artist and educator

This convening and exhibition consider how nature and the built environment coexist and whether natural forms might inform how we value designed objects. Are there ways that nature can help inform how we design twenty-first-century cities for twenty-first-century challenges?

Exhibition Dates: Dec 10–Jan 12
mcachicago.org/blkhaus-nature

DISABILITY AND PERSPECTIVE

Tue, Dec 10

Location: Arts of Life

Conversation Lead: Bess Williamson, author of *Accessible America: A History of Disability and Design*

Curator: Adero Knott, founder and CEO of AK Prosthetics

This convening and exhibition consider how embracing a wider variety of perspectives and physical lived experiences might change our value structures for designed objects. How can we critique social constructions of disability and normalize bodily and sensory differences?

Exhibition Dates: Jan 14–Feb 9
mcachicago.org/blkhaus-disability

RADICAL FUTURES

Tue, Jan 7

Location: Austin Town Hall

Conversation Lead: Paola Aguirre, artist and founder of Borderless Studio

Curator: Juarez Hawkins with TRACE, Teens Re-Imagining Art, Community & Environment

This convening and exhibition consider how young people might reimagine collecting with their generation's concerns at the forefront. What questions or issues are important to Chicago's young people around art and design within institutional, social, and urban spaces?

Exhibition Dates: Feb 11–Mar 1
mcachicago.org/blkhaus-futures

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COLLECTORS AND ARTISTS

Tue, Jan 28

Location: Home of Patric McCoy, art collector and environmental chemist

Conversation Lead: Patric McCoy

This convening considers how artists and collectors nurture meaningful relationships. What role does the collector play in helping to initiate and maintain the trajectory of an artist's oeuvre, and how do relationships with artists help a collector to develop their collection of art?

The

Commons

Table

Open Hours

Bring small items from your personal collection that reflect your community to have them photographed, catalogued, and added to Teague and Wilson's *The Commons Collection*. Items will be photographed with their owner and recorded into the collection database. Physical objects remain with their owners.

Open hours occur at the MCA on select Tuesdays and Saturdays in the Commons. The photo booth will also be available at each public convening.

Tuesdays, 4–6 pm:
Nov 12, Dec 10, Jan 7,
Jan 21, Feb 4, Feb 18

Saturdays, 2–4 pm:
Dec 7, Dec 21, Jan 4,
Jan 18, Feb 1, Feb 15,
Feb 29

Public
Convenings
in the
Commons

OPENING BRUNCH
Sun, Nov 17

Celebrate the exhibition with artists Folayemi Wilson and Norman Teague of blkHaUS studios in this opening brunch and discussion around the care and creation of collections. Participants are encouraged to bring small items that represent their community to be photographed, catalogued, and added to *The Commons Collection*.

**CONVERSATIONS ON COLLECTING:
FINAL REPORT**
Tue, Feb 18

The artists and conversation facilitators report back to the MCA and other collecting institutions around Chicago about the learnings and directives discussed over the course of five conversations on collecting. Moderated by curator January Parkos Arnall.