

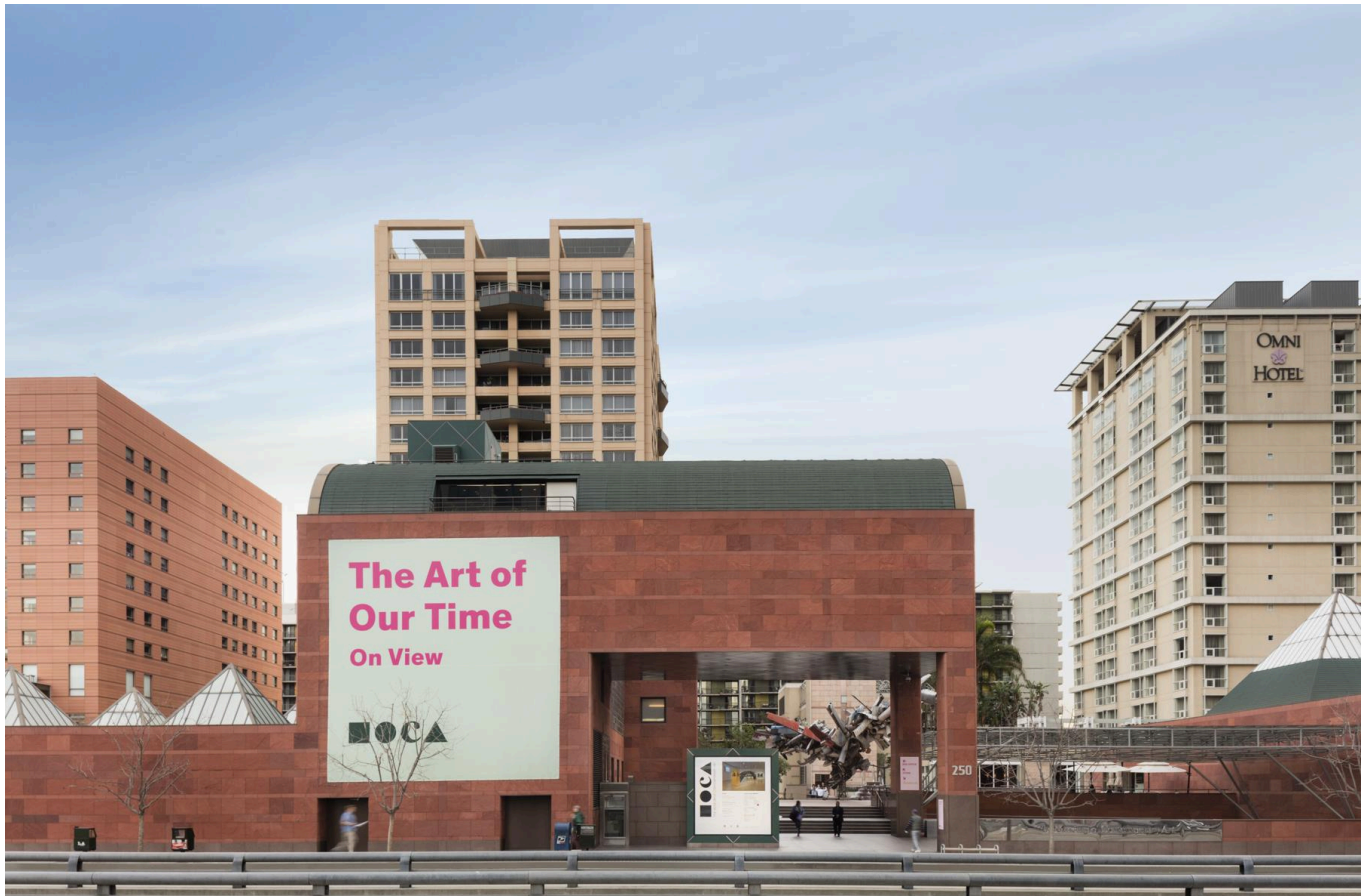
THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MOCA ANNOUNCES THE ERIC AND WENDY SCHMIDT ENVIRONMENT AND ART PRIZE

New Prize to Commission Artwork Addressing Environmental Issues
That Will Engage Local Communities



Los Angeles, CA – The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) announced today the **Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize**, a juried award that will support and celebrate artists whose practices address critical intersections in art, architecture, design, climate, conservation, sustainability, and environmental justice.

The new Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize, funded through the generosity of philanthropists Eric and Wendy Schmidt, will be awarded by MOCA to an artist every two years from 2024 until 2030, resulting in three prizes over six years. The Prize awards a \$100,000 unrestricted honorarium as well as resources and institutional support to complete a new project that will be commissioned and presented by MOCA.

The inaugural winner of the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize will be announced this fall, and the first artist's MOCA-commissioned project will be unveiled in spring 2026. Over each two-year award period, prize winners will engage and collaborate with communities in Los Angeles and beyond.

"Eric and Wendy Schmidt, through their philanthropic initiatives, have long supported projects at the intersection of science, technology, and the arts. MOCA is immensely grateful to them for their generous gift to establish this prize," said **Johanna Burton, The Maurice Marciano Director of MOCA**. "MOCA has demonstrated our commitment to engaging with artists around critical environmental issues through the presentation of exhibitions such as *Pipilotti Rist: Big Heartedness, Be My Neighbor*, *MOCA Focus: Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio*, and *Josh Kline: Climate Change*; performances and residencies including the opera *Sun & Sea* and Crenshaw Dairy Mart's garden at MOCA Geffen; as well as our ongoing Climate Conversations series. This new prize enables the museum to continue to forefront the work of artists who are creating dialogue and visibility around issues of climate, conservation, and sustainability."

"Science and technology help us explain the world, while art and community give us understanding and belonging," said **Wendy Schmidt, president and co-founder of the Schmidt Family Foundation and Schmidt Ocean Institute**. "We are delighted to establish this prize with MOCA because, as we've seen across our philanthropy, connecting scientists, artists and communities appears to reveal essential truths about people and our planet."

MOCA's Environmental & Sustainability Strategist Kelsey Shell added: "The Schmidt Environment and Art Prize will deepen the museum's engagement with the community and reinforce our mission to support artists whose work drives important conversations about sustainability and environmental justice."

This summer a committee of 15 to 20 representatives from diverse fields—ranging from art and architecture to conservation and ecology to design and community organizing—will nominate artists from a broad range of disciplines to be considered for the inaugural prize. Nominated artists will then have four weeks to create and submit proposals.

MOCA's Environmental Council—the first such body convened by a major U.S. art museum—will advise MOCA in the administration and execution of the prize. A five-person jury will select the winners of the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize. Jury members for 2024 are: Johanna Burton, Maurice Marciano Director of MOCA; Maria Seferian, President, Hillspire; Dan Hammer, Managing Partner, Ode & Advisor to the MOCA Environmental Council; John Kenneth Paranada, Curator of Art and Climate Change, Sainsbury Center; Carson Chan, Director of the Emilio Ambasz Institute for the Joint Study of the Built and the Natural Environment, MoMA.

The final artwork will be presented at MOCA and may be an exhibition, performance, artist book, public program, or other project to be determined in collaboration with the winner. The winner will also select an advisor with experience in environmental justice, climate science, or sustainable practice to serve as a key collaborator in the conception, contextualization, and realization of the project.

For more information about the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize, please visit MOCA's website at moca.org/about/schmidt-prize.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (MOCA)

Founded in 1979, MOCA is the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth; a world-class collection of nearly 8,000 objects, international in scope with deep holdings in Los Angeles art; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

ABOUT ERIC AND WENDY SCHMIDT

Eric and Wendy Schmidt have been active philanthropists since 2006, when they started the [Schmidt Family Foundation](https://schmidtfoundation.org/) to address challenges facing communities around the world, working for clean renewable energy,

healthy food systems, healthy oceans and the protection of human rights. They also founded [Schmidt Ocean Institute](#) to advance oceanographic research by offering scientists free access to the world's first year-round philanthropic research vessel in exchange for making their findings publicly available. In 2024, Eric and Wendy founded [Schmidt Sciences](#), a nonprofit organization working to advance science and technology that deepens human understanding of the natural world and develops solutions to global issues. Through their philanthropy, the couple are working toward a healthy, resilient, secure world for all.

[Eric Schmidt](#) led Google as CEO for a decade and as executive chairman for four years. He also served as executive chairman of Alphabet for three years and as technical advisor. A journalist early in her career, [Wendy Schmidt](#) also worked in marketing communications in Silicon Valley and since 2006 has led the couple's philanthropy as president of the Schmidt Family Foundation and Schmidt Ocean Institute.

ABOUT THE ERIC AND WENDY SCHMIDT ENVIRONMENT AND ART PRIZE

Established in 2024, the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Environment and Art Prize, funded by philanthropists Eric and Wendy Schmidt, is awarded to an artist whose work addresses intersections in art, architecture, design, climate, conservation, sustainability, and environmental justice. Winners receive a \$100,000 unrestricted honorarium and additional resources to complete a newly commissioned project focusing on environmental justice, climate activism, and/or human rights. MOCA will award the prize every two years until 2030, resulting in three prizes over six years. The inaugural winner will be announced in the Fall of 2024.

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