



PRESS RELEASE

August 28, 2018

21c MUSEUM HOTELS COMMISSIONS TEN ARTISTS TO DESIGN BILLBOARDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, IN COLLABORATION WITH FOR FREEDOMS *50 STATE INITIATIVE*

21c unveils inaugural billboards by artist Jeremy Dean in Kansas City, Kansas, on August 26th, and will oversee the installation of ten additional billboards across the U.S. by artists including Titus Kaphar, Hank Willis Thomas, Zoe Buckman, amongst others.

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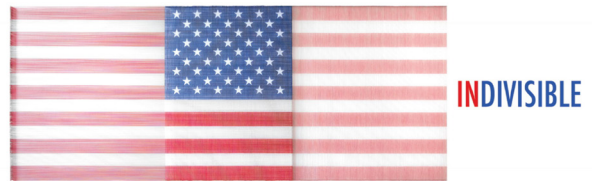
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21c FOR FREEDOMS

Jeremy Dean, *In-Divisible*

Kansas City, MO (August 28, 2018)

21c Museum Hotels is unveiling a public art installation designed by artist Jeremy Dean – two billboards on the I-35 highway running through Kansas City – as part of the *50 State Initiative* of For Freedoms Federation. Founded by Hank Willis Thomas and Eric Gottesman, For Freedoms provides a platform for civic engagement, discourse, and direct action for artists in the United States by producing exhibitions, town hall meetings, billboards, and public art. 21c serves as an institutional partner to For Freedoms Initiative, helping to produce nationwide public art installations and lead local community dialogues in order to inject nuanced, artistic thinking into public discourse.

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21c and For Freedoms share a belief in the power of art to connect communities, start conversations, and inspire change. The opportunity to participate in the Fifty States initiative provides an exciting platform to integrate the work of some of today's most dynamic artists into public spaces in all 10 cities across the United States that 21c calls home today and in the near future.

**–Alice Gray Stites
Chief Curator**



The *50 State Initiative* was launched in 2018 as a non-partisan, nationwide campaign to use art as a means of inspiring broad civic participation. In the lead-up to the midterm elections this November – artists and institutions across the 50 states are designing and commissioning billboards, town halls, lawn signs, and exhibitions, transforming artistic spaces into civic forums for action and discussion of values, place, and patriotism. 21c will play a prominent role in the initiative, supporting the development of twelve billboards by ten artists in 21c cities across the United States.

The first two billboards by artist Jeremy Dean are being unveiled in Kansas City on August 26 on I-35 & Terrace E/S. Through research, direct action, and repetitive gesture, Dean works to bring new histories to light and provoke new conversations on the nature of freedom. “I am thrilled to use my artwork on these billboards and join 21c and For Freedoms in the belief that in divisive times art can illuminate- showing the world as it is and pointing to the world as it can be,” said Jeremy Dean. For one of the billboards in Kansas City, Dean will depict an altered American flag that builds upon his series *Rendered Flags*. Ongoing since 2004, *Rendered Flags* consists of American flags unwoven and reassembled as two separate flags, made only of the vertical and horizontal strings respectively. The work on the billboard presents another iteration of this practice: the stars and stripes traditionally on the left of the flag have been reconfigured to the center, with red and white stripes flanking both sides and the word **INDIVISIBLE** to the right of the flag.

Dean’s second billboard is a part of his series of horse-drawn cars, commenting on the history of Depression Era “Hoover Wagons,” in which impoverished Americans transformed their cars into stagecoaches because they could not afford gas. Using the image of a Hummer-turned-stagecoach, Dean comments on American consumption, advocates for environmentalism and alludes to the perils of what could happen when natural resources run out. Dean had a solo exhibition *Futurama*, at 21c in 2010 in Louisville and has work included in subsequent 21c thematic exhibitions including, *Aftermath: Witnessing War*, *Countenancing Compassion* in 2014 and *Pop Stars* in 2015.

“21c and For Freedoms share a belief in the power of art to connect communities, start conversations, and inspire change,” said Chief Curator Alice Gray Stites. “The opportunity to participate in the Fifty States initiative provides an exciting platform to

integrate the work of some of today’s most dynamic artists into public spaces in all 10 cities across the United States that 21c calls home today and in the near future.”

In addition to Jeremy Dean, 21c has commissioned nine artists to design billboards in nine other cities where 21c operates. The billboards serve as outdoor activations, inviting artists to use the tools of art and advertising to encourage civic engagement. The full list of participating artists and billboard installation sites includes:

- **Jeremy Dean** (2 billboards): Kansas City, August 26 – September 23
- **Bayeté Ross Smith** (2 billboards): Chicago, September 24 – October 22
- **Emily Hanako Momohara**: Cincinnati, September 24 – October 21
- **Justin Brice Guariglia**: Oklahoma City, October 1 – 28
- **Hank Willis Thomas**: Nashville, October 1 – 29
- **Titus Kaphar**: Louisville, October 1 – 29
- **Derrick Adams**: Miami, October 1 – 29
- **Stacey Kirby**: Durham, October 1 – 29
- **Ebony Patterson**: Lexington, October 1 – 29
- **Zoe Buckman**: Bentonville, October 1 – 31

Along with 21c, close to 200 art museums, universities, and cultural centers serve as participating partners, including Baltimore Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum, Cincinnati Art Museum, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Minneapolis Institute of Art, New Museum, and Perez Art Museum, among others.

ABOUT FOR FREEDOMS

Freedoms started in 2016 as a platform for civic engagement, discourse, and direct action for artists in the United States. Inspired by Norman Rockwell’s 1943 paintings of the four universal freedoms articulated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1941—freedom



of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear—For Freedoms seeks to use art to deepen public discussions of civic issues and core values, and to clarify that citizenship in American society is deepened by participation, not by ideology. For Freedoms is part of a rich history of artists employing means of mass communication to provoke political discourse. For Freedoms believes art, and artists, play an important role in galvanizing our society towards a more representative and transparent government.

50 STATE INITIATIVE PROJECT STATEMENT

Since 2016, For Freedoms has produced special exhibitions, town hall meetings, billboards, and lawn sign installations to spur greater participation in civic life. This year, For Freedoms launched its *50 State Initiative*, a new phase of programming to encourage broad participation and inspire conversation around November's midterm elections.

Building off of the existing artistic infrastructure in the United States, For Freedoms has developed a network of over 300 artists and 200 institutional partners who will produce nationwide public art installations, exhibitions and local community dialogues in order to inject nuanced, artistic thinking into public discourse. Centered around the vital work of artists, For Freedoms hopes that these exhibitions and related projects will model how arts institutions can become civic forums for action and discussion of values, place, and patriotism.

ABOUT 21c MUSEUM HOTELS

21c Museum, a multi-venue museum with locations in eight cities, is one of the largest contemporary art museums in the U.S., and North America's only collecting museum dedicated solely to art of the 21st century. It was founded in 2006 by Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson, philanthropists, preservationists, and contemporary art collectors, who were inspired by the idea that art can spur urban revitalization and catalyze civic connection. Envisioning a new way to expand access to contemporary art in urban centers, they created 21c Museum Hotels, which seamlessly combine a fully functioning contemporary art museum with boutique hotels and chef-driven restaurants.

From rotating, curated exhibitions, to site-specific installations and cultural programming, 21c creates innovative cultural centers for experiencing thought provoking contemporary art from all over the world. Open and accessible 24/7, 21c's exhibitions and programs are free to public. 21c Kansas City brings

over 6,200 square feet of exhibition, meeting, and event space to downtown Kansas City. As a multi-venue museum, 21c presents a range of arts programming curated by Museum Director, Chief Curator Alice Gray Stites. 21c collaborates on arts initiatives with artists and organizations worldwide. 21c Museum Hotels are located in Louisville, KY; Cincinnati, OH, Bentonville, AR; Durham, NC; Lexington, KY, Oklahoma City, OK, and Nashville, TN. Projects are under development in Des Moines and Miami.

For more information visit **21cMuseumHotels.com** and follow us on social media at **@21cHotels** or **#21cMuseumHotel**.
