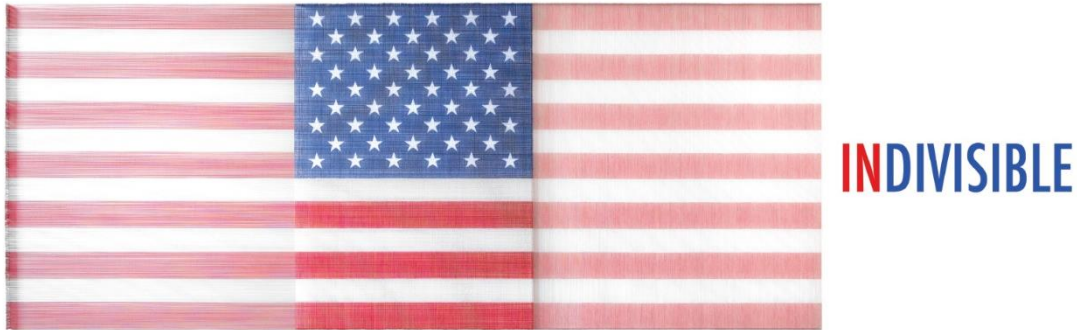




21c MUSEUM COMMISSIONS TEN ARTISTS TO DESIGN BILLBOARDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, IN COLLABORATION WITH FOR FREEDOMS 50 STATE INITIATIVE

21c UNVEILS BILLBOARDS ACROSS THE U.S. IN TEN CITIES, FROM BENTONVILLE TO MIAMI, BY ARTISTS INCLUDING TITUS KAPHAR, HANK WILLIS THOMAS, ZOE BUCKMAN, PAULA CROWN, DERRICK ADAMS, AND MORE



Rendering of Kansas City billboard design by Jeremy Dean.
Image courtesy of the artist and 21c Museum Hotels

21c Museum Hotel – October 11, 2018 - A month ahead of the midterm elections on November 6, 2018, 21c Museum Hotel, in partnership with For Freedoms Federation's *50 State Initiative*, will have unveiled ten artist-designed billboards in ten locations across the U.S. Founded by Hank Willis Thomas and Eric Gottesman, For Freedoms provides a non-partisan platform for civic engagement, discourse, and direct action for artists in the United States by producing exhibitions, town hall meetings, billboards, and public art. As an institutional partner, 21c will present 12 commissioned billboards by artists **Titus Kaphar, Jeremy Dean, Derrick Adams, Paula Crown, Hank Willis Thomas, Zoë Buckman, Stacey Kirby, Emily Momohara, Justin Brice Guariglia, and Ebony G. Patterson**, that will be installed as public art installations in highly visible locations across the country in 10 cities, including: Bentonville, AR; Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Durham, NC; Lexington, KY; Louisville, KY; Kansas City, MO; Nashville, TN; Miami, FL, and Oklahoma City, OK. With a national scope, 21c and For Freedoms seeks to use artistic voices to spur community dialogues that bring critical thinking about the current political climate into public discourse.

"21c and For Freedoms share a belief in the power of art to connect communities, start conversations, and inspire change," said Chief Curator and Museum Director **Alice Gray Stites**. "The opportunity to participate in the *50 State 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."

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. 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.

Additional information on 21c projects in collaboration with For Freedoms follows below:

***Inaction is Apathy Collusion is Violence* by Zoë Buckman**

21c Bentonville, Arkansas at 1113 S. Walton

On view October 1-31, 2018

Zoë Buckman is a New York City based artist. Buckman is a multi-disciplinary artist working in sculpture, installation, and photography, exploring themes of Feminism, mortality, and equality. For her billboard commissioned by 21c and For Freedoms, she portrays a vintage dish cloth embroidered with the words “Inaction is Apathy Collusion is Violence.” The use of machine embroidery on a dish cloth is symbolic of the intrinsic violence of domesticity and the female experience throughout history. It speaks to the concept that in this climate, inaction and apathy are tantamount to violence and implores all viewers to take responsibility and do what we can to make this a safer and more just country for everyone.

***Thoughts and Prayers* by Paula Crown**

Chicago, Illinois at Jackson Boulevard

On view September 24-October 21, 2018

Paula Crown is an artist based in Chicago. Working across media in drawing, painting, video and sculpture, Crown is best known for her site-specific, immersive, public installation pieces. In addition to being an artist, Crown is a social advocate and has spearheaded progressive initiatives in education, children’s health, environmentally sustainable business practices, and the arts. Commissioned for the For Freedoms *50 State Initiative*, Crown created a billboard that is both a confrontation and a call to action. The work, entitled ***Thoughts and Prayers***, presents two firearms reflected in conflict under the flattened sentiment of a clichéd phrase. Crown confronts the viewer with a choice of action or indifference, thereby urging citizens to “translate thoughts and prayers into policy.”

***Never Again is Now* by Emily Hanako Momohara**

21c Cincinnati, Ohio on I-75 Norwood Lateral Expressway, 100' S/O

On view September 24-October 21, 2018

Emily Momohara is an artist based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Working in photography, video, and sculpture, Momohara explores themes of culture and assimilation, migration and displacement, legacy, and loss. During WWII, her family was incarcerated because of their Japanese heritage. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in an unconstitutional use of power, signed Executive Order 9066 incarcerating all Japanese Americans. In many cases, families were separated. Even those who were able to be imprisoned together suffered a damage of family structure. In response to recent accounts of family separations at the US/Mexico border, and drawing from her family history, Momohara uses documentation of the WWII incarceration to make a striking comparison to the current treatment of immigrants in the U.S. to the past, with an urgent message: *Never Again is Now!* In addition to the billboard, 21c will host a For Freedoms Town Hall at 21c Cincinnati with local artists, politicians, and representatives from the Freestore FoodBank.

***Yo Soy Válida* by Stacey L. Kirby**

21c Durham, North Carolina on N/S Highway 147 (EW Expressway)

On view October 1-29, 2018

Stacey L. Kirby is an artist based in Durham, North Carolina. For over a decade, Kirby has combined installation and performance to create 'performative interactions' in alternative, private, and public spaces. Fueled by the current political climate and ethnographic research, her work addresses issues of identity, citizenship, and civil rights. Kirby believes in freedom through creative embodiment and invites visitors to become active participants in her work. With the presentation of a billboard “*Yo Soy Válida*,” which translates to “I am valid,” Kirby attempts to offer empowerment and amplify voices of the Latinx community against the backdrop of the U.S. government’s current immigration policies. Building off of her recent mentorship of a Latinx teen, *Yo Soy Válida* honors the humanity and societal contributions of her mentee, her family, and the Latinx community who deserve to be treated as allies rather than aliens.

***I am a Promise* by Ebony G. Patterson**
21c Lexington, Kentucky at 167 W. Main Street
On view October 1 – November 7, 2018

Ebony G. Patterson is an artist currently based in Chicago, Illinois. Born in Jamaica, Patterson is an interdisciplinary artist whose work examines how identities are made visible and invisible in our society. Using popular contemporary cultural archetypes, Patterson explores how new technologies and new spaces have increased the visibility of disenfranchised groups. With *I am a Promise*, Patterson draws the text from a popular children's hymn, to ask viewers what social hierarchy within postcolonial spaces and its relationship does to dress, disenfranchisement, body politics, invisibility, and visibility while asking the audience to bear witness. The image is taken from her series, '...when they grow up' which shows pictures of black children in varying ages engaged in daily activities and captures innocence that is often denied to black youth.

***Behind the Myth of Benevolence* by Titus Kaphar**
21c Louisville, Kentucky at I-65 @ Audubon F/S, faces south
On view October 2 – 30, 2018

Titus Kaphar is an artist based in New Haven, Connecticut. A painter and sculptor whose practice examines the history of representation, Kaphar utilizes styles and conventions from the art historical canon and, using techniques like cutting, shredding, and erasing, he illuminates social inequalities and addresses African-American experiences, from our country's founding to today, and confronts our past to highlight the inadequacies of our present. With *Behind the Myth of Benevolence*, Kaphar attempts to give presence to the hundreds of thousands of untold and hidden narratives about usurped liberty through representing the story of Thomas Jefferson's enslaved woman Sally Mae Hemmings, who was the mother of the founding father's children. This work represents the countless women throughout history whose liberty was taken from them at the hands of powerful men and gives presence and voice to these erased histories.

***Indivisible and Hoover Wagons* by Jeremy Dean**
21c Kansas City at 1-35 & Terrace E/S
On view August 27, - November 7, 2018

Jeremy Dean is an artist based in New York City. Through research, direct action, and repetitive gesture, multimedia artist Dean works to bring new histories to light and provoke new conversations on the nature of freedom. Dean created two billboards in collaboration with 21c and For Freedoms on view in Kansas City. For *Indivisible*, Dean depicts an altered American flag that builds upon his ongoing series *Rendered Flags*. Through unweaving American flags and reassembling the materials, Dean presents a reconfigured American flag alongside the word INDIVISIBLE that speaks to the current divisive political climate. 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.

***Ride Walk Drive March Vote* by Derrick Adams**
Miami, Florida at NW 79th Street
On view October 1 – 29, 2018

Derrick Adams is an artist based in New York City. With a multidisciplinary practice, Adams works across performance, video, sound, and 2D and 3D realms and focuses on the fragmentation and manipulation of structure and surface, exploring self-image and forward projection. For his billboard commissioned by 21c and For Freedoms, Adams urges viewers to cast their vote in upcoming elections with the text, "Ride Walk Drive March Vote."

***Love Over Rules* by Hank Willis Thomas**
21c Nashville, Tennessee at I-24 .40 M/N Jefferson St W/S F/N, faces north
On view October 1-November 7, 2018

Hank Willis Thomas is a New York City based artist and co-founder of *For Freedoms*. Thomas is a conceptual artist working primarily with themes related to perspective identity, commodity, media, and popular culture. For his billboard, he memorializes his cousin, Songha Willis, who was murdered in Philadelphia in 2000. A month after his cousin's death, Thomas found a recording of the incident and learned his cousin's last words were 'love over rules.'

WE ARE THE ASTROID by Justin Brice Guariglia
21c Oklahoma City at 2903 W I-40, facing west
On view October 2 - 30, 2018

Justin Brice Guariglia is an artist based in New York City. Artist and environmental activist, Guariglia works across disciplines and collaborates with scientists, philosophers, and journalists to explore important ecological issues of our time and was the first artist to fly on earth science missions with NASA. For his billboard commissioned by 21c and For Freedoms, Guariglia presents a text-based work entitled "WE ARE THE ASTEROID." The work draws from *HYPEROBJECTS: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minnesota, 2013) written by philosopher Timothy Morton, Professor and Rita Shea Guffey Chair in English at Rice University, Morton, which explores the intersection of object-oriented thought and ecological studies. Guariglia seeks to use his role as an artist as a positive force for making social and political change by giving audiences new ways to see and understand the world.

ABOUT FOR FREEDOMS

For 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 the 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 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.

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