

LETTER FROM THE MOCP ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHAIR:

The MoCP's 2012 fiscal year was a period of transition and growth for the Museum in the face of a changing cultural landscape at Columbia College Chicago and the city at large. It was a period that simultaneously featured *Limits of Photography*, the final exhibition curated by former director Rod Slemmons, as well as the beginnings of strategic planning for the Museum's bright future under its new director Natasha Egan. *Limits* examined the work of artists testing the borders of the medium of photography itself. It highlighted many of the artists the MoCP has collected and deemed worthy of study, such as Curtis Mann, Doug Stapleton, and Vera Klement. The exhibition was a capstone of sorts for Rod's 9-year tenure, which has been distinguished by new scholarship and a strategic expansion of the Museum's collection. Rod's contributions furthered the Museum's venerable reputation on an international scale—a reputation that Natasha seeks to build upon, while also broadening the MoCP's visibility and influence in the field and the world.

To help her, the Museum attracted new blood with fresh perspectives and ideas to our Advisory Committee including Patti Bartlestein, Adam Brooks, Susan O'Brien Lyons, Bruce Mondschain, Kristi Nuelle, David Weinberg, and Bob Wislow. As a sign of the Museum's deepening the relationship with Columbia College Chicago, the Photography department's new Chair at Columbia, Peter Fitzpatrick, joined the Advisory Committee—along with Interim Provost Louise Love. The close engagement of Peter and Louise, both experts in education and administration, is a symbol of the seamless and symbiotic relationship between the MoCP and Columbia. As a Trustee for the College as well as Chairman of the MoCP's Advisory Committee, I see firsthand this synergetic relationship. During a period of belt-tightening for the College as student enrollment dips, the Museum is a more important asset for the College than ever before, attracting students to campus and enriching their educations. At the same time, there is a need to grow the Museum's financial independence and increase community investment and support.

To advance its curatorial and development goals, the MoCP welcomed two new individuals. Allison Grant made her curatorial debut with the intriguing *Our Origins* exhibition, which examined science through an artistic lens, and Jonathan Kinkley succeeded Jeffrey Arnett as the Museum's development officer, seeking to maintain the Museum's steadfast relationships with foundation and government agencies while also bringing new individual stakeholders into the MoCP fold. Curator Karen Irvine's duties took on an added dimension with her new role as Associate Director. Longtime Exhibitions Manager Stephanie Conaway also underwent a title change to reflect the greater role she plays in running the museum as Head of Operations. Lastly, Manager of Education Corinne Rose and Manager of Collections Kristin Taylor continued to direct and implement their strategies for the Museum's Education and Collection activities with tireless dedication and leadership.

It's refreshing that with changes afoot, the Museum keeps a vigilant eye on its priorities. Whether delving into artistic preoccupations with crime in Karen Irvine's provocative *Crime Unseen* exhibition or presenting the illuminating arguments of leading visual scholar W.J.T. Mitchell at an education event, the MoCP remains unequivocally devoted to developments and ideas in the field.

Thank you to the fantastic Advisory Committee, the Trustees of Columbia College Chicago, and the donors, volunteers and staff that work hard to make the MoCP an artistic leader in Chicago.

Bill Hoo

Advisory Committee Chairman and Columbia College Chicago Board Trustee



Christian Patterson, House on Fire, 2007. Museum purchase.

Cover: Christian Patterson, Dead Prairie Grass, 2009. Courtesy of the artist.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR:

August 31, 2012 closes the Museum of Contemporary Photography's thirty-sixth exhibition season and my first year as Director. This annual report allows me to reflect on the Museum's accomplishments and to acknowledge everyone's hard work and dedication to making the MoCP the vibrant and dynamic institution we all value. First, I would like to thank the outstanding museum staff, both full and part-time employees; the team of Columbia College graduate and undergraduate student interns; and our invaluable volunteers. I also extend a special thank you to all the members of MoCP's Advisory Committee, chaired by Bill Hood, for their passion, curiosity, support, and most of all for pushing the Museum to think big. It is with the commitment and generosity of all our supporters that we can accomplish our mission of promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of the artistic, cultural, and political implications of the images in our world today.

All the year's numbers are impressive. Over the course of the year MoCP presented four thematic group exhibitions that featured the work of nearly fifty local, national, and international artists, along with numerous gallery talks, lectures, concerts, video screenings, and public print viewings from the permanent collection. More than 9,000 students from Columbia College and the Chicago region's universities, colleges and high schools benefitted from attending MoCP education programs such as docent-led and self-guided tours. In total, over 30,000 people visited the museum's exhibitions and programs throughout the year, nearly 1.3 million unique visitors viewed the MoCP website, and we are soon to reach 25,000 likes on Facebook!

The exhibition season began with Assistant Curator Allison Grant's debut exhibition *Our Origins*, presenting works by sixteen contemporary artists who use photography, video, drawing, and sculpture to reflect on natural history from a distinctly human and often humorous point of view. One highlight of the exhibition was a public program with artist Alison Ruttan, whose work links human and primate behavior, in dialogue with Dr. Laurie Santos, who studies primate psychology and the evolutionary origins of the human mind in the Department of Psychology at Yale University.

At the end of October we opened the critically acclaimed exhibition *Crime Unseen*, organized by Curator and Associate Director Karen Irvine. The eight artists featured in the show grappled with retelling the stories of disturbing crimes, and their work questioned the roles of memory, the media, and evidence in solving and remembering criminal acts. This exhibition featured the work of Christian Patterson and coincided with the release of his publication *Redheaded Peckerwood*, supported by MoCP and containing essays by Karen Irvine and Luc Sante (MACK, 2011). The publication, now in its third edition, was named best photography book of 2011 by numerous publications including *Time magazine*, *the New York Times*, *Art in America*, and the *Guardian*, and as you will see in the Exhibition Press section of this report, both the publication and the exhibition received significant attention from the media.

In January, former Director Rod Slemmons organized *Limits of Photography*, an exhibition featuring works by ten artists that explored the viewer's loss of faith in the veracity of photography, upending the notion that photographs are telling us a "truth" about the world. Rod Slemmons has explored this topic in innovative and diverse ways for nearly three decades, beginning when digital art photography was just beginning to receive serious attention.

Dan Hojnacki, Christmas Cactus With Chair,

2010, Courtesy of the artist.

The final exhibition of the season, *Survival Techniques: Narratives of Resistance*, which I coorganized with Shanghai-based independent curator Davide Quadrio, examined human conflict and the ways individuals and groups endure long-term hardship through the work of international artists working in video, printmaking, and still photography. A selection of work in this exhibition was from a newly acquired extended loan to MoCP of nearly 100 works from the Shanghai-based FarEastFarWest collection, which has commissioned works of art focused on

artistic experimentation in China and the rest of Asia since 2009. We are making this collection available to students and professionals for workshops, exhibitions, and presentations, and it includes works by artists such as Olivo Babieri, Birdhead (Song Tao and Ji Weiyu), Cao Fei, Rainer Ganahl, Sutee Kunavichayanont, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Xijing Men, and Xu Zhen.

Acquiring the FarEastFarWest collection demonstrates our commitment to increasing the number of diverse, international, and emerging works of art in our collection, and it complements our continual effort to acquire select works from exhibiting artists for future study and exhibition. From this season's exhibitions we're proud to have acquired works by such artists as Jenny Akerlund, Corinne May Botz, Alison Carey, Eric William Carroll, Vera Klement, Deborah Luster, Aspen Mays, J. J. Murphy, Christian Patterson, Alison Ruttan, Taryn Simon, and Angela Strassheim. This year the Museum added 366 objects through purchases and gifts to the collection, which now numbers over 11,000 objects. Making these works of art accessible for students, teachers, researchers, and the general public—and loaning them to other institutions—are both at the core of our mission. As part of this emphasis on bringing our collection to a wider audience, we have just launched a new website that we hope makes the collection even more accessible and engaging in the always-on cyber world.

Embracing our mission as a college art museum, education continues to be a primary focus of our work. The MoCP dramatically increased the number and diversity of students and educators it served in 2011/2012, approximately 4,400 regional college and high school students through docent-facilitated group visits and an additional 4,800 students on selfguided tours visited the MoCP. Manager of Education Corinne Rose presented workshops and lectures on visual literacy, as well as integrating photography into a range of arts and academic curriculum, to over 800 Chicago Public Schools teachers, potentially reaching more than 24,000 CPS students. In the past year the museum also successfully integrated museum visits and visual literacy training into many courses at Columbia College, including First Year Seminar, Introduction to Visual Culture, and Photography One and Two-introducing the resources of the Museum to several hundred Columbia students in their first year of study. Additionally, the Museum's community-based education program, Picture Me, provided Chicago teens with intensive mentorship in the techniques and history of photography. We continued our popular Talkin' Back: Chicago Youth Respond exhibition, consisting of the work of students from six different Chicago schools and communities who, with guidance from professional photographers and writers, created photographs and texts that expressed their diverse ideas about landscape, place, and identity.

Toward the end of the fiscal year we embarked on a new strategic plan. Leveraging the model of strategic planning set by peer organizations as well as the Chicago Cultural Plan, the Museum's leaders established strategic goals and measurable outcomes. These plans are currently undergoing reflection with focus groups, led by key members of the MoCP Advisory Committee. The four overarching goals are as follows: Artistic: to introduce and contextualize high-quality, local, national, and international artistic voices. Civic: to be a vital civic institution. Educational: to teach and educate photography's past and present and strategically grow the collection. Influence: To be a highly visible museum with wide influence.

I am excited and proud to be pursuing these worthy goals with incredibly dedicated people—my colleagues, the members of our Advisory Committee, Friends of MoCP—alongside the artists whose work we present and the visitors who come (or click) to see it. Thank you, all.

Natasha Egan Director

Nalah UK



Binh Danh, Memory of Tuol Sleng Prison, Child 7 from the Immortality: The Remnants of the Vietnam and American War series, 2010, Gift of the artist.

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EXHIBITIONS



Jason Lazarus, Eric Becklin, first human to see the center of our Galaxy, 2010, Courtesy

Our Origins July 29 - October 16, 2011

Artists: Jenny Akerlund, Julia Büttelmann, Alison Carey, Eric William Carroll, Michelle Ceja, Ken Fandell, Jason Lazarus, Aspen Mays, Scott McFarland, Patricia Piccinini, Mark Ruwedel, Jennifer Ray, Alison Ruttan, SEMICONDUCTOR, Rachel Sussman, and Penelope Umbrico

The exhibition *Our Origins* brought together sixteen contemporary artists using photography, video, drawing, and sculpture to reflect on natural history from a distinctly human and often humorous point of view, ultimately considering the human inclination to trace our beginnings beyond recorded history and exploring our limited capacity to draw conclusive answers about the meaning of life. Curated by Allison Grant.



Richard Barnes, *Sacramento (Cabin in Warehouse)*, 1998, Gift of Andreas Waldburg-Wolfegg.

Crime UnseenOctober 28, 2011 - January 15, 2012

Artists: Richard Barnes, Corinne May Botz, Christopher Dawson, Deborah Luster, Christian Patterson, Taryn Simon, Angela Strassheim, and Krista Wortendyke

Crime Unseen brought together artists grappling with a retelling of disturbing crimes. Using photography as well as other methods, the artists reactivated historical material and opened it up to further contemplation. By drawing on techniques of photojournalism, forensic photography, and documentary landscape, the artists actively engaged with myth and reality as they questioned the roles of memory, the media, and evidence in solving and remembering crime. Curated by Karen Irvine.



John Brill, *Untitled,* 1991. Courtesy of Kent Fine Art, NY.

Limits of PhotographyJanuary 21 - March 25, 2012

Artists: Chris Naka, Curtis Mann, Daniel Hojnacki, Doug Stapleton, J.J. Murphy, John Brill, Randy Hayes, Rhona Shand, Sally Ketcham, and Vera Klement

The exhibition *Limits of Photography* presented artists whose work pushes photography to the limits of recognizing it as photography. The artists in the exhibition used a wide variety of contemporary mixed media, video, and technical alteration and manipulation to depart from photographic purity and tradition, raising questions about the veracity of photography and the objectivity of the making and viewing experience. Curated by Rod Slemmons.



Li Mu, *Blued Book*s, 2011, Extended loan of the FarEastFarWest collection.

Survival Techniques: Narratives of Resistance April 13 – July 1, 2012

Artists: Yto Barrada, Raphaël Dallaporta, Rainer Ganahl, Philippe Laleu, Sigalit Landau, Daria Menozzi, Li Mu, MRK Palash, Uriel Orlow, Navin Rawanchaikul, Julika Rudelius, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Tintin Wulia, Zhang Peili, and Artur Zmijewski

The exhibition *Survival Techniques: Narratives of Resistance* looked at human conflict and the ways individuals and groups endure long-term hardship. The 15 international artists in this exhibition approached contentious political issues that, although individually nuanced, presented parallel fundamental challenges to the human psyche. From various reactions to situations that rise out of differences in ideologies, to the impact of nationalism, ethnicity, and power, the artists investigated a range of human travails—including exile, displacement, and the struggle to exist in a state of flux. Curated by Davide Quadrio and Natasha Egan.

EXHIBITION PRESS

Our Origins

- Adler, Tony. "In the beginning there was nothing", *Chicago Reader*. September 1, 2011.
- Ritchie, Abraham. "Our Origins," *ArtSlan*t. August 22, 2011
- Russell, Kathy. "Chicago Calendar: Featured Five," *The Beacon-News*, July 22, 2011.
- Weinberg, Lauren. "'Our Origins' at the Museum of Contemporary Photography," *Time Out Chicago*, Aug. 17, 2011.
- Spurgeon, Marta. "Beguilingly Incomplete: Our Origins at the Museum of Contemporary Photography," *Daily Serving*, November 2011.
- Westin, Monica. "Our Origins," FlavorPill Chicago. July 29, 2011
- Weinstein, Michael. "Recommended: Review of Our Origins/
 Museum of Contemporary Photography," *New City*Art. August 30, 2011

Crime Unseen

- Baden, Evan. "Crime Unseen at the MoCP," Marginalia, Dec. 5. 2011.
- Cavanaugh, Amy. "Last Chance: See 'Crime Unseen' at MoCP," CBS Chicago, Jan. 2, 2012.
- Cavanaugh, Amy. "This Week in Art: January 15-21, Chicagoist, Jan. 15, 2012.
- "Crime Unseen," Chicago Life Magazine, Dec. 2011.
- Dash, Flip. "'Crime Unseen' at the Museum of Contemporary Photography," *F News Magazine*, Jan. 5, 2012.
- Foumberg, Jason. "Eye Exam: On Happiness and Violence," New City, Nov. 15, 2011.
- Foumberg, Jason. "Top Five of Everything 2011,"

 New City, Dec. 21. 2011.
- Foumberg, Jason. "Crime Unseen at Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago," *Photograph Magazine*, Dec. 13, 2011.
- "Group Show: 'Crime Unseen,'" ArtSlant, Oct. 27, 2011, through Jan. 15, 2012.
- Hartigan, Phillip A. "Can We Trust a Photograph?" Hyperallergic, Nov. 25, 2011.
- Melia, James. "In 'Crime Unseen' Violence is All Around Us," PBS News Hour, Dec. 8, 2011.

- Moakley, Paul. "Haunted Histories by Corinne May Botz," Time LightBox, Oct. 31, 2011.
- "Pick of the Week," Chicago Tribune, Jan. 4, 2012.
- Tadelman, Samantha. "'Crime Unseen,' Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave." Samanthaphoto, Nov. 13, 2011.
- Thompson, Courtney R. "Exhibit A: 'Crime Unseen,'" ArtSlant Chicago, Nov. 7, 2011.
- Worley, Sam. "Crime Unseen," Chicago Reader,
 Oct. 21, 2011.
- Wehunt, Jennifer. "Five Best Things to do in November," *Chicago Magazine*, Nov. 2011.
- Weinberg, Lauren. "'Crime Unseen' at the Museum of Contemporary Photography," *Time Out Chicago*, Nov. 9, 2011.

Limits of Photography

- Putze, Patrick G, "Pushing the limits of photography at the MoCP", F News Magazine, March 21, 2012
- Cavanaugh, Amy, "Museum of Contemporary Photography Explores 'The Limits of Photography",

 CBS Local, March 19, 2012
- Nelson, Nicole, "Limits of Photography at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, *Arts America*, March 16, 2012

Survival Techniques

- Weinberg, Lauren, "Survival Techniques at the Museum of Contemporary Photography" *Time Out Chicago*, April 26, 2012
- Grant, Allison, "Museum of Contemporary Photography // Survival Techniques", *The Seen*, April 11, 2012
- Niendorf, Emmaline, "Lux Life: Museum of Contemporary Photography", Simply Magnificent (Ritz Carlton blog). June 19, 2012
- Carter, Garrett, "Survival Techniques: Narratives of Resistance, Elephant Room Gallery blog, June 6, 2012
- Houlihan, Mary, "Photography shows are all the rage in Chicago", *Chicago Tribune*, May 23, 2012
- Fishman, Elly, "How do we survive", *Chicago Reader*, April 16. 2012

PUBLIC PROGRAMS



Our Origins Panel Discussion:
Behavioral Brethren: Links Between Human
and Non-Human Primates: Alison Ruttan in
conversation with Laurie Santos, PhD
Moderated by Gabriel Spitzer

August 25, 2011

Gallery Talk and Reception: *Our Origins* Exhibiting Artists Alison Carey, Ken Fandell, Jennifer Ray and Alison Ruttan, with curator Allison Grant

Stargazing in Grant Park with amateur astronomer Joseph Guzman

September 8, 2011

Book Signing:

Kelli Connell and Colleen Plumb

September 27, 2011

Crime Unseen Public Opening Reception and Gallery Talk: Exhibiting artists Christian Patterson and Angela Strassheim with curator Karen Irvine October 27, 2011

Lecture: Exhibiting Artist Deborah Luster

November 10, 2011

Lecture: Evidence Author Luc Sante

November 15, 2011

Concert: International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) Chimers | Phyllis Chen: solo toy piano

November 16, 2011

Screening: Video Playlist: *The Evidence Show(s)* with Guest Curator Jesse McLean

November 30, 2011

Lecture: *Crime Unseen* Exhibition Artist Corinne May Botz

Presented in conjunction with the Glessner House Museum

December 1, 2011

Limits of Photography Opening Reception

January 26, 2012

Exhibiting Artists Talk: Randy Hayes and Vera Klement

January 26, 2012

Film Screening and Discussion:

Print Generation

Exhibiting Filmmaker J.J. Murphy

February 2, 2012

Screening and Discussion:

Video Playlist: Speechless

February 29, 2012

Lecture: Limits of Digital Photography:

W.J.T. Mitchell, PhD

March 20, 2012

Talkin' Back: Chicago Youth Respond
Opening Reception and Celebration

March 29, 2012

Film Screening:

Before Ai Weiwei and Enemies of the People

April 11, 2012

Artist and Curator Talk:

Exhibition Curator Davide Quadrio with Exhibiting Artists Julika Rudelius and Li Mu

April 12, 2012

Survival Techniques Opening Reception

April 12, 2012

Concert: International Contemporary

Ensemble (ICE) One Hundred Names | Rebekah
Heller, solo bassoon

April 20, 2012

Lecture-Performance:

Aide-Mémoire: by Exhibiting Artist Uriel Orlow Survival Techniques: Narratives of Resistance

April 25, 2012

ACQUISITIONS

Jenny Åkerlund / Yolanda Andrade / Jaime Bailléres / **Tom Bamberger / Christian Boltanski / Corinne May Botz /** Marilyn Bridges / Robert Capa / Alison Carey / Eric William Carroll / Henri Cartier-Bresson / Mark Cohen / Steven Criqui / Binh Danh / Tim Davis / Max Dean / Michael Disfarmer / **Larry Fink / Jonathan Gitelson / Anthony Goicolea /** David Hartt / Robert Heinecken / Ken Heyman / Hiwa K / **Vera Klement / Jason Lazarus / Leon Levinstein / Armin Linke / Deborah Luster / Sameer Makarius / Fredrik Marsh /** Aspen Mays / Scott McFarland / Joel Meyerowitz / Sonya Noskowiak / John Opera / Object Orange / **Christian Patterson / Simon Patterson / Jennifer Ray /** George Rodger / Milton Rogovin / Francisco Mata Rosas / Alison Ruttan / August Sander / SEMICONDUCTOR / David Seymour / Taryn Simon / Michael A. Smith / Hannah Starkey / Louis Stettner / Angela Strassheim / **Karl Struss / Rachel Sussman / David Taylor / Enrique Villaseñor / Geoff Winningham**



Jason Lazarus, Spencer Elden in his last year of high school (January 2008), Museum purchase.



Aspen Mays, 1%, 2008, Museum purchase.

Angela Strassheim, Evidence No. 2, 2009, Gift of the artist.



David Hartt, Lounge at the Johnson Publishing Company Headquarters, Chicago, Illinois, 2011, Museum purchase.



Doug Rickard, #83.016417, Detroit, MI from the A New American Picture series, 2009, Museum purchase.

EDUCATION

The MoCP has a strong reputation in the education and cultural communities for the unprecedented access it provides the public to its exhibitions and collections. The MoCP is further recognized for creating innovative programs and curriculum that help its diverse audiences contextualize and connect the photographs in its exhibitions and collections to a wide range of topics and disciplines.





Outreach

Now in its eleventh year, the MoCP's Picture Me outreach program serves 90 teens in three Chicago Public Schools. This intensive after-school photography program cultivates students as independent artists in programs led by teaching teams of working artists, enhanced by museum field trips and contact with MoCP staff and guest artists. Several graduates of our program have gained admission to college and scholarships based on portfolios developed in our program.

Talkin' Back: Chicago Youth Respond

In the spring, the MoCP hosted its annual exhibition *Talkin' Back: Chicago Youth Respond*, an exhibition of works created by over 200 youth from schools across Chicago who combine words and images to express their creative voices in workshops led by photographers and writers in programs sponsored by the MoCP and the Center for Community Arts Partnerships at Columbia College Chicago.



Group Visits

Last year, the museum provided docent-facilitated tours, viewings of select works from its collection, free of charge, to over 4,400 students from numerous area colleges, universities and K-12 schools. Planned in conjunction with each group's leader, every session catered to the curriculum and interests of that group. Online curriculum guides are created for each exhibition to enrich the experience of visitors who self-guide through the exhibitions or use MoCP resources in their classrooms.

Professional Development for Educators

In the past year, MoCP education staff has presented workshops and public lectures for close to 800 educators from Chicago Public Schools and Chicago cultural providers, promoting the use of contemporary photography to inspire learning across fine art and academic content areas. The MoCP was among the first to create programs and resources aligned with the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy adopted nationally this fall, and is considered a leader in K-12 arts education in Chicago. In 2012, MoCP staff additionally led workshops, most focused on modeling visual literacy, for approximately 200 faculty from Columbia College and other regional colleges and universities.



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(Reflects gifts made between September 1, 2011 and August 31, 2012)

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Alison Ruttan

Sandro Carrie Schneider

Schneider Gallery

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Tony Wight Gallery Penelope Umbrico

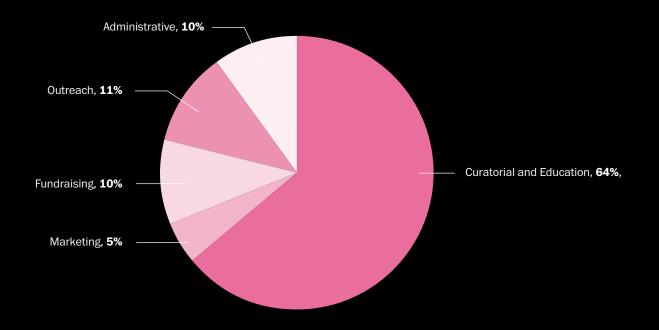
Jan Theun van Rees Yancey Richardson Gallery



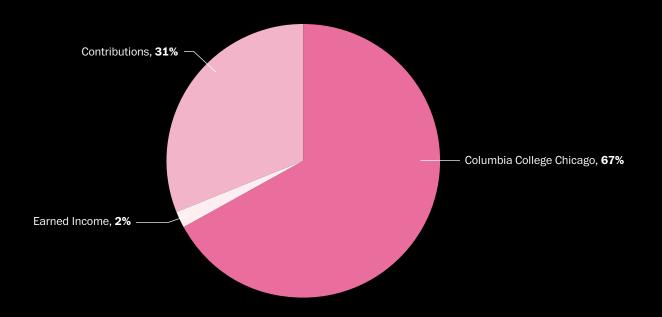
Louis Faurer, Times Square, New York City, NY, 1949, Gift of Ralph and Nancy Segall.

^{*}artwork donated to the collection

Expenses



Revenues



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Natasha Egan, Director

Karen Irvine, Curator and Associate Director Jonathan Kinkley, Manager of Development **Stephanie Conaway**, Head of Operations Kristin Taylor, Manager of Collections **Corinne Rose**, Manager of Education

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