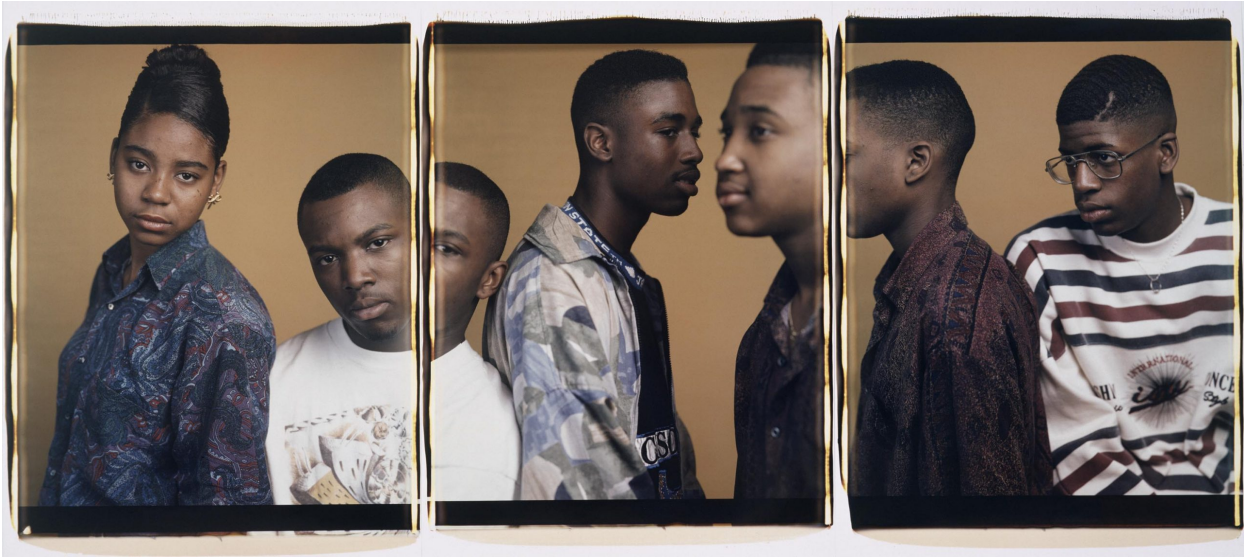
What's on this Spring

Toward Common Cause opens with three exhibitions featuring MacArthur Fellows

Three exhibitions marking the 40th anniversary of the MacArthur Fellows Program open across Chicago this spring, ushering in the first wave of projects presented in conjunction with *Toward Common Cause: Art, Social Change, and the MacArthur Fellows Program at 40*.

MacArthur Fellows Dawoud Bey (class of 2017), Jeffrey Gibson (2019), An-My Lê (2012), and Shahzia Sikander (2006) are among the 29 artists participating in *Toward Common Cause*, an expansive multi-venue exhibition organized by the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago in collaboration with more than two dozen exhibition, programmatic, and research partner organizations across Chicago, including UChicago's Arts + Public Life, the Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP) at Columbia College Chicago, and the Newberry Library.

What's on this Spring



Dawoud Bey, *Sharmaine, Vicente, Joseph, Andre, and Charlie*, 1993, Triptych, Internal dye diffusion transfer print. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Photography. Courtesy of the artist.

Three photographs are lined up, each with a light brown background. In the first, farthest left, photo, there is a standing teen girl with black hair and a dark blue and red, long sleeve button up. There is also a teen boy sitting next to her with a white shirt with some undistinguishable graphics on the front. Both figures are staring at the camera without smiling. The middle photo has three teen boys, the first, from left to right, being the same boy with a white shirt from the previous picture. He is at the edge of the photo, sitting and showing only

half of his face and his shoulder. Leaning into his shoulder is a teenage boy standing sideways with a multicolored button up that is left unbuttoned and a black undershirt. His head faces to the right. The third figure is at the right edge of the photograph, facing to the left. The image is cut off, showing his face and one shoulder only. He wears a black and brown button up. The third photo has two figures. The first is the same boy with the black and brown button up, still facing to the left. The image cuts off at the start of his face, showing just his head and shoulders. Behind and off to his side is another boy, his body turned toward the camera, but his head is turned to the left slightly. He wears glasses and a striped crewneck, white, brown, and blue.


Toggle Media Description

Dawoud Bey: Portraits from Chicago (1993–2001)

May 21–August 28, 2021

Arts + Public Life, Arts Incubator, 301 East Garfield Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60637

Arts + Public Life opens *Toward Common Cause* with an exhibition of works by Chicago-based Dawoud Bey, who has photographed South Side youth across decades of artistic practice. In the 1990s, he invited them into his studio, seated them against single-hued studio walls, and fragmented their faces across multiple 20 x 24-inch Polaroids. In the early 2000s, he took street photographs of South Side youth as he came across them on sidewalks and steps. As a whole, these portraits make visible a group who are not fully recognized by society, activating the sitters' inner worlds for viewers to contemplate.

Learn more and visit Arts + Public Life



Photo by John Lusis.

Jeffrey Gibson, *Chief Pretty Eagle*, 2021, Cotton Rag Paper, Inkjet Print, Vintage Beaded Eyeglass

Case (Glass Beads, Polyester, Thread, Suede), Vintage Beaded Barrette (Glass Beads, Polyester, Thread), Vintage Papers, Found Pin, Glass Beads, Glitter, Urethane, Acrylic Paint. Courtesy of the artist and Kavi Gupta, Chicago.

A painting consisting of colorful geometric parallelogram patterns, repeated reproductions of Chief Pretty Eagle, a white brush wash that obscures parts of the image, and 3D elements integrated into the painted surface at various locations that include: a backwards U.S. beaded flag, a red button with the text question reality, a blue beaded flower, and a paper collage.


Toggle Media Description

Jeffrey Gibson: Sweet Bitter Love

May 28–September 18, 2021

Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago, IL 60610

Sweet Bitter Love presents Jeffrey Gibson's reflections on representations of Indigenous people in cultural institutions. Gibson, a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

and of Cherokee descent, responds to nineteenth-century portraits of Indigenous people in the Newberry Library's collection. His paintings and wallpaper refute ethnographic symbolism with vibrant, glittering layers. Surrounding documentation of ceremonial gifts acquired by the Field Museum in 1991, Gibson's works question our expectations for what qualifies as cultural artifacts and the institutional practices surrounding their care. As they enter into critical dialogue across the gallery space, these art objects collectively deconstruct myths about Indigenous cultures and attest to Native persistence.

Learn more and visit the Newberry Library



An-My Lê, *Fragment I: Sugar Cane Field, November 5, Houma, Louisiana*, from *Silent General*, 2016 Inkjet print. Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery.

An My Le's work "November 5, Sugar Cane Field, Houma, Louisiana, 2016" is a striking image of a sugar cane field

being burnt, stirring questions of the origin of the fire. A massive plume of smoke encompasses the majority of the middle section of the photograph, with the blackened rows of sugar cane fields below it and a blue sky full of clouds around it. There are sparks of orange around the field, marking the presence of more fires; it is not clear from the photograph if these fires were intentionally set, to repropagate the soil, or otherwise. In the base of the smoke there are faint outlines of tall sugarcane plants reaching up into the pillar of smoke.

 Toggle Media Description

Much Unseen is Also Here: An-My Lê and Shahzia Sikander

June 3–August 29, 2021

Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College Chicago, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605

Much Unseen is Also Here brings together the works of two major artists who both consider the theater of the landscape, monumentality, cultural history, and representation. Probing monuments and identity, An-My Lê and Shahzia Sikander

explore history's embeddedness in our present. Lê's *Silent General* (2015–ongoing) presents large-scale views of places and people in the contemporary American landscape, while Sikander uses sculpture, drawings, and animation to examine representations of intersectional femininity that is prompted by questions of who monuments historically depict.

Much Unseen is Also Here has been generously supported through the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Learn more and visit MoCP

Presented in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the MacArthur Fellows Program, *Toward Common Cause* encompasses a broad spectrum of contemporary artistic practice, including community-based projects realized in public spaces as well as solo and group presentations in multiple museum, gallery, and community spaces. Additional details about the exhibition—including summer and fall exhibition dates, visitor information for each venue, and related programs—are available through the companion website, towardcommoncause.org.

Toward Common Cause is curated by Abigail Winograd, MacArthur Fellows Program Fortieth Anniversary Exhibition Curator, Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago.

Posted May 11, 2021 10:00am

Related Artists

An-My Lê

Dawoud Bey

Jeffrey Gibson

Shahzia Sikander

Related Events

Virtual Opening: Much Unseen is Also Here
June 3, 2021 6:00-7:00pm

Related Partners

Arts + Public Life

Newberry Library

Museum of Contemporary Photography

Smart Museum of Art