



CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER

A TRADITION OF INNOVATION

- 1939** With the encouragement of Edward M. M. Warburg and Alfred H. Barr of New York's Museum of Modern Art, local art appreciators Peggy Frank, Betty Pollack and Rita Rentschler form the "Cincinnati Modern Art Society" on November 9.
- The new organization presents its inaugural exhibition, *Modern Paintings from Cincinnati Collections*, in the basement of the Cincinnati Art Museum.
- 1940** The Society establishes a Lending Gallery of Local Art, one of the first of its kind in the United States. The Society exhibits Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) as part of *Picasso—Forty Years of His Art*.
- 1941-47** The Society presents exhibitions of the art of Marsden Hartley, Stuart Davis, Paul Klee, Alexander Calder, Henri Rousseau, Le Corbusier, Fernand Léger, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Rufino Tamayo and Theo van Doesburg.
- 1948** The Society presents the first American retrospective of Juan Gris.
- 1951** Buckminster Fuller lectures at the Society.
- 1952** Architects Carl Strauss and Ray Roush and a young architect in their office, Michael Graves, remodel a large part of the lower floor of the Cincinnati Art Museum to serve as permanent exhibition galleries for the society.
- The Society's membership subsequently votes to change the organization's name to the Contemporary Arts Center.
- 1954** The Center organizes a major exhibition of the work of David Smith.
- 1957** John Cage performs at the Center.
- 1958** Membership at the Center continues to thrive; doubling since 1953.
- 1963** The Center presents one of the first museum exhibitions of Pop art, *An American Viewpoint 1963*, featuring work by Jim Dine, Robert Indiana, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Andy Warhol and Tom Wesselmann.

- 1964** The Center moves to the Women's Exchange Building in downtown Cincinnati.
- 1968** The CAC presents *Air Art*, curated by Willoughby Sharp, featuring the Architectural Association Group: Hans Haacke, Robert Morris and others.
- 1970** The Center moves to the Mercantile Center on Fifth Street into 10,000 square feet of exhibition space designed by Harry Weese. At the time, it is one of the largest exhibition venues in the United States devoted to contemporary art.
- The inaugural exhibition in the new space, *Monumental Art*, spreads into Cincinnati's Fountain Square where the Center installs large-scale works of sculpture.
- The Center is one of the first museums in the United States to exhibit the work of Robert Morris.
- 1973** CAC mounts a major exhibition of architecture and design by Ettore Sottsass, and launches *D'Aug Days*, a month-long series of performances held in Fountain Square.
- 1974** The works of Bernd and Hilla Becher and Chris Burden are presented in solo shows.
- 1975** The Center's exhibition of video art is selected to represent the United States at the São Paulo Biennale.
- 1976-80** The CAC organizes exhibitions of the work of Jennifer Bartlett, Carl Andre, Duane Michals, Jackie Winsor, Robert Kushner, Anne and Patrick Poirier and Alice Aycock; and performances by Steve Reich, Maya Angelou, Laurie Anderson, Terry Riley, Bill T. Jones and the Philip Glass Ensemble.
- 1980** CAC organizes a major survey exhibition of works by Robert Wilson and premieres the exhibition *John Baldessari: Work 1966-1980*
- 1982** The Center seeks funding through a city bond and secures a permanent lease on its space on Fifth Street.
- In Tableaux, Nine Contemporary Sculptures*, the Center presents installations by Mac Adams, Richard Artschwager, Marcel Broodthaers, James Casebere, Edward Keinholz, Jannis Kounellis, William Leavitt, George Segal and Paul Thek.
- 1986** The Center presents *Jenny Holzer and Cindy Sherman: Personae* and *Peter Eisenman: An Architecture of Absence*.
- 1988** The Center commissions Andrew Leicester to create a public sculpture for the entranceway to the newly constructed Sawyer Point Park on the riverfront.

Leicester's design draws criticism and becomes part of the ongoing national debate on public art. At a hearing in the City of Cincinnati Council Chambers, the public voices its resounding support for the work.

- 1990** The Center furthers the public debate over contemporary art when it successfully defends the right of Cincinnatians to view the exhibition *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*.
- 1991** The CAC is the first to present *Donald Lipski: The Bells*, a collaboration with the Cincinnati-based Verdin Bell Company.
- 1992** The CAC presents one of the first major exhibitions of sculpture by Dale Chihuly.
- 1995** Charles Desmarais is appointed Director of Contemporary Arts Center.
- 1996** The Center organizes the first museum retrospective and catalogue on the artist Tim Hawkinson.
- The Center proposes relocating to the corner of Sixth and Walnut, across from the new Aronoff Center for the Arts.
- 1997** The Center selects three architects—Zaha Hadid, Daniel Liebeskind and Bernard Tschumi—as finalists to design the new building.
- The CAC organizes *Photo-Op: Tim Burton, Dennis Hopper, David Lynch, John Waters* and exhibitions of works by Kara Walker, Robert Therrien and Louise Bourgeois.
- 1998** CAC organizes the last museum exhibition of Roy Lichtenstein's work before his death, and the first museum exhibition of sculpture by Gregory Barsamian. Both exhibitions travel extensively.
- Cincinnati's City Council approves \$4.3 million to buy the parcel of land at Sixth and Walnut for the new CAC building.
- The Center announces the selection of Zaha Hadid as architect.
- 1999** Lois and Richard Rosenthal donate \$5 million to the new building; the Board of Trustees votes to name it the Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art.
- CAC organizes an exhibition of Martin Puryear drawings and *Brooklyn, New Work*, a survey of the lively Brooklyn art scene.
- 2000** Installations by Allan Wexler and Celeste Boursier-Mougenot are presented.

- 2001** Construction of the new Center begins at Sixth and Walnut on May 24.
CAC presents first museum exhibition of the architecture of Samuel Mockbee.
Center-organized solo exhibitions include the work of Lezley Saar, David Bunn and Paul Henry Ramirez.
- 2002** *Ecovention: Current Art to Transform Ecologies* reviews the recent history of activist environmental art.
- 2003** CAC moves into its first free-standing home, the Lois & Richard Rosenthal
Center for Contemporary Art.
Contemporary Arts Center premieres *Beautiful Losers: Contemporary Art and Street Culture*.
- 2004** Linda Shearer is appointed Director of Contemporary Arts Center.
Contemporary Arts Center celebrates its 65-year anniversary.
- 2005** CAC organizes *A Thousand Tears Too Late: A History of Cincinnati Soul*.
- 2006** Linda Shearer resigns from the CAC.
Cynthia Goodman is named Interim Director.
CAC organizes *Graphic Content: Contemporary and Modern / Art and Design* and celebrates Charley Harper Day in the city of Cincinnati.
- 2007** CAC commissions Alexis Rockman's new painting *Romantic Attachments*.