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## **Giant Exhibition of Works by LGBTQ+ Artists in Conjunction with 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 'Detroit Pride' Ceremoniously Kicks Off This Week**

*A month-long exhibition with 700+ works spread across 17 venues, with film screenings, live performances, panels, artist talks, poetry readings, and never-before-seen fine art.*

**DETROIT, MICHIGAN – May 28, 2022** – Mighty Real/Queer Detroit (MR/QD), in partnership with the City of Detroit Office of Arts, Culture, and Entrepreneurship, will host the nation's largest exhibition of works by LGBTQ+ Detroit artists to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 'Detroit Pride' in June.

The Ford Foundation is the presenting sponsor of the month-long art exhibition, celebration, and event series that represents a historical deep dive into the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community and its longtime allies. The exhibition features work by 150+ emerging, established, as well as deceased LGBTQ+ Detroit artists.

Taking place simultaneously across 17 galleries, the exhibition and public programming, are curated to connect with queer and non-queer audiences, creating public space and attention to queer art and life, from 1945 to present. Importantly, the emergence of queer art as a studied aspect of 'American' art has been a relatively new phenomena and only recently celebrated. Yet, the richness of Detroit queer life, as expressed in art, has continued to develop in unseen ways—something MR/QD aims to uncover.

This year it is especially poignant, as the exhibition recognizes and celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first 'Detroit Pride' march, in 1972. As such, MR/QD is one of the first to capture the range and breadth of queer art in Detroit. Bringing this thread into the contemporary forefront, MR/QD Program Director, Adriel Thornton (he/him), shared:

*"Today is such an opportune moment for all Detroiters to just be present for queer art. Given the temperature of rights and respect we've been fighting for years, it is more critical than ever to figuratively 'bust out the closet,' maybe even throw the closet away. A showcase of hundreds of works of art that tell intimate and often unheard Detroit narratives, is something I think we can all celebrate."*

Additionally, participating MR/QD artist, Matthew Papa (he/him), shared:

*“It is very exciting for me to come back to Detroit and show my work in the ambitious programming of MRQD! I came out in 1984 at the age of seventeen and my first formative experiences as a young gay man were in the welcoming queer spaces of Menjos, Backstreet, and Heaven. Our community has come so far since those days and I feel blessed to have this opportunity to reflect upon that, but also to remember that the battle for inclusion for everyone in our queer community continues.”*

Beyond the exhibition, MR/QD will host an online gallery and publish a future catalog with essays by noted writers and historians that will document the exhibited artwork. Moreover, mediums of queer talent will fill the month of June, with many artist talks, film screenings, poetry readings, panel discussions, and live performances by an additional 40+ artists. **See the calendar below for an up-to-date listing.**

Perhaps unseen, beyond the historical draw of this exhibition, is the unity that it is actively fostering, between LGBTQ+ artists and the public, as well as within the art scene here in Detroit. On this Curator & Director of Contemporary Art for Galerie Camille, Dalia Reyes (she/her), shared:

*“We are delighted to participate in such a historic and essential exhibition. Being able to present to the public special works from 25 of the 150 participating artists is an honor and we hope that this event will be a catalyst for continuous progress within the LGBTQ+ communities here in Detroit. Art is a unifying force, and this is a wonderful example of that.”*

This grassroots event is being curated and organized by dozens of volunteers, who collectively have devoted thousands of hours to the cause. It will culminate into what MR/QD hopes to be the inaugural kickoff for a future biannual event and as a continuation and preservation of the largest showcase of queer art in the United States.

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### **SOCIAL CHANNELS:**

Save the dates, tag a friend, and stay in the know. #MRQD #MRQD2022

Follow Mighty Real/Queer Detroit on Instagram [@mightyrealqueerdetroit](https://www.instagram.com/mightyrealqueerdetroit), Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MRQD2022>, and at [www.mrqd.org](http://www.mrqd.org).

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### **CALENDAR (Updated):**

- **Thursday, June 2 | Kickoff Reception**  
8:00-10:00 p.m. artist reception; 10:00-2:00 a.m. celebration  
A joyful opening reception and party with deep soulful dance music by [DJ Kai Alc e](#). At Menjos – 928 W McNichols, Detroit

- **Friday, June 3 | Openings**  
5:00-9:00 p.m.  
Cass Cafe, College for Creative Studies, Detroit Artists Market, Galerie Camille, N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, Playground Detroit, Scarab Club
  
- **Saturday, June 4 | Openings**  
2:00-4:00 p.m.  
Anton Art Center  
  
11:00-6:00 p.m.  
Log Cabin at Palmer Park, Mint Artists Guild  
  
2:00-7:00 p.m.  
David Klein Gallery (Birmingham)  
  
5:00-9:00 p.m.  
Affirmations Center, Hatch Art, M Contemporary Art, Norwest Gallery, Oloman Cafe + Gallery, Public Pool
  
- **Sunday, June 5 | Openings, Tea Dance**  
2:00-6:00 p.m.  
Collected Detroit (2439 Fourth Street), Metropolitan Museum of Design Detroit.  
*Tea Dance is a summertime Sunday function inspired by the English countryside afternoon tea tradition. From the 1950's to today the Tea Dance has been adopted by the queer community to guise their own get-togethers.*
  
- **Tuesday, June 7 | Artist Talk with Stephanie Crawford**  
7:00 p.m. at Scarab Club
  
- **Saturday, June 11 | Performance by Vagner Whitehead**  
3:00 p.m. at Detroit Artist Market (DAM)
  
- **Wednesday, June 15 | Poetry, Music, & Performance with Cherry Wood, Meg Foley, Stephanie Glazier, and Jess Julian**  
6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. at Galerie Camille
  
- **Wednesday, June 22 | Juneteenth Poetry Reading with Tommy Blount, Deidre D.S.Sense Smith, Mars Marhall, and Lester Rambus**  
6:00 p.m. at Scarab Club
  
- **Saturday, June 25 | Artist Talks**  
2:00 p.m. at Hatch Detroit

- **Saturday, June 25 | 'Trade Center' Film Screening & Panel Discussion with Billy Miller, Tim Retzloff**  
4:00 p.m. at N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art
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### **SPONSORS:**

Special thanks to:

Title Sponsor – The Ford Foundation

Additional Sponsors – The Aaron Family Foundation, the College for Creative Studies (CCS), and the Ruth Ellis Center.

Artist fees made possible by Kresge Arts in Detroit.

### **VENUES:**

Affirmations, College for Creative Studies, N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, David Klein Gallery (Birmingham), Norwest Gallery, Anton Art Center, Detroit Artists Market, Cass Cafe, Oloman Café + Gallery, Collected Detroit, Galerie Camille, Hatch Art, M Contemporary Art, Metropolitan Museum of Design Detroit, Playground Detroit, Public Pool, Scarab Club.

### **ARTISTS:**

Austé, Robbie Aaron, Austin Ackles, Rico Africa, Charles Alexander, Paula Allen, Elliot Avis, Audrey Banks, Tanner Blackwell, Joan Jett-Blakk, Tommye Blount (poet), John Briggs (film), Emmy Bright, Jeff Britting, Jan Brown, Brian Buczak, Patrick Bunyan, patrick burton, Brian Carpenter, Shudi Chen, Feather Chiaverini, Aki Choklat, Seuil Chung, Justin Coleman, Michael Connelly, Andrea Costantini, Robert Craner, Stephanie Crawford, Christopher Cushman, Cyrah Dardas, Carl Demeulenaere, Sam Dienst, Julio Dominguez, Demario Dotson, Kaiden Dunn, Bakpak Durden, Iris Eichenberg, Gary Eleinko, Brett Evans, Danielle Eve, Meg Foley (performance artist), LeRoy Foster, Rebecca Frantz, Timothy Gass, Neil Gates, Carl George, Bill Girard, Stephanie Glazier (poet), Javier Gonzalez, Brenda Goodman, Lorelee Grace, Nickie Gunning, Michael Gute, John Gutoskey, Katy Hait, Boswell Hardwick, Eugene Harris, Karianne SpensHanna, Jefre Harwoods, Jarad Tacon-Heaslip, Jeremy Tacon-Heaslip, Bryan Hoffman, Stephanie Holloway, Erin Brott-Holtzman, Johnny Ray Huston, Richard Jerzy, Ray Johnson, Carmichael Jones, Andrew Jordan, Jess Julian (performer), Urban Jupena, Alvaro Jurado, Andrew Kaplowitz, Kira Keck, Deborah Kingery, Howard Kottler, Paul Kotula, Brian Kovach, Em Lane, Maura Latty, Marcus Leatherdale, Richard Lewis, Yang Li, Tom Livo, Jim Lucky, Ron Madalinski, Marcus Mannino, Darrin Marzorati, Brett Maxwell, Ian McLaughlin, Annie Meyer, Billy Miller, Levon Millross, Monica Molinaro, Mothercyborg, Jeremy Noonan, Merel Noorlander, Scott Northrup, Kiwi Phong Nguyen, Kasper Ray O'Brien, Matthew Papa, Jerome Patryjak, Henry Petrucci, Maureen Petrucci, Leslie Ann Pilling, Arkadiy Polezhaev, Rachel Pontious, Gordon Price, Mieyoshi Ragernoir, Lester Rambus (poet), Nathan Rapport, Deborah Rockman, Joyce Sabit, Julie Sabit, Aceem Salmon, Peggy Sauer, Tylonn Sawyer, Andromeda Schmidt, Anthony Smith, Deidre D.S.SENSE Smith (poet), Gregory

Sobieraj, Peter Sparling, James Stephens, Joe Sposita, Jon Strand, Jack O. Summers, Brian Szeto, Darryl DeAngelo Terrell, Christian Trippe, Constantinos (Gus) Tsatsanis, Virgil Vogel, April Walker, Patrick Webb, Kevin Weeder, Frederick Weston, Jack Whitehead, Vagner Whitehead, Tony Whitfield, Levester Williams, Ellen Wieske, Scott Wistinghausen, Cherry Wood (performance artist), Sophia Wojnovich, S. Kay Young.

**ABOUT: Mighty Real/Queer Detroit**

Mighty Real/Queer Detroit is a not-for-profit organization committed to promoting positive and meaningful images of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community through artistic and intellectual means. Mighty Real/Queer Detroit provides a platform for artistic exploration of various queer perspectives crossing generations and disciplines. The organization uses the contemplative spirit of the arts to foster understanding of the diversity of LGBTQ+ experience, which have been historically suppressed and overlooked by traditional institutional systems. It will achieve this through programming that promotes educational, civic, and cultural engagement.

[www.mrqd.org](http://www.mrqd.org)

**ABOUT: Creative Director/Curator – Mighty Real/Queer Detroit**

Patrick Burton grew up in Detroit and received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a MLS, with an emphasis on Queer Studies, from the University of Detroit. Since the late 1980s, he has been actively involved in the Detroit arts community—as a painter, performance artist, poet, and culture warrior. As a resident artist at Detroit’s 1515 Broadway black-box theater, he created a series of Queer themed performance art pieces, including his critically acclaimed work, *Until*, which was featured at the 1994 Stonewall 25 Unity Festival in New York City.

**ABOUT: City of Detroit Office of Arts, Culture, and Entrepreneurship:**

Established in 2019, the City’s Office of Arts, Culture, and Entrepreneurship oversees the City’s investment in and support of one of the best and brightest creative workforces in the country. The Office also works to ensure that opportunities to experience arts and culture in all its forms are available to residents year-round across the city. More information can be found at [www.detroitmi.gov/ace](http://www.detroitmi.gov/ace).

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**Media Assets are located [here](#).** Additional media assets are available. For all interviews, gallery site visits, program scheduling, and all other inquires contact MR/QD Publicist: Julien Godman | 313.495.2047 | [godman.international@gmail.com](mailto:godman.international@gmail.com).

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