

December 11, 2014

THE CITY
Class canceled
 Schools shutter due to storm threat
PAGE 7

ARTS
Feast and frolic
 Edwardian-style fun, food at 'Soiled Dove'
PAGE 16

ART
More diaspora
 African museum now larger after expansion
PAGE 17

SPORTS
QB learning PR
 Kaepernick talkative at 49ers press event
PAGE 27

Front and center



As police protest over the Michael Brown and Eric Garner grand jury decisions sizzle locally, The Examiner followed one demonstrator on a wild ride from Berkeley to Oakland to Emeryville
PAGE 4

Renovated MoAD bigger, better than before

By Anita Katz
 Staff Writer, S.F. Examiner

The Museum of the African Diaspora has reopened its doors after a six-month closure for renovation. With upgraded interior and a Smithsonian Institute affiliation new to its name, the two-story museum is set to enhance its community presence and national visibility.

"An urban protestative place to be" is how MoAD executive director Linda Harrison described the museum's last week's ribbon-cutting event.

The \$1.1-billion Genesee-designed makeover features an entry area designed

to make efficient use of outdoor sunlight. Attractions include a digital-themed screen, a gift shop and plaza in its library, gallery and public programming space has been expanded.

A recently-acquired affiliation with the Smithsonian also lowers MoAD's costs. This association with the venerable national museum center will allow MoAD to present significant traveling shows and to access the Smithsonian collection for exhibits and research.

MoAD originally opened in December 2006 and, since then, has established itself as a staple presence in Yerba Buena area built and as an institution devoted to sharing experiences of a common African heritage.

Current exhibits include two shows collectively exhibiting MoAD's desire to showcase local artists, examine African influence worldwide and serve, as what Harrison described, as a place where of contemporary personal African connections.

"Lens Through Beyond," running through April 5, features works in various media by the locally based Thomas, whose art involves memory, humanity and transcendence.

Hair is a frequent subject for Thomas, whose grandmother's major influence on her life was a hairdresser. Thomas says she uses hair as a "vis-

igraphic work" in her art and as a spiritual system presented by women whose stories often go unrecognized.

Items on view include a hand-drawn graphic on paper work titled "Lament" and a photographic installation of "Chauhanque Pretoria." Thomas describes the latter as a reflection of her grandmother's spiritual belief in transcendence and a "receptor for the disembodied time

we spend online."

African-Cuban experiences are the focus of "Despacomata," which is on view through Jan. 4. Created by Harvard scholar Alejandro de la Fuente, the show celebrates Cuban artists, a 1970s-80s group of long-standing Cuban artists whose work demonstrates how African traditions have shaped Cuban culture.

artist and political revolutionary Manuel Mendive. Prado, in among the works on view, "Seric's Calceus," a mixed-media piece by significant Cuban artist Manuel Mendive to be influenced by the Sonoma original) addresses social issues. "Reverence," a sculpture featuring a wooden angel, is by Rafael Quereñá, a primary force behind Grupo Artístico's creation.



"Lament" by Linda Thomas — who often uses hair as subject — is among the works on view in the newly renovated Museum of the African Diaspora in The City.

IF YOU GO:
Museum of the African Diaspora
 Where: 685 Mission St., S.F. When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Saturday; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Tickets: \$5 to \$30; free for children 12 and under. Contact: (415) 398-7200, www.moadd.org

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Renovated MoAD bigger, better

By [Anita Katz](#)



• COURTESY SHELLEY AND DONALD RUBIN COLLECTION

- “Sin titulo,” a painting by Manuel Couceiro Prado is among the Afro-Cuban-themed pieces on view in “Drapetomania” at the Museum of the African Diaspora.

The Museum of the African Diaspora has reopened its doors after a six-month closure for renovation. With upgrades to its interior and a Smithsonian Institution affiliation now to its name, the 9-year-old museum is set to enhance its community presence and national distinction.

“An urban provocative place to be” is how MoAD executive director Linda Harrison described the museum at last week’s ribbon-cutting event.

The \$1.3 million Gensler-designed makeover features an entry area designed to make efficient use of outdoor sunlight; attractions include a diaspora-themed screen, a gift shop and places to sit. Upstairs, gallery and public-programming space has been expanded.

A recently acquired affiliation with the Smithsonian also boosts MoAD's draw. This association with the venerated national museum center will allow MoAD to present significant traveling shows and to access the Smithsonian collection for exhibits and research.

MoAD originally opened in December 2005, and, since then, it has established itself as a staple presence in San Francisco's Yerba Buena arts hub and as an institution devoted to sharing experiences of a common African heritage.

Current exhibits include two shows collectively reflecting MoAD's desire to showcase local artists, examine African influence worldwide and serve as what Harrison described as a place where all can explore personal African connections.

"Lava Thomas: Beyond," running through April 5, features works in various media by the locally based Thomas, whose art involves memory, humanity and transcendence.

Hair is a frequent subject for Thomas, whose grandmother, a major influence in her life, was a hairdresser. Thomas says she uses hair as a "calligraphic mark" in her art and as a symbol of wisdom possessed by women whose stories often go unrecognized.

Items on view include a hair-themed graphite-on-paper work titled "Lavaialle" and a photographic installation of "Cloudscape Portraits." Thomas describes the latter as a reflection of her grandmother's spiritual belief in transcendence and a "metaphor for the disembodied time we spend online."

Afro-Cuban experiences are the focus of "Drapetomania," which is on view through Jan. 4. Curated by Harvard scholar Alejandro de la Fuente, the show celebrates Grupo Antillano, a 1970s-80s group of long-unsung Cuban artists whose work demonstrates how African traditions have shaped Cuban culture.

"Sin titulo," an oil painting by artist and political revolutionary Manuel Couceiro Prado, is among the works on view. "Serie Cabezas," a mixed-media piece by significant Cuban artist Manuel Mendive (who is influenced by the Santeria religion) addresses social issues. "Resurreccion," a sculpture featuring a wooden angel, is by Rafael Queneditt, a primary force behind Grupo Antillano's creation.

IF YOU GO

Museum of the African Diaspora

Where: 685 Mission St., S.F.

When: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday-Saturdays, noon to 5 p.m. Sundays

Tickets: \$5 to \$10; free for children 12 and under

Contact: (415) 358-7200, www.moadsf.org

<http://www.sfexaminer.com/sanfrancisco/renovated-moad-bigger-better/Content?oid=2913839>