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## Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) Completes \$1.3 Million Makeover, Reopens in December

*MoAD named an official Smithsonian Affiliate in conjunction with the reopening*

*Reopening activities include the new exhibitions Drapetomania and Lava Thomas: Beyond*

**SAN FRANCISCO – Oct. 22, 2014** – [Museum of the African Diaspora](#) (MoAD), a San Francisco-based arts and cultural institution dedicated to preserving and sharing stories of a common African heritage, reopens Dec. 3, 2014 following a six-month makeover. The museum, now a Smithsonian affiliate, joins a national network of cultural institutions that partner with the Smithsonian to share resources and expertise. Among the new exhibitions on display: *Drapetomania* and *Lava Thomas: Beyond*.



Renovations to the building, which first opened in 2005, refreshed the museum’s overall look and feel and also created more exhibition space. The renovation is the first major step in an effort to transition the facility from a museum that houses temporary exhibits into a fine arts museum with a national presence that showcases both permanent and rotating collections. Designed by Gensler, the refreshed look and expanded exhibition space also will give MoAD the capacity needed to grow its community, educational and outreach programs.

“We could not be more excited to unveil MoAD’s grand makeover which will give us the space we need to explore how African culture has – and continues to – influence our world,” said Linda Harrison, executive director of MoAD. “Whether you’re a first-time visitor or a MoAD alumnus, we hope this transformation of the museum and our new exhibitions will help you to understand the important connections we all share with Africa and the African Diaspora.”

### **Smithsonian Affiliation**

Smithsonian Affiliations is a national outreach program that develops long-term collaborative partnerships with museums, educational and cultural organizations to enrich communities with Smithsonian resources. As a new affiliate, MoAD will have access to the Smithsonian Institution’s 136 million artifact collection for research, exhibits and programming. MoAD joins a network of more than 190 organizations in 45 states, Puerto Rico and Panama with a shared goal of creating lasting experiences that educate, inspire and broaden perspectives on science,



history, world culture and the arts. In addition, MoAD will have the opportunity to offer its members the Smithsonian Affiliate Membership Program, exclusive use of the Smithsonian Affiliate logo and professional development opportunities in Washington, D.C.

“We’re delighted to begin this new affiliate partnership between MoAD and the Smithsonian Institution, one that builds on shared missions, a commitment to education and prior collaborations,” said Harold A. Closter, director of Smithsonian Affiliations. “Since its founding in 2005, MoAD has been a beacon to the museum community by applying innovative exhibition ideas to the study of living communities and their cultures. We welcome the opportunity to work together through the sharing of our knowledge base, collections and traveling exhibits to place the story of human migration in local, national and global contexts.”

MoAD is uniquely positioned as one of the few museums in the world to focus exclusively on the African “Diaspora,” or the migration of people from their homeland. MoAD explores the cultural shifts that resulted from African people moving around the globe throughout history by way of art, exhibitions and community programs.

In the newly designed space, MoAD continues to focus on its four key themes: origins, movement, adaptation and transformation. These provocative exhibitions present the contemporary art of people of African descent, and they also help to present the culture and history of the African Diaspora.

### **Gensler Chosen for Re-Design**

MoAD chose renowned architect firm [Gensler](#) to re-imagine the new space. Gensler, which designed the headquarters for Facebook and Pixar, also updated the iconic Tonga Room inside The Fairmont San Francisco and the newly remodeled Terminal 2 inside San Francisco International Airport.

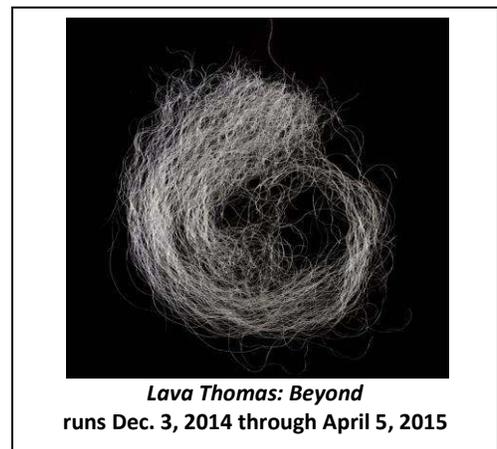
### **Drapetomania**

MoAD’s reopening features new exhibits including *Drapetomania: Grupo Antillano and the Art of Afro-Cuba*. This exhibition showcases works by artists who belonged to Grupo Antillano as well as contemporary artists. *Drapetomania* offers a revisionist understanding of the “new art of Cuba.” The exhibition focuses on the work of artists who have dealt with issues of race, history, the centrality of Africa and the Caribbean-to-Cuban national identity. *Drapetomania* runs through Jan. 4, 2015.



### **Lava Thomas: Beyond**

Another new exhibit is *Lava Thomas: Beyond*, a two-part exhibition that interweaves Thomas’ past and present works. Thomas creates a space that inspires reflective thought and evokes a sense of the sublime through memory, metamorphosis and transcendence. *Lava Thomas: Beyond* runs through April 5, 2015.



### **About Museum of African Diaspora (MoAD)**

Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) is an arts and cultural institution dedicated to preserving the stories of our common African heritage and sharing those stories with audiences from around the world. Situated in the heart of the Yerba Buena Arts District in San Francisco, MoAD is actively engaged in building a community that inspires, educates and connects people of all ages and backgrounds. MoAD seeks to build a deeper understanding of the African Diaspora through art, programs and events that cultivate wonder and excitement about the ways in which our personal histories are connected. As a nonprofit organization, the museum's operations and programs are supported by grants and contributions from public and private sources.

As a Smithsonian Institution affiliate, MoAD has access to the Smithsonian Institution's 136 million artifact collection for research, exhibits and programming. MoAD joins a network of more than 190 organizations in 45 states, Puerto Rico and Panama with a shared goal of creating lasting experiences that educate, inspire and broaden perspectives on science, history, world culture and the arts. To learn more and to support MoAD, visit [www.moadsf.org](http://www.moadsf.org).

### **Calendar Editors, Please Note:**

**WHAT: Drapetomania: *Grupo Antillano and the Art of Afro-Cuba*** showcases artistic works by the Grupo Antillano, the name given to an outstanding group of artists in the 1970s and 80s. The exhibition offers a revisionist understanding of the "new art of Cuba" and focuses on the work of artists who celebrated the importance and significance of Africa and its influence on Cuban culture and national identity.

**WHERE:** MoAD (685 Mission St., San Francisco)

**WHEN:** Dec. 3, 2014 through Jan. 4, 2015

**ADMISSION:** \$10 for adults; \$5 for seniors (65+) and students; Free for children (12 and under); Free for MoAD members

**FOR FURTHER INFO:** Visit Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) at [www.moadsf.org](http://www.moadsf.org).

**WHAT: *Lava Thomas: Beyond*** is a two-part exhibition that interweaves Thomas' past and present works in such a way that the new echoes the old. Thomas creates a space that inspires reflective thought and evokes a sense of the sublime through memory, metamorphosis and transcendence.

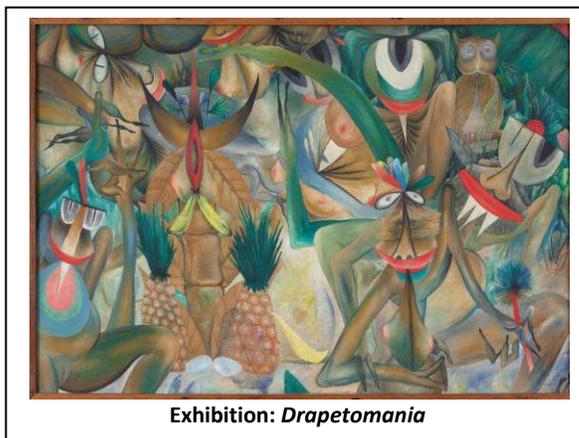
**WHERE:** MoAD (685 Mission St., San Francisco)

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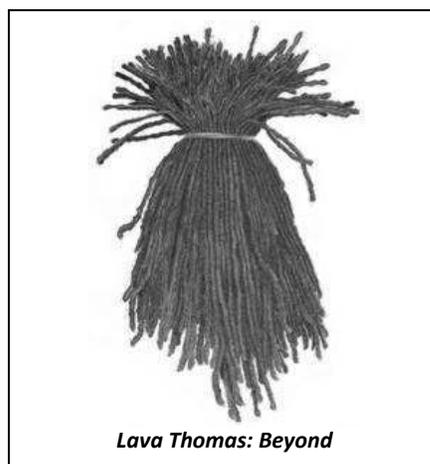
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**FOR FURTHER INFO:** Visit Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) at [www.moadsf.org](http://www.moadsf.org).

**Media/Calendar Editors, Please Note:** To schedule a sneak-peek tour, request high-resolution images or to schedule an interview with Linda Harrison, please contact Kristin Cockerham at (415) 561-0888 or [kristin@landispr.com](mailto:kristin@landispr.com).



Exhibition: *Drapetomania*



*Lava Thomas: Beyond*