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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Freedoms Town Hall at CAM promotes civic engagement



October 1, 2018 (St. Louis, MO) - The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents the For Freedoms Town Hall: The 50 State Initiative on Thursday, November 1 at 6:30 pm. This free public conversation will focus on the power of protest and the ballot on the eve of the midterm elections. [For Freedoms](#) was co-founded by artists Hank Willis Thomas and Eric Gottesman to engage artists and arts institutions more fully in public life. Now active across the nation, For Freedoms, the largest public art initiative in US history, includes exhibitions, installations, billboard campaigns, and public programs that advocate for participatory democracy on a non-partisan basis.

The Town Hall at CAM will bring together For Freedoms co-founder and Brooklyn-based artist **Hank Willis Thomas**; **Bruce Franks Jr.**, who represents St. Louis's House District 78 in the Missouri Legislature; **Nicole Hudson**, Assistant Vice Chancellor for the Academy for Diversity and Inclusion at Washington University in St. Louis; **Rachel Lippmann**, criminal justice and city politics reporter at St. Louis Public Radio; and **Tef Poe**, a rapper and activist based in St. Louis. The speakers will present their unique insights on the freedom of speech as artists, activists, journalists, and public officials, with the goal to initiate a meaningful conversation about participatory democracy. Everyone is invited to share, to discover, and to be inspired.

Freedom of speech is one of the four freedoms articulated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, in 1941, to counter the rise of fascism in Europe. The other freedoms outlined by Roosevelt are freedom to worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. Town hall meetings have been a vital component of democracy in America since the 17th century, inviting citizens to speak their hearts and minds on a wide range of issues. As part of the For Freedoms Initiative, visitors to the Museum will also be able to register to vote at the front desk for the November midterm elections through October 10.

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For Freedoms Town Hall speakers (clockwise from top left): Hank Willis Thomas, Bruce Franks Jr., Nicole Hudson, Tef Poe, and Rachel Lippmann.

In St. Louis, For Freedoms is also partnering with the [Kranzberg Arts Foundation](#) and [projects+gallery](#) to organize activities throughout the fall, including billboards, exhibitions, artist talks, and educational initiatives. The [For Freedoms Billboard Guide](#) provides images and a map of works on view in St. Louis by artists Derrick Adams, Michele Pred, and Hank Willis Thomas. At the Kranzberg Arts Center, Oscar Murillo's installation *Over You / You* will open on Thursday, October 11. The Murillo work is part of a larger group exhibition, *Cry of Victory and Short Walks to Freedom*, curated by Senegalese artist Modou Dieng in conjunction with For Freedoms, which will be on view at projects+gallery, October 18 through November 24, 2018, with an artists and curator talk scheduled for October 20. Dieng also organized and curated the St. Louis For Freedoms billboards.

In conjunction with For Freedoms, CAM will work with students in the creation of interactive lawn signs for public display. The signs will be designed with the open phrases "Freedom of _____," "Freedom to _____," and "Freedom for _____," with participants encouraged to complete phrases as they choose. CAM joins projects+gallery, Pulitzer Arts Foundation, Saint Louis Art Museum, Center of Creative Arts (COCA), Saint Louis University, Washington University, University of Missouri St. Louis, and Webster University in this citywide action.

WHAT: For Freedoms Town Hall

WHERE: Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

WHEN: Thursday, November 1, 6:30 pm

TICKETS: Free. Register at camstl.org/forfreedoms

This program is generously supported by BlackPuffin Art Consulting and St. Louis Public Radio.

About For Freedoms

For Freedoms started in 2016 as a platform for civic engagement, discourse, and direct action for artists in the United States. Inspired by Norman Rockwell's 1943 paintings of the four universal freedoms articulated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1941—freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear—For Freedoms seeks to use art to deepen public discussions of civic issues and core values, and to clarify that citizenship in American society is deepened by participation, not by ideology. For Freedoms is part of a rich history of artists employing means of mass communication to provoke political discourse. For Freedoms believes art, and artists, play an important role in galvanizing our society towards a more representative and transparent government.

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About the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis presents, supports, and celebrates the art of our time. It is the premier museum in St. Louis dedicated to contemporary art. Focused on a dynamic array of changing exhibitions, CAM provides a thought-provoking program that reflects and contributes to the global cultural landscape. Through the diverse perspectives offered in its exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives, CAM actively engages a range of audiences to challenge their perceptions. It is a site for discovery, a gathering place in which to experience and enjoy contemporary visual culture. CAM is located in the Grand Center Arts District.

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