

OCTOBER 20, 2022

The Music Center Invites All Angelenos to Commemorate BIPOC Communities That Have Contributed to L.A. County's History at *We ARE Here: A Celebration of Legacy*

GRAND PARK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, NOON – 4:00 P.M.

Free Public Event Will Blend the Use of Grand Park's Physical Space with Digital Experiences Using Augmented Reality to Expand Upon L.A.'s Ancestral History

LOS ANGELES (October 20, 2022)-- In collaboration with artist collective **For Freedoms** and **Kinfolk**, makers of the smartphone augmented reality app with the same name, **The Music Center** today announced an unprecedented community event, *We ARE Here: A Celebration of Legacy*, which will offer Angelenos the opportunity to learn--through augmented reality (AR) and with hands-on artistic experiences--about the legacies of Black,



Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and individuals who have contributed to Los Angeles County's rich diversity. The free public event, to be held in **Grand Park in Downtown Los Angeles on Saturday, November 12, 2022, from noon-4:00 p.m.**, will blend the use of physical spaces with digital innovation to expand upon the ancestral histories of Los Angeles and explore the connections between land and legacy by helping tell the stories and share the histories of communities that are often marginalized. During the four-hour celebration, park goers will discover a range of artistic experiences, including music performances, spoken word and live DJ sets, and will be able to participate in artmaking by contributing to a digital quilt, among other opportunities.

In a powerful statement about the complexities and challenge of history, *We ARE Here* will incorporate The Music Center's commission of three larger-than-life digital monuments that acknowledge often under-recognized BIPOC communities and individuals. Park visitors will discover these monuments during a walking tour of Grand Park. With the aid of the Kinfolk app, participants will be instructed to aim their mobile phones at three designated spots within Grand Park's perimeter and witness the digital monuments of BIPOC historical figures who will appear before their very eyes. They include:

- **Biddy Mason**, a nurse, midwife, philanthropist and entrepreneur who emerged as one of Los Angeles' most prominent citizens in the 1850s and 1860s. She co-founded the First African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest African American church in the city. Artwork for this monument will be created by artist, curator and freedom seeker **Autumn Breon**;
- **Beatrice (Bea) Alva**, whose Gabrieleno-Tongva tribe experienced genocide in 1852, was instrumental in representing her community in the modern age. In 1934, she was crowned the first San Gabriel Fiesta Queen and continued to be actively involved in the preservation of her Gabrieleno-Tongva ancestry until her death in 2010. Art direction for this monument provided by **Samantha Morales-Johnson**;
- **Gaspar Yanga**, known as the first liberator of the Americas, led a successful anti-colonial campaign against the Spanish in 1609 in present-day Mexico. He established, ran and operated a maroon colony, one of its first free Black settlements. Today, the town of Yanga, located in the southern area of the State of Veracruz, boasts a population of approximately 18,000; 6,000 of which identify as Afro-descendent. Art direction for this monument provided by **Alfredo Salazar-Caro**.

"The Music Center is immensely proud to join forces with For Freedoms and Kinfolk to give deserving attention to some of the less well-known figures who were heroes in their own right and vital to the story of Los Angeles County. *We ARe Here* is a powerful statement that reflects the complexities and challenges of introducing and rewriting history," said Rachel S. Moore, president and CEO of The Music Center. "The Music Center is one of very few performing arts centers in the country exploring this new, exciting horizon of leveraging new technologies, such as augmented reality, in the arts. Be prepared to learn more about L.A.'s history--and experience civic spaces--in an entirely new and exciting way."

"*We ARe Here* reflects what is occurring right now in communities nationwide: Citizens are raising questions about their communities' complex histories and calling for a broader spectrum of representation in our nation's monuments. Digital technologies like augmented reality allow us to collectively imagine what that future could look like, so we can bring those visions to life in physical forms," added Kamal Sinclair, senior director, *The Music Center's Digital Innovation Initiative*. "The goal of this event is to bring Angelenos together to voice the kinds of representation and history they would like to see reflected in our communities, as well as to discover their own connections to L.A.'s history at the intersection of technology and physical spaces. Participants will be immersed in a dynamic way of learning and communicating. We cannot wait for everyone to experience it."

The three Music Center-commissioned monuments will remain visible in the park through 2022 after the event, encouraging the public to continue to learn by exploring the histories of the many communities of Los Angeles, understand how public spaces were made possible by many who often go unacknowledged, and become better, more knowledgeable ancestors as a result. Visitors can also experience other monuments in the Kinfolk app's catalog during the *We ARe Here* event by participating in an AR scavenger hunt.

"Kinfolk's vision is to create a world where art, emerging technologies, and education intersect to increase the impact and accessibility of Black and Brown narratives. We want to meet the people where they are and use our technology to highlight their voices, bringing these conversations into the public realm in the form of digital monuments," said Idris Brewster, executive director and co-founder of Kinfolk (formerly known as Movers & Shakers NYC). "It has been transformative working with For Freedoms and The Music Center to bring to life histories that are important to the L.A. community, which has allowed us to make space for diverse communities around the city to come together. *We ARe Here* is just the first step for Kinfolk; we are bringing our technology and public programming to cities across the country on our National Tour, with the goal of creating an interconnected archive of local untold histories."

In addition to the AR experiences, Angelenos will be able to deepen their connections to L.A.'s history in other ways including:

- The creation of a mural wall, led by **Mobile Mural Lab**;
- The creation of a digital quilt, led by **Black Image Center** and **Las Fotos Project**, in which participants will be photographed on site and asked to discuss their own legacies;
- Screen printing and crafting table provided by **LA Commons**;
- Live DJ sets by **Jihaari Terry** and **Linafornia**; and
- Music performances by **Black Fist Brass Band** and the **Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles**

"*We ARe Here* is an embodiment of For Freedoms' work and vision toward a more liberated future through artistic expression in civic spaces," said Claudia Peña, executive director of For Freedoms. "With Kinfolk's technology and the support of The Music Center, we are co-creating both a digital and ancestral space where people can aspire to be better ancestors. Through exploring diverse histories in community and affirming BIPOC lived experiences, monuments can reveal and reflect truth, beauty and justice--*We ARe Here* captures that spirit."

EVENT SCHEDULE:*

- Noon-1:00 p.m.: Live DJ set by Jihaari Terry
- 1:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.: Performance art by Autumn Breon
- 1:30 p.m.-1:40 p.m.: Welcome remarks
- 1:40 p.m.-2:10 p.m.: Music performance by the Inner City Orchestra of Los Angeles
- 2:10 p.m.-2:20 p.m.: Emcee remarks
- 2:20 p.m.-4:00 p.m.: Live DJ set by Linafornia

* *Performers, artists and event schedule are subject to change.*

For more information about *We ARe Here*, visit **musiccenter.org/wearehere**

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: *We ARE Here: A Celebration of Legacy*

A public commemoration of Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities and individuals who have contributed to L.A. County's rich and diverse history. Presented by The Music Center in collaboration with For Freedoms and Kinfolk, this unprecedented event, a portion of which involves the use of augmented reality (AR) through the Kinfolk smartphone app, includes musical performances, spoken word and hands-on artistic experiences.

WHEN: **Saturday, November 12, 2022**

Noon-4:00 p.m.

WHERE: **Grand Park**

200 N. Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90012

TRANSPORTATION: Public parking will be available for \$10 per vehicle in The Music Center Main Garage (accessible via the Grand Avenue entrance) and the Walt Disney Concert Hall Garage.

The public is highly encouraged to take public transportation. Grand Park is located conveniently at the Civic Center/Grand Park station along the Metro B Line (Red) and Metro D Line (Purple).

MORE INFO: Visit musiccenter.org/wearehere

About The Music Center

The Music Center convenes artists, communities and ideas with the goal of deepening the cultural lives of every resident in Los Angeles County. The \$70 million non-profit performing arts organization has two divisions: TMC Arts and TMC Ops. TMC Arts, The Music Center's programming engine, provides year-round programming inside The Music Center's four theatres, on Jerry Moss Plaza, outside at Grand Park--a 12-acre adjacent green space--in schools and other locations all over Los Angeles County and on a digital platform called *The Music Center Offstage*. TMC Arts presents world-class dance with *Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center*, free and low-cost public concerts and events, as well as live and digital K-12 arts education programs, workshops, performances, interactive experiences and special events. TMC Ops manages the theatres, the Plaza and Grand Park, which comprise \$2 billion in county assets, on behalf of the County of Los Angeles. The Music Center is also home to four renowned resident companies--Center Theatre Group, Los Angeles Master Chorale, LA Opera and LA Phil. For more information, visit musiccenter.org. Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @MusicCenterLA.

About For Freedoms

For Freedoms is an artist collective that centers art and creativity as a catalyst for transformative connection and collective liberation. By wielding the power of art, we aim to deepen and expand our capacity to interrogate what is and imagine what could be. Founded in 2016 by a coalition of artists, academics, and organizers, including Hank Willis Thomas, Eric Gottesman, Michelle Woo, and Wyatt Gallery, For Freedoms promotes infinite expansion through art, and is dedicated to awakening a culture of listening, healing, and justice.

About Kinfolk

Since 2017, Kinfolk (formerly Movers and Shakers NYC) has been holding public teach-ins, demonstrations, performance pieces and have created augmented reality (AR) experiences that advocate for the decolonization of history. Its mission is to uproot oppressive systems and reimagine public spaces through art, emerging technology and storytelling. The vision is to inspire an equitable future. It's 2022 and Kinfolk is still frustrated by the lack of representation in public spaces and textbooks. Its approach is to:

- Educate the next generation
- Use augmented reality to write Black and Brown narratives into American curricula

- Use immersive technology to challenge the inequitable distribution of monuments
- Empower communities to collaborate

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