New Spring Exhibitions:
**Todd Gray, The Ease of Fiction, MoAD Emerging Artist Lili Bernard, and Jimi Hendrix**

*On View April 26, 2017 through August 27, 2017*


**Todd Gray: My Life in the Bush with MJ and Iggy**

MoAD presents the work of Los Angeles-based multi-disciplinary artist, Todd Gray, who investigates the erasures and potentiality of imaging blackness through photography, sculpture and performance. Comprised of his most recent works in which Gray collages his archived photographs of Iggy Pop and Michael Jackson with his California Mission series, Todd Gray: My Life in the Bush with MJ and Iggy, examines California as a site of new narratives and reflections of power. Interested in colonialism as both a psychic and material phenomenon, Gray explores blackness and labor within celebrity.

Todd Gray lives and works in Los Angeles and Ghana. He received both his BFA and MFA from the California Institute of the Arts. He is Professor Emeritus, School of Art, California State University, Long Beach. Recent solo and group exhibitions include the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Luckman Gallery, Cal State University, Los Angeles, Studio Museum, Harlem, NY, USC Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California African American Museum, Los Angeles, Tucson Museum of Art, Detroit Museum of Art, Renaissance Society, University of Chicago among others. Performance works have been presented at institutions such as the Roy & Edna Disney Cal/Arts Theater, REDCAT, Los Angeles, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, and the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles. He was the recipient of a Rockefeller Foundation Grant in 2016.
The Ease of Fiction
The Ease of Fiction, curated by Dexter Wimberly, presents the work of four African artists living in the United States as the foundation of a critical discussion about history, fact and fiction. The exhibiting artists, ruby onyinyechi amanze (b. 1982, Nigeria), Duhirwe Rushemweza (b. 1977, Rwanda), Sherin Guirguis (b. 1974, Egypt), and Meleko Mokgosi (b. 1981, Botswana), present recent paintings, drawings and sculptural works that explore issues of cultural identity, personal agency, and the very notion of “African art.”
The exhibition’s title evokes the idea that people are often more comfortable accepting or believing what is told to them by those in power, rather than challenging and investigating the authenticity of information presented as historical fact. Interweaving their personal experiences and memories into broader historical contexts, these artists create work that is in strident opposition to passive acceptance.
The artists’ cultural backgrounds, as well as geographic diversity, create an opportunity for a provocative examination of varied perspectives of the truth. Although these artists are from four different African countries, their work addresses universal issues that are relevant across all borders.

MoAD Emerging Artists presents
Lili Bernard: Antebellum Appropriations
Through large-scale oil paintings, Lili Bernard reconfigures the art historical cannon by turning classical European paintings into slave narratives in her series, Antebellum Appropriations. Bernard’s work exposes the post-colonial paradigm of suffering and resilience, through a collision of cruelty against compassion. The generational struggle of her Afro-Cuban immigrant family and Caribbean ancestors, coupled with her personal experiences as a rape survivor, informs Bernard’s visual exploration of the impact of trauma and the unconquerable nature of the human spirit.

Love or Confusion: Jimi Hendrix in 1967
As Jimi Hendrix walked out onto the stage at Monterey Pop, he was also stepping out for his American Rock and Roll debut. Playing with The Jimi Hendrix Experience, he introduced himself to California at the festival before the U.S. release of his first album. Hendrix solidified himself as a music idol with a performance enlivened by rock theatrics, sexual flamboyance and magnetic guitar riffs. An integrated band with a black front man, The Jimi Hendrix Experience represented racial and sexual freedom as goals of the 1960s counterculture. Composed of photographs taken of Jimi Hendrix in 1967, this exhibition celebrates the 50th anniversary of the infamous Summer of Love and the entrance of Jimi Hendrix as one the greatest guitarists of all time. Free and open to the public in the first floor gallery of the Museum of the African Diaspora, April 26th- August 27th, 2017.

MEDIA, PLEASE NOTE:
Reporters/editors interested in interviewing MoAD’s Executive Director Linda Harrison, Deputy Director Michael Warr, or Director of Exhibitions Emily Kuhlmann, please contact Mark Sabb at 415.318.7148 or msabb@moadsf.org.