

LACMA's Opening Gala for the David Geffen Galleries Raises Nearly \$11.5 Million, a New Record for a LACMA Fundraiser



(Image caption on page 5)

(Los Angeles, CA—April 17, 2026) On Thursday, April 16, 2026, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) hosted its opening gala for the David Geffen Galleries, the museum's new building for the permanent collection designed by Peter Zumthor. The event welcomed more than 820 notable guests from L.A.'s creative and philanthropic communities and raised nearly \$11.5 million—a new record for a LACMA fundraising event—to support the opening of the Geffen Galleries. The opening gala for the David Geffen Galleries was presented by Genesis and was also supported by East West Bank, as part of its presenting sponsorship of a series of Geffen Galleries opening events. The museum's long-time partner, Gucci, provided additional support for the evening.

Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director, said, "Tonight's celebration marks a tremendous milestone for LACMA and Los Angeles. We have built beautiful new galleries that reimagine how visitors experience LACMA's collection, and new spaces that will enhance the museum's vital public and education programs. I'm grateful to the entire community of supporters who made this moment

possible, as well as to the County of Los Angeles for its commitment to LACMA. And I'm grateful to everyone who continues to show generosity to the museum as we look to the future."

The opening gala began on the plaza level of the Geffen Galleries, where guests took photos in front of one of the building's iconic staircases and Tony Smith's *Smoke*. During a gallery preview on the exhibition level, Berlin-based artist Tino Sehgal activated one of the exhibition spaces with his work *This Entry* (2023), a recent addition to LACMA's collection and one of the artist's signature "constructed situations." The artwork brings together a dancer, a violinist, an artistic cyclist, and a freestyle soccer player in a gallery, unfolding through the participants' encounters.

A vibrant cocktail reception hosted on the East West Bank Commons included a display of a Genesis X Gran Berlinetta Concept. As the cocktail hour came to an end, guests were led to the Smidt Welcome Plaza by a modern masquerade procession performed by Seki Foundation. In the dinner space, Mamo Camilo, spiritual leader of the Arhuaco community of Kutunsama, Colombia, welcomed guests by sounding the caracol, a ceremonial conch shell. The welcome was followed by remarks from LACMA board co-chairs Willow Bay and Tony Ressler, and Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell.

Willow Bay said, "We are writing a new story about art, culture and community, thanks to the vision of a once-in-a-generation cultural leader, Michael Govan, and the breathtaking artistry of Peter Zumthor. This is the culmination of a 20-year journey that has transformed our LACMA campus, how we experience an encyclopedic art collection, and how we imagine what is possible here in Los Angeles."

Tony Ressler added, "Future generations of Angelenos and visitors from around the world will walk through these halls, discover art that moves them, challenges them, inspires them, and helps them understand our shared humanity. Our visitors will learn, dream, and carry that inspiration forward. For me, that is the true measure of our success."

While enjoying a menu created by chef Gabriela Cámara of Contramar in Mexico City, guests were treated to a dance performance honoring classical Indian dance traditions performed by the Mona Khan company, made possible by the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Center (NMACC).

Following dinner, LACMA life trustee Lynda Resnick shared a heartfelt message, and Michael Govan delivered the closing remarks for the evening before introducing a special performance by T-Bone Burnett who sang a cover of “The Times They Are A-Changin’” by Bob Dylan.

As guests departed, Studio DRIFT provided a striking finale to the gala with its iconic drone performance *Franchise Freedom*. Developed through decades of research into the swarming behavior of starlings, *Franchise Freedom* transformed the sky into a living field of collective motion and light, bringing nature and technology into dialogue with the David Geffen Galleries.

As a gift to gala guests, artist Shio Kusaka created an edition of maquettes of her large-scale sculpture *Beam*, commissioned for the David Geffen Galleries plaza level and set to be installed this summer. To celebrate the partnership and as part of the Gucci Art of Silk collection launch, the House created two exclusive Flora scarves for the opening of the Geffen Galleries, available exclusively at the new LACMA Store, with proceeds benefiting the museum. The scarves are complemented by a curated selection of limited-edition Gucci items, including co-branded product.

In addition to co-chairs Willow Bay and Tony Ressler, LACMA trustees attending the opening gala included Her Excellency Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Honorable Nicole Avant, the Honorable Colleen Bell, Rebecka Beldegrun, Allison Berg, Suzanne Deal Booth, Andrew Brandon-Gordon, Eva Chow, Ann Colgin, Janet Crown, Kelvin Davis, Joshua S. Friedman, Thelma Golden, Mellody Hobson, Victoria Jackson, David Kaplan, Bobby Kotick, Lyn Davis Lear, Ashley Merrill, Wendi Murdoch, Dominic Ng, Rich Paul, Viveca Paulin-Ferrell, Janet Dreisen Rappaport, Carter Reum, Florence Sloan, Eric Smidt, Michael G. Smooke, Andy Song, Jim Tananbaum, Maggie Tsai, Casey Wasserman, Gillian Wynn, and Jeff Yabuki.

Notable figures from the art world and Los Angeles community attending the opening gala for the David Geffen Galleries included Doug Aitken, Refik Anadol, Judy Baca, Shai Baitel, Mayor Karen Bass, Klaus Biesenbach, Mark Bradford, Nick Brown, Mel Chin, Mary Corse, Mariana Castillo Deball, Larry Gagosian, Charles Gaines, Liz Glynn, Alexandra Grant, Todd Gray, Mark Grotjahn, Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, Lauren Halsey, Los Angeles County Supervisor Lindsay Horvath, Alex Israel, Jeff Koons, Bettina Korek, Barbara Kruger, Shio Kusaka, Brigitte Lacombe, Neil Lane, Lee Bul, Simone Leigh, Carlos Eric Lopez, Matthew Marks, T. Kelly Mason, Julie Mehretu, Rajiv Menon, Los Angeles County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell,

Los Angeles County CEO Joseph Nicchitta, Marina Ochakoff, Cathy Opie, Jorge Pardo, Ann Philbin, Pedro Reyes, Sarah Rosalena, Sonya Roth, Ed Ruscha, Zoë Ryan, Alison Saar, Betye Saar, Kyungmi Shin, Adam Silverman, Tavares Strachan, Do Ho Suh, Ricky Swallow, Diana Thater, Walter Timoshuk, James Turrell, Francesco Vezzoli, Darren Walker, Hamza Walker, Jordan Wolfson, Jonas Wood, Kulapat Yantrasast, Los Angeles City Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky, Anicka Yi, Peter Zumthor, and David Zwirner.

Guests from the entertainment, fashion, business, and sports worlds at the opening gala included Andre Balasz, Bam Bam, Derek Blasberg, Nadia Lee Cohen, Barry Diller, Ava DuVernay, Lisa Eisner, Will Ferrell, G-Dragon, Gabbriette, Brian Grazer, Desiree Gruber, Mark Guiducci, Tom Hanks, Paris Hilton, Bob Iger, Alejandro G. Iñárritu, Lisa Joy, Alicia Keys, Heidi Klum, Miky Lee, Lee Soo-hyuk, Bryan Lourd, Lisa Love, George Lucas, Marc Merrill, Bette Midler, Moon Sang-sim, Chris Paul, Erica Pelosini, Kim Petras, Lionel Richie, Henry Samuel, Ted Sarandos, Troye Sivan, Son Heung Min, Alexander Wang, Kamasi Washington, Wim Wenders, Rita Wilson, and Jimmy O. Yang.

Wines by JUSTIN Vineyard & Winery, specialty spirits by Tequila Don Julio, and water provided by FIJI.

Credit:

The Opening Gala is presented by Genesis



Additional support by Gucci

GUCCI

The Series of David Geffen Galleries opening events is presented by East West Bank



About LACMA: Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of 155,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and

global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

Location: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. lacma.org

Image caption: Exterior view southeast toward Wilshire Boulevard with Tony Smith's *Smoke* (1967) in foreground, David Geffen Galleries at LACMA, art © Tony Smith Estate/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, photo © Iwan Baan

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