

ZEITZ MOCAA OFFICIALLY OPENS AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST MUSEUM DEDICATED TO CONTEMPORARY ART FROM AFRICA AND ITS DIASPORA

Cape Town (15 September 2017) – Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA), the world's largest museum dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its Diaspora hosts its Professional & Patrons Preview Weekend ahead of its official public opening on Friday 22 September 2017. More than four years in the making, the boldly ambitious project to reimagine the V&A Waterfront's historic grain silo into the world's largest museum dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its Diaspora has reached completion.

From preserving the historic architectural legacy of what was once the tallest building in South Africa to developing a sustainable not-for-profit public cultural institution that preserves, develops and enhances creativity, Zeitz MOCAA is a hugely important cultural landmark that will contribute to a stronger, wider appreciation of Africa's cultural heritage.

The grain silo's architectural redevelopment from a disused industrial building into a cutting-edge contemporary art museum was undertaken by London-based Heatherwick Studio in conjunction with local South African architects, and funded by the V&A Waterfront at a cost of R500-million. The museum's founding art collection, the Zeitz Collection, is on long-term loan and will form the basis of the extensive art on display at the museum once it opens.

"Standing at the opening of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa is somewhat surreal. It has been a long and challenging journey but we are delighted that we have been able to create a platform of such scale and influence for Africa," says Mark Coetzee, Executive Director and Chief Curator of Zeitz MOCAA.

"As a patron and supporter of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, I wanted to send my congratulations to Jochen Zeitz, the V&A Waterfront and the whole Zeitz MOCAA team for making this dream a reality.

“By providing a platform for the incredibly talented and passionate artists across Africa and beyond, this museum fills a critical gap in the continent’s art scene. I am proud to be part of this journey,” says Kofi Annan, a Zeitz MOCAA patron.

“Due to the launch of a film I’m acting in, my wife and I are not able to join this exciting moment of the opening doors at Zeitz MOCAA in person. But we do want to congratulate the V&A Waterfront and our friend Jochen Zeitz on this outstanding accomplishment of this new important African establishment, the first major museum for contemporary African art.

“I can’t imagine a better place than Cape Town to represent African art but also to bring international artists to this amazing city to celebrate unity within the arts. I’m excited to participate as a patron and my hope is that the Sundance Institute and I will find a way to collaborate with Zeitz MOCAA’s Institute of the Moving Image so we will be able to create a stronger voice for the arts worldwide,” adds Zeitz MOCAA patron and actor Robert Redford.

The museum has 9,500 square metres of custom-designed space, spread over nine floors and carved out of the monumental structure of the V&A Waterfront’s historic grain silo complex. The galleries and the cathedral-like atrium space at the centre of Zeitz MOCAA have been carved from the silos’ dense cellular structure of 42 tubes that pack the building.

The development includes 6,500 square metres of exhibition space in 100 galleries, a rooftop sculpture garden, state-of-the-art storage and conservation areas, a gift shop, a restaurant and bar, and various reading rooms. The museum will also house a Costume Institute, and Centres for Photography, Curatorial Excellence, the Moving Image, Performative Practice and Art Education.

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

For images and additional information, click [here](#).

Additional quotes

Jochen Zeitz, Co-chair of Zeitz MOCAA's Board of Trustees: "We wanted the museum to be as representative of Africa as possible. To celebrate its history, its culture, its diversity and its future with a focus on art from the 21st century. Most importantly, this is an institution for all of Africa!"

David Green, CEO of the V&A Waterfront and Co-chair of Zeitz MOCAA's Board of Trustees: "At its heart, Zeitz MOCAA is centred around the promise of creating a museum that showcases the best talent and creativity of Africa and grants access to everyone. With its opening, we are seeing our vision of an accessible, contemporary art museum reach fruition."

Thomas Heatherwick, Founder of Heatherwick Studio: "The idea of turning a giant disused concrete grain silo made from 116 vertical tubes into a new kind of public space was weird and compelling from

the beginning. We were excited by the opportunity to unlock this formerly dead structure and transform it into somewhere for people to see and enjoy the most incredible artworks from the continent of Africa. The technical challenge was to find a way to carve out spaces and galleries from the 10-storey-high tubular honeycomb without completely destroying the authenticity of the original building. The result was a design and construction process that was as much about inventing new forms of surveying, structural support and sculpting, as it was about normal construction techniques.

“As the opening approaches, we are all looking forward to witnessing the impact of the museum’s ambitious artistic programme and the museum taking its pivotal place in the middle of Africa’s cultural infrastructure.”

Mat Cash, Group Leader at Heatherwick Studio “Our challenge was understanding what was needed for an institution of such broad ambition then extracting that space, flexibility and scale from an almost solid historic object. Because the radical transformation of the space and function of the building risked losing the stories it had to tell, we needed to be brave and respectful at the same time. It has been an enormous privilege to work on a project of such significance. We owe a great deal to our expert local collaborators with whom we’ve worked so closely over the last four years.”

About the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA)

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) is a public not-for-profit contemporary art museum that collects, preserves, researches and exhibits 21st-century art from Africa and its Diaspora; hosts international exhibitions; develops supporting educational and enrichment programmes; encourages intercultural understanding; and guarantees access for all.

More than one hundred galleries, spread over nine floors, are dedicated to a large cutting-edge permanent collection; temporary exhibitions; and Centres for Art Education, Curatorial Excellence, Performative Practice, Photography, the Moving Image, and the Costume Institute.

Zeitz MOCAA was established through a partnership between the V&A Waterfront led by CEO David Green—acting on behalf of Growthpoint Properties Limited and the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), represented by the Public Investment Corporation Limited (PIC)—and collector Jochen Zeitz. The building was reimagined through a design by the acclaimed London-based Heatherwick Studio. Mark Coetzee serves as the Executive Director and Chief Curator.

The Zeitz MOCAA board consists of David Green and Jochen Zeitz (Co-chairs), Isaac Julien and Wangechi Mutu (Artist Board Members), Suzanne Ackerman, Jody Allen, Jonathan Bloch, Kate Garwood, Pulane Kingston, Gasant Orrie, Albie Sachs, Anton Taljaard, Roger Ross Williams and Mark Coetzee (Ex Officio).

About the V&A Waterfront

The 123-hectare V&A Waterfront blends commercial, residential, retail, cruise, leisure and entertainment within a contemporary working harbour with 22 historical landmarks. The V&A Waterfront is flanked by the scenic beauty of the sea and Table Mountain, and is adjacent to the vibrant city centre and Cape Town International Convention Centre.

Since 2002, the V&A Waterfront has nominally contributed R335.4-billion to GDP, accounting for nearly 2% of the direct value of the entire Western Cape province. By 2016, the V&A Waterfront had created more than 50,000 direct and indirect jobs.

With 25-million annual visitors, the V&A Waterfront remains a favourite destination for international visitors as well as a retail, leisure and entertainment hub well-frequented by locals.

In September 2017, the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) opens. This is a significant cultural gift from the V&A Waterfront to Africa and will house the largest collection of contemporary art from Africa and its Diaspora.

The V&A Waterfront is further developing a world-class cruise terminal—in walking distance of Zeitz MOCAA—which it manages on behalf of the National Ports Authority.

The V&A Waterfront is jointly owned by Growthpoint Properties Limited and the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), represented by the Public Investment Corporation Limited (PIC).

About the historic grain silo complex

Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA), a new not-for-profit institution, will be housed in the historic grain silo complex at the V&A Waterfront, with the V&A committing more than R500-million to the development required for the establishment of the museum.

Built in 1921, and at 57 metres tall, the grain silo remains an icon of the Cape Town skyline. This investment will further the development of art in Africa and acknowledges the important cultural and financial contribution the visual arts sector makes.

The silo building has been a part of the Cape Town skyline for almost 90 years and, until the turn of the millennium, has been at the heart of the operational life of the city's waterfront dock, facilitating the collection, sorting, storing and exportation of much of the country's grain. Completed in 1924 by SA Railways and Harbours, it has processed hundreds of thousands of tons of wheat, maize, soya and sorghum. Its location was driven by its connectivity to the docks and the resultant rail infrastructure. So much is the building a principle part of the city's urban character that it has been heritage-listed by the authorities.

The over-arching vision is to redevelop and restore it in such a way that brings national and international interest in a manner that breathes new and sustainable commercial and cultural life to the building.

About the Zeitz Collection

The Zeitz Collection was founded in 2002 by business entrepreneur Jochen Zeitz and is one of the most representative collections of contemporary art from Africa and its Diaspora. Its mandate is to collect and preserve contemporary cultural artefacts of Africa. The Zeitz Collection is held and exhibited in spaces such as Switzerland, Spain, South Africa and through an extensive presentation of art at Segera Retreat in Kenya.

The Zeitz Collection collaborates on an ongoing basis with the Zeitz Foundation for Intercultural Ecosphere Safety. As part of the 4Cs philosophy (conservation, community, culture and commerce), the Zeitz Foundation supports creative activities that strengthen intercultural relationships and understanding, raises awareness of cultural diversity and inspires others to act in kind.

The Zeitz Collection Curator, Mark Coetzee, acts as the cultural specialist for the Zeitz Foundation. Both organisations collaborate on cultural outcomes at the Foundation headquarters based at Segera, Kenya, and globally.

For more information, visit zeitzfoundation.org, thelongrun.com and segera.com.

About Heatherwick Studio

Heatherwick Studio is a team of 180 problem solvers dedicated to making the physical world around us better for everyone. Based out of a combined workshop and design studio in Central London, the team creates buildings, spaces, master plans, objects and infrastructure. Focusing on large-scale projects in cities all over the world, they prioritise those with the greatest positive social impact.

Working as practical inventors with no signature style, the Heatherwick Studio team's motivation is to design soulful and interesting places that embrace and celebrate the complexities of the real world. The approach driving everything is to lead from human experience rather than any fixed design dogma.

The studio's founder, Thomas Heatherwick, comes from a background immersed in materials and making. His curiosity and passion for problem-solving matured into the studio's current design process where every architect, designer, landscape architect and maker is encouraged to challenge and contribute ideas. Positive and pragmatic, the studio's team are collaborators whose role is to listen and question then lead the conception and construction of special and unusual places. Ingenuity and inspiration are used to make projects that are affordable and buildable.

And the client is vital when it comes to the journey and challenges of the team's thinking; together, they look for the opportunities that might traditionally be overlooked. The studio's best future projects are the ones that will teach them the most.

The studio's completed projects include a number of internationally celebrated buildings, including the award-winning Learning Hub at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University and the UK Pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo 2010.

The studio is currently working on approximately 25 live projects on four continents. Current projects include a landmark for Hudson Yards in Manhattan, major new headquarters for Google in both Silicon Valley and London (in collaboration with BIG), and Coal Drops Yard, a 100,000 square-foot retail quarter in London that makes use of two historic coal drops buildings.

For more information, visit heatherwick.com.