

FORFREEDOMS

# 50 STATE INITIATIVE



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# Dear Partner,

We founded For Freedoms 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—we seek to use art to deepen public discussions of civic issues and core values, and to clarify that citizenship in American society is defined by participation, not by ideology.

In the For Freedoms 50 State Initiative in September–November 2018, concurrent decentralized art exhibitions and public events across the country will encourage broad participation in civic discourse and, through lifting up a multiplicity of voices, will spark a national dialogue about art, education, advertising and politics.

By signing onto our initiative, you will have access to a growing national directory of over 175 artists and 100 institutions. Together, we can help facilitate new partnerships and collaborations throughout the network that were previously unavailable.

We believe in the collective power of artists. We are committed to the idea that democracy thrives on free dialogue.

JOIN US. FOR FREEDOMS. FOR US ALL.

Hank Willis Thomas & Eric Gottesman

*Co-founders, For Freedoms*



50 STATE INITIATIVE

## Overview

The 50 State Initiative is a non-partisan, nationwide campaign to use art as a means of inspiring broad civic participation. Along the way, we aim to build a network of artists, arts institutions and civic leaders and to map and connect the cultural and artistic infrastructure in the United States.



# HOW TO PARTICIPATE

## ACTIVATIONS

There are four main ways for your institution or community to participate in the 50 State Initiative:

- Billboards
- Town Halls
- Lawn Signs
- Exhibitions

## PLANNING

- Add one or more of these activations to your pre-existing programs
- Brand already-planned events at your institution as part of the 50 State Initiative
- Creating new programs that connect to our Curatorial Questions (see page 15)

## TIMELINE

### SUMMER 2018

Push PR for events and promote initiative. Release For Freedoms' expanded artist, teaching, and institutional resources.

### SEPT – NOV 2018

50-state coordinated events occur.



# Billboards



# Billboards

## WHY PRODUCE ARTIST-MADE BILLBOARDS?

We believe that if artists' voices replace advertising across the country, public discourse will become more nuanced.

## HOW TO DO IT

There are 3 major national billboard companies—[Clear Channel](#), [Lamar Advertising](#), [Outfront Media](#). Contact their regional office in your area and they will provide you with locations and production specs.

## DESIGN

You or the artist you work with provides a design to the billboard company (usually a .pdf or .eps file). The company will approve, print and install. For basic design guidelines, see [here](#) or [here](#).

## COST

\$2000-\$5000, depending on:

- Location (rural is cheaper than urban)
- # of billboards (renting multiple billboards can reduce the rate)
- Are you a non-profit? ("political" rates are more expensive; say yours is "art")
- Negotiate (all billboard companies negotiate; don't be shy!)

## TO INCREASE IMPACT

- Hire a photographer to document the billboards
- Post documentation on social media
- Send images to:  
[50states@forfreedoms.org](mailto:50states@forfreedoms.org)
- Ask your institution's PR department to notify local news outlets

## OTHER

It may be cheaper to produce non-traditional or DIY billboards by printing on vinyl and installing on bus benches, subway ads, on fences or even on a free-standing board.

[Rareform](#) will upcycle your billboard vinyl into products you can distribute or sell.

If you have any questions about creating your own, please feel free to contact us!

## BILLBOARDS

# Traditional Billboards



For Freedoms with Spider Martin  
*Pearl, Mississippi, 2016*



Carrie Mae Weems x For Freedoms  
*Columbus, Ohio, 2016*

## BILLBOARDS

# Create Your Own Billboard



For Freedoms at MFA Boston  
*Boston, Massachusetts, 2017*



Aida Muluneh x For Freedoms at AfroPunk  
*New York, New York, 2016*



# Town Halls



# Town Halls

## WHAT IS A FOR FREEDOMS TOWN HALL?

Our Town Halls are forums for inclusive public conversations that

- are artist-led
- can be inspired by one of the Four Freedoms (fear, speech, want or worship)
- welcome many kinds of voices and points of view
- provoke active, critical listening

## FORMAT

For Freedoms Town Halls are meant to be an artful act—the goal is civic engagement and dynamic conversation. There is no required format, topic, or rules for the discussion. It could be a walking tour of a city, an artist critique, or a debate. What happens when we begin to think of dialogue and discourse as an artistic medium unto itself?

## WHO PARTICIPATES

This is an opportunity to highlight the expertise among artists, designers, policy makers, community organizers and citizens in your city or town. If helpful, we can recommend local artists or institutions in our network.

## PAST EXAMPLES

A conversation in a museum about immigration populated only by self-identified immigrants

A round-table talk about food insecurity amongst chefs, artists and urban agriculturalists

Artists and lawyers discussing the First Amendment

A rifle-range visit led by an artist and discussion of gun culture among doctors, gun enthusiasts and historians.

Let us know how it goes. Document your town hall and send us video or pictures!

## TOWN HALLS

# Examples



For Freedoms Town Hall : Freedom from Fear : Migration  
MOCA Cleveland, 2017



For Freedoms Town Hall : Collective Thinking  
Aperture Foundation, 2017



# Exhibitions

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# Exhibitions

## CURATORIAL QUESTIONS

Exhibitions connected to the 50 State Initiative respond to the following prompts:

1. As clay in the hands of the artist, Democracy, especially in America, proves malleable. Shaped by its founders, reshaped by its citizens over and over, it remains uncast, ever-evolving. Whose hands shape it now? Whose voices rise? Whose stay silent?
2. Art does not separate from power. Art is connected and networked and also messy. Art encourages social movement and enables participation. What do artists do that others do not? What is their special power? What does art offer to political speech? How can art make social action better?
3. In this moment, we aim to unite students, artists, citizens and arts institutions throughout the country in a simultaneous exploration of art and public life. What is the power of synchronicity, of unity? And what is the value of discord and disagreement?

## HOW TO RESPOND TO THESE QUESTIONS

- What most urgently needs to be addressed in your community?
- How do local artists respond?
- What programming are you already doing that responds to these ideas?

## EXHIBITION FORMAT

What do you want it to be? A symposium, a film series, a group or solo exhibition in a gallery or anything else you think would represent your institution's interests.

We will provide a For Freedoms 50 State Initiative Statement and For Freedoms branding that can be posted as part of the exhibition.

## DOCUMENTATION

An important part of this overall 50 State Initiative is connecting all programming nationwide. Please begin to plan a strategy for documenting your participation in images, videos, sounds, and text. We will follow with more information about this in the coming months.

## THE NETWORK CAN ALSO PROVIDE

- A Curriculum Guide - with ideas for how to integrate the exhibition into teaching
- A PR Strategy Guide - a national and local campaign as well as through social media
- A Local Fundraising Guide - with specific tips about raising money
- Avenues of communication among our nation-wide network of partners

## EXHIBITIONS



Kameelah Janan Rasheed and Norman Rockwell  
For Freedoms Exhibition at Jack Shainman Gallery  
New York, New York, 2016



For Freedoms Residency at MOMA PS1  
Long Island City, New York, 2017



# Lawn Signs



# Lawn Signs

## WHAT IS A FOR FREEDOMS LAWN SIGN EVENT?

At these events, participants are encouraged to produce and publicly display their own definition of freedom by filling out signs that say

- Freedom Of \_\_\_\_
- Freedom From \_\_\_\_
- Freedom For \_\_\_\_
- Freedom To \_\_\_\_

## HOW TO DO IT

- Download the sign designs (Adobe Illustrator files [here](#))
- Find a printer of either lawn signs or posters
- Order signs, sharpie markers, and mounting hardware
- Hold a public event and invite people who attend to fill out the signs
- Find a lawn and put them in the ground (or a wall to hang them on)

## WHY?

The Four Freedoms outlined by FDR and Norman Rockwell began to articulate the human right to freedom, but the articulation of those freedoms did not apply to everyone. The lawn signs allow every participant to define freedom in their own way and articulate a vision of freedom that contains multitudes.

## Examples



For Freedoms Lawn Signs  
*Brooklyn Museum, 2016*



Bayete Ross Smith and Stuart Sheldon x For Freedoms  
*Miami, 2016*



# The For Freedoms Network

*Artists We Have Worked With 2016-2018*



Ahron Weiner  
Aida Muluneh  
Albert James Ignacio  
Alec Soth  
Alejandro Cartagena  
Alex Bell  
Alfredo Jaar  
Allison Stewart  
Amy Adler  
Andrea Bowers  
Andres Serrano  
Angie Smith  
Anya Ayoung Chee  
Argus Paul Estabrook  
Ashley Gates  
Bayeté Ross Smith  
Baz Dreisinger  
Beau Rhee  
Ben Schonberger  
Betsy MacLean  
Brian Ulrich  
Brittany M. Powell  
Caran Hartsfield  
Carrie Mae Weems  
Cassils  
Charlene Carruthers  
Cheryl Pope  
Chip Southworth  
Chitra Ganesh  
Chris Berntsen  
Chris Myers  
Christine Wong-Yap  
Claire Beckett  
Coby Kennedy  
Corinne May Botz

Cristina Velasquez  
Daesha Devón Harris  
Dan Farnum  
Daniel Evan Rodriguez  
Daniel Shea  
Danna Singer  
David Rothenberg  
Debi Cornwall  
Deborah Willis  
Demetris Koilalous  
Domingo Borges  
Dread Scott  
Edgar Arceneaux  
Emily Jacir  
Emily Yang  
Emma Sulkowicz  
Eric Gottesman  
Esa Nickel  
EverydayClimateChange  
Firelei Báez  
Francesca Magnani  
Fred Tomaselli  
Gary Burnley  
Gerard Gaskin  
Gigi Gatewood  
Glenn Kaino  
Hank Willis Thomas  
Harm Weistra  
Hector Rene  
Holly Lynton  
Inbal Abergil  
Invisible Borders  
Jackie Nickerson  
Jamilah King  
Jared Thorne

Jasmine Clarke  
Jay Turner Frey Seawell  
Jean-Christian Bourcart  
Jemima Kirke  
Jenny Brover  
Jeremy Dean  
Jess Ingram  
Jess T. Dugan  
Jim Goldberg  
Jim Ricks  
Joaquin Palting  
Jon Henry  
Jon Santos  
Jordan Reznick  
Justin Brice Guariglia  
Kambui Olujimi  
Kameelah Janan Rasheed  
Kamoinge  
Katrina Walker  
Ke Peng  
Kerry Alan Skarbakka  
KevinCharityFair  
Kris Graves  
Lacy Austin  
Lali Khalid  
Lawrence Tribe  
Leslie Wayne  
Lili Holzer-Glier  
Lisa K. Blatt  
Mara Sánchez-Renero  
Marc McAndrews  
Marcus DeSieno  
Maria Gaspar  
Mariam Ghani  
Marilyn Minter

Mark Tribe  
Marshall Reese  
Marta Kosiorek  
Mary Beth Meehan  
Matthew Day Jackson  
Matthew Hamon  
Maureen Drennan  
Michael Joseph  
Michele Pred  
Mickalene Thomas  
Mike Fernandez  
Mike Osborne  
Mikhael Subotzky  
Millee Tibbs  
Myriam Abdelaziz  
Nari Ward  
Nina Chanel Abney  
Nora Ligorano  
Noritaka Minami  
Norman Rockwell  
Omar Imam  
Pablo Helguera  
Paula Crown  
Perri Hoffmann  
Phil Roeder  
Piece of Cake  
Rashid Johnson  
Rashida Bumbray  
Rawi'ya  
Reverend Sekou and The Seal  
Breakers  
Rhea Karam  
Richard Misrach  
Rosa White  
Rujeko Hockley

Sam O'Neill  
Samara Gaev  
Sandra Chen Weinstein  
Shane Rocheleau  
Shimon Attie  
Sohrab Hura  
Sophia Keleta Ignacio  
Soumya Sankar Bose  
Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa  
Stephen Duncombe  
Stephen Joyce  
Steven Trent Smith  
Stuart Sheldon  
Susan Barnett  
Tariku Shiferaw  
Titus Kaphar  
Todd Webb  
Travis Somerville  
Trevor Paglen  
Wendy Ewald  
Will Steacy  
WRRQ  
Wyatt Gallery  
Xavi Bou  
Xaviera Simmons  
Yorgo Alexopoulos  
Yosi Sergeant  
Zoë Buckman  
Zoë Charlton



# Institutional Collaborators

*Institutions We Have Worked With 2016-2018*



Afropunk  
Anderson Ranch  
Art Africa Miami  
Artsy  
Arts in Ad Places  
Aspen Art Museum  
Aperture Foundation  
Bowdoin College  
Brooklyn Museum  
Creative Time  
Creative Capital  
Center for Artistic Activism  
City Club of Cleveland  
Crowdpac  
Edition Hotels  
EXPO Chicago  
Flux Projects  
Houston Center for Photography  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Hyperallergic  
The International Center of Photography  
Into Action  
Jack Shainman Gallery  
The Joyce Foundation  
Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art  
Kickstarter  
LaGuardia Community College  
Magnum Foundation  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
The Mistake Room  
MOCA Cleveland  
MoMA  
MoMA PS1  
Monique Meloche Gallery  
MTV  
Museum of Fine Arts Boston  
Neuehouse  
New York Live Arts

New York University  
Performa  
Pier 24  
Planned Parenthood  
Postcards From America  
Prison-to-College Pipeline  
Project Row Houses  
Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art  
Spotify  
Summit Co  
SVT KOBRA  
Triangle Arts Association  
Truthwork Theater Company  
Univision  
University of Louisville  
Vassar College  
W Magazine

FOR FREEDOMS

## Our Team

**OUR TEAM** is you and we are your team.

50 STATE INQUIRIES: [50states@forfreedoms.org](mailto:50states@forfreedoms.org)

GENERAL INQUIRIES: [info@forfreedoms.org](mailto:info@forfreedoms.org)

**FOR FREEDOMS** is a platform for civic engagement, discourse, and direct action for artists. Founded in January 2016, For Freedoms strives to model how art and discourse can urge communities into greater civic action and participation. Our mission is to blur the line between artistic and political discourse, to increase civic engagement, and to encourage open, nuanced dialogue in a partisan climate. We are a network for artists and arts institutions to become more engaged with the current political system in the United States.





# Thank You

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