

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Paul Pfeiffer, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (09)*, 2004. Fujiflex digital C-print; 48 × 60 in. (121.9 × 152.4 cm). Collection of Alan Hergott and Curt Shepard. © Paul Pfeiffer. Courtesy of the artist; Paula Cooper Gallery, New York; carlier | gebauer, Berlin/Madrid; Perrotin; and Thomas Dane Gallery, London.

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**MCA Chicago announces *Paul Pfeiffer: Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom*, opening on May 3, 2025.**

CHICAGO—The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago [announces \*Paul Pfeiffer: Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom\*](#), opening May 3 and on view until August 31, 2025. *Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom* is a survey that covers twenty-five years of work from artist Paul Pfeiffer (b. 1966, Honolulu, HI; lives in New York), whose practice interrogates ideas of

spectacle, celebrity, and mass culture. The exhibition brings together works from across Pfeiffer's career, spanning from his early photo and video works to his latest experiments in sculpture and installation. *Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom* focuses on the artist's use of media manipulation to reveal audiences' participation in both adoration and objectification.

Mining imagery from our media-saturated world, Pfeiffer recontextualizes global icons such as pop stars, film actors, and athletes through careful acts of cutting, splicing, and masking. Throughout his work, Pfeiffer interrogates what it means to consume images and culture. For Pfeiffer, the basketball court, the boxing ring, and the stadium not only serve as platforms for grand spectacles but as sites where the body politic—of a nation, of a community, of society—is imagined, defined, and contested.

Spanning two and a half decades of work, the exhibition features Pfeiffer's works in the MCA Collection, including *Fragment of a Crucifixion (After Francis Bacon)* (1999) and *Self-Portrait as a Fountain* (2000), which is part of the D.Daskalopoulos Collection Gift. This exhibition is the MCA's fourth that centrally features Pfeiffer's work, following his career-defining solo show *Paul Pfeiffer* in 2003, *MCA Screen: Paul Pfeiffer* in 2018, and *Fragments of a Crucifixion* in 2019. The accompanying catalogue for this exhibition includes an interview from *Fragments of a Crucifixion* between Pfeiffer and former MCA Marjorie Susan Curatorial Fellow Chanon Kenji Praepipatmangkol, and features contributions from University of Chicago Professor Emeritus Tom Gunning, artist Julie Mehretu, and historian Lawrence Chua.

*Paul Pfeiffer: Prologue to the Story of the Birth of Freedom* is organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and curated by Clara Kim, Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs, and Paula Kroll, Curatorial Assistant. The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago presentation is curated by Bana Kattan, Pamela Alper Associate Curator, with Iris Colburn, Curatorial Associate.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Paul Pfeiffer (b. 1966, Honolulu, Hawaii)** is an artist living and working in New York City, who has been making work in video, photography, installation, and sculpture since the late 1990s. Known for his innovative manipulation of digital media, Pfeiffer recasts the visual language of mass media spectacle to examine how images shape our awareness of ourselves and the world. Sampling footage from YouTube and other sources, he uses these to plumb the depths of contemporary culture, assessing its racial, religious, and technological dimensions. At the same time, Pfeiffer's objects and images function diachronically, establishing profound genealogies that connect contemporary culture and its many particularities to the long, seemingly remote histories of art, media, religion, and human consciousness.

Pfeiffer has had many one-person exhibitions at Whitney Museum of American Art (2001); the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2003 and 2017-18); the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2005); MUSAC León, Spain (2008); Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2009); Sammlung Goetz, Munich (2011); Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila (2015); Inhotim, Brumadinho, Brazil (2018); and The Athenaeum, Athens, GA (2023). He has presented work in major international exhibitions, most recently the Performa Biennial and the Honolulu Biennial in 2019 and the Toronto Biennial and Seoul Mediacity Biennale in 2022. His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; M+, Hong Kong; The Guggenheim; Tate Modern; and the Pinault Collection, among many others.

Pfeiffer's first large-scale retrospective of his work at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2023-24) will travel to the Guggenheim Bilbao and open November 2024.

## **SUPPORT**

Lead support is provided by the Harris Family Foundation in memory of Bette and Neison Harris, the Zell Family Foundation, and Cari and Michael Sacks.

## **ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO**

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The MCA interweaves exhibitions, performances, collections, and educational programs while providing a place for audiences to contemplate and discuss contemporary art in pursuit of a creative and diverse future. The MCA believes in the values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) as a platform to enact structural change. The museum is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members; private and corporate foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and government agencies. The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District. Free admission for 18 and under is generously provided by Liz and Eric Lefkofsky and Northern Trust.

The [MCA is located at 220 E. Chicago Avenue](#) and is open 10 am to 5 pm Wednesday to Sunday and Tuesdays from 10 am to 9 pm. Tuesday evenings (5-9 pm) are free for Illinois residents. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is free for all youth 18 and under, members of the military and veterans, and MCA members. Find more information about MCA's exhibitions, programs, and special events at [mcachicago.org](http://mcachicago.org) or at 312.280.2660.



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