



THE INSTITUTE OF  
CONTEMPORARY ART/BOSTON

2016-2021

# STRATEGIC PLAN: A RADICAL WELCOME



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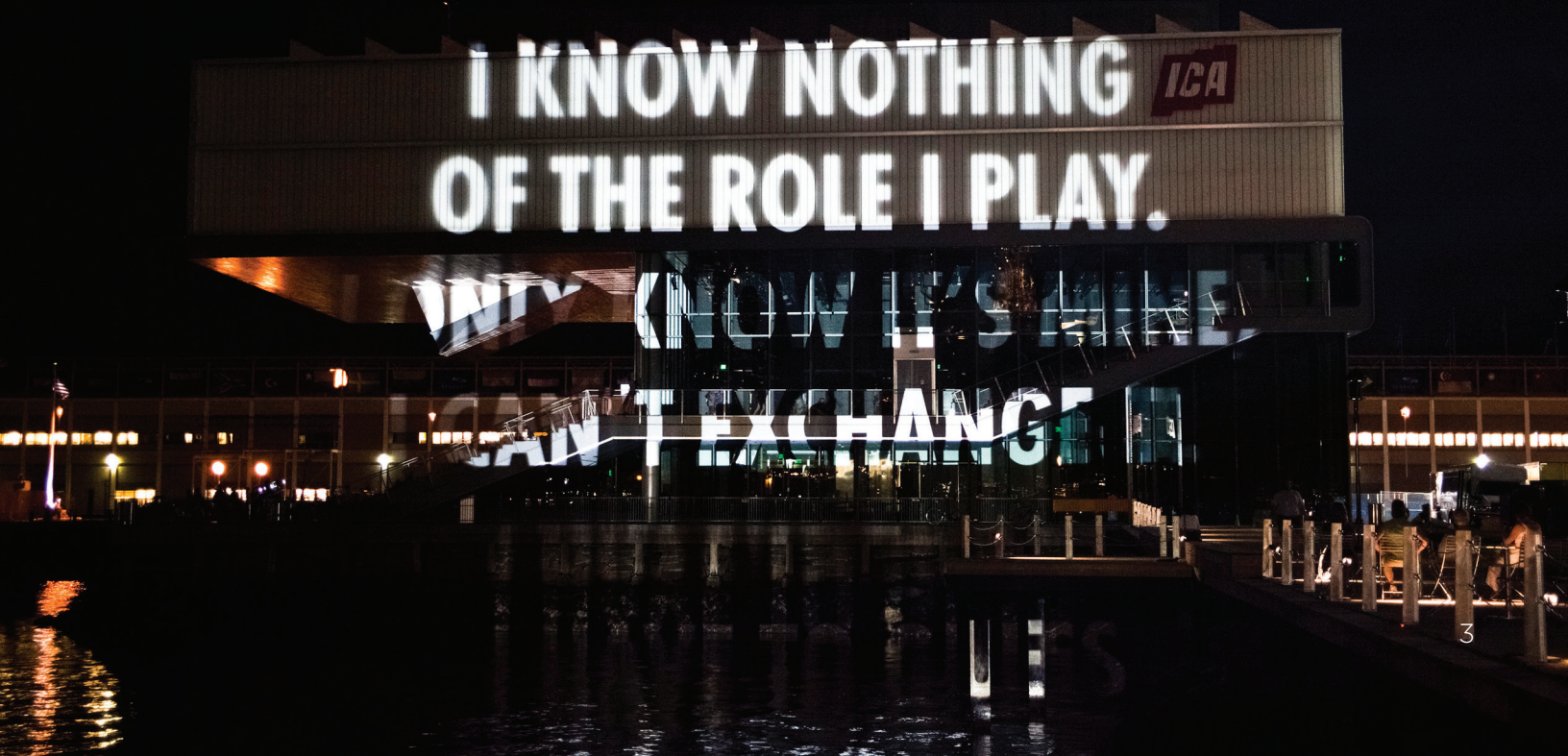
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# VISION

Our vision for the ICA is a “Radical Welcome.” This new strategic plan takes as inspiration artist Anna Deavere Smith’s idea of a “radical hospitality”—one embodying “hope, radical hospitality, and kindness”—a philosophy we are weaving into all of our activities and programs. We will strive to create a museum at the intersection of contemporary art and civic life, a museum that amplifies the artist’s voice and augments art’s role as educator, incubator, and convener for social engagement.

We believe that:

- Access to contemporary art is essential to informed citizenship and an equitable and creative education
- Artists, through their work, bring people together to question and make sense of the world
- Museums are distinct places and unique platforms for discourse and engagement in a pluralistic society
- Collections of art reflect the cultures of the 21st century for generations to come





# FOREWORD

In 2010, the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (ICA) approved a five-year strategic plan that identified long-term goals for the museum. These goals articulated the institution's vision of leadership in contemporary art and civic life, committed to audience development and engagement, and building the financial, human, and physical resources needed to accomplish this with integrity, enthusiasm, and excellence.

By 2015, the museum had achieved or exceeded most of these goals. We had created award-winning exhibitions; contributed new scholarship to the field; expanded art education; been recognized by the White House for teen arts education; broken boundaries with interdisciplinary performing arts programs; and acquired works of art that shape and tell individual and collective histories. We worked with the leading artistic voices of our age and connected artists and audiences in new and bold ways. Coming out of the recession of 2008, the museum also maintained a balanced budget, cared for our iconic architecture, invested in staff recruitment and retention,

and helped spark a renaissance in contemporary art in Boston dubbed "the ICA effect" by the *Boston Globe*.

In summer 2015, the museum launched a planning process to guide our work for the next five years: 2016-2021. On June 6, 2016, at the conclusion of more than a year of work, the Board of Trustees voted to adopt this new strategic plan.

Titled *A Radical Welcome*, this new plan expands on our aim to be a center for the intersection of contemporary art and civic life that has been the cornerstone of the ICA for nearly twenty years. It builds on what we have learned—from both successes and failures. In some places it continues our goal to maintain and continue to improve upon our standards of excellence in exhibitions, performance, collections, education, staff, and boards. In others, this plan outlines new initiatives to advance and deepen our impact on individual lives, improve the health and wellbeing of our community, and ensure equity and vitality through diversity and inclusivity. And as we have done before, it aspires to set the

ICA on a stronger financial and organizational course, increasing our endowment and base of support, and strengthening our staff and governance.

Like all strategic plans, ours aligns ambitions and resources. It seeks to balance aspirational programming with financial sustainability and prioritizes experimentation with new models of engagement and growth. We seek to build and share knowledge: on-site, off-site, and online. And we've detailed the implementation of each goal in the plan in a series of objectives and tactics with responsibilities assigned and timetables and measures of success established.

### THE PLANNING PROCESS

With the completion of the last plan, the Board of Trustees and museum management committed to a participatory process of envisioning the museum's future. To guide us through the process, the museum engaged Susan Courtemanche as a consultant; Susan worked with senior staff and an interdepartmental strategic planning group of the staff, members of the ICA's Advisory Board, and the Board of Trustees.

To inform the planning, the ICA compiled and shared critical benchmarking and research studies and presented them to the Board of Trustees. Key among them were audience studies commissioned by the national market research firm Morey Group; an endowment benchmark survey compiled by the ICA; the Mellon Foundation Museum Diversity Study; growth analysis and revenue and expense benchmark and margin studies; long-term financial modeling; and visitor research. We also shared essays and literature presenting a wide array of thought pieces on the museum of the future, as well as case studies on governance.

In November and December 2015, all trustees, advisors and senior staff completed surveys on institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and goals. Susan Courtemanche led staff and trustees in two planning retreats/workshops, on November 5 and December 7, in which participants convened in large groups and small breakout sessions to identify and establish museum priorities. The group identified several overarching goals for the future: artistic excellence, interdisciplinary programming, and audience impact; expansion on- and off-site; brand and visitor experience; financial stability; a commitment to expand in the digital space; and greater diversity in audience, staff, and boards.



In January 2016, the chair and president of the Board of Trustees appointed a Trustee Strategic Planning Group to evaluate resource needs and organizational capacity, and to review and respond to input from Board Committees. ICA Ellen Matilda Poss Director Jill Medvedow solicited feedback and met with stakeholders and community leaders from philanthropic, local government, and faith-based organizations, as well as academics, peers, and corporate leaders; this input was also shared with the board and planning group.

In April 2016, the planning group presented a draft framework, strategic goals, and objectives to the Board of Trustees, along with financial scenarios to support these initiatives. Based on these discussions, the planning group submitted a final draft, which was presented and approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2016.

At the conclusion of this process, staff was charged with creating an implementation plan to achieve and assess progress on all goals and objectives.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following plan is organized into four overarching goals. Each goal is structured into objectives and supported by specific tactics and actions, which were developed by individual departments and then integrated across the entire museum to ensure interdepartmental synergy and coordination. Some actions have begun; some are continuations of ongoing work; others are in the planning phases; and still others are geared for the future. A planning group will monitor progress and adherence to timelines under the leadership of Kelly Gifford, Deputy Director for Public Engagement and Planning.

## **GOAL I: INSPIRE AUDIENCES AND ARTISTS IN THEIR PURSUIT AND DESIRE FOR LEARNING, GROWTH, AND COMMUNITY, CONTRIBUTING TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE IN OUR FIELD, IN OUR CITY, AND IN OUR SOCIETY**

Our vision of a truly radical welcome is a decade-long endeavor. Central to the mission of the ICA is the role of the museum as a site for lifelong learning and the pursuit and exchange of knowledge for both artists and audiences. The ICA brings together global perspectives and local

placemaking; it emphasizes the centrality of contemporary arts, artists, and museums to support creativity, catalyze change, build empathy, drive economic development, and offer effective models of leadership, education, skill development, and inspiration.

## **GOAL II: EXTEND A RADICAL WELCOME TO DEEPLY ENGAGE AND SUPPORT AUDIENCES**

The ICA is committed to the engagement of broad audiences as core to our mission of excellence and access. Recognizing that most art museums are historically white and privileged institutions, the embodiment of a radical welcome is essential to creating an inclusive and inviting place where visitors can encounter works of art in the context of an experience that values difference and seeks to make all visitors feel safe and welcome.

The idea of the radical welcome landed at the ICA in a circuitous manner. At a meeting of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) in Los Angeles, Jill Medvedow heard an inspiring and provocative speech by Kate Levin, Principal, Cultural Assets Management at Bloomberg

Associates and NYC Commissioner of Cultural Affairs from 2002 to 2013. Levin referred to a speech Anna Deavere Smith gave at Stanford, in which she spoke of radical hospitality. Medvedow returned to Boston to research the origins of the term, and shared the idea of a radical welcome with her colleagues. The concept of a radical welcome at the ICA resonated strongly with the entire ICA community and helped synthesize an approach that many departments had already been developing.

From the artists in our galleries, classes, and on our stage to the voices inside and outside of the museum, the ICA seeks to offer diverse perspectives from Boston and beyond as we aim to welcome new audiences to the ICA and deepen the engagement of those already involved.

**GOAL III: STRENGTHEN THE INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE—STAFF, FACILITY, GOVERNANCE, AND TECHNOLOGY—TO ACHIEVE GOALS, LEVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES, AND PREPARE FOR THE DECADE AHEAD**

The ICA has an iconic piece of 20th-century architecture, and a staff and boards characterized by commitment, generosity, courage, and nimbleness. Strong governance, a well maintained facility, a resilient and adaptive staff, and an inclusive organization are core assets of the museum. The infrastructure needed for programs, visitors, students, and artists enhances and supports all the strategic goals for learning, engagement, and hospitality across all aspects of the museum; investments in the human, technological, and physical resources of the ICA ensure the proper care of the art and communities under our stewardship.

**GOAL IV: ACHIEVE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY TO ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO CONTEMPORARY ART AND EDUCATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

A healthy operating budget and adequate capital funds are critical to ensuring that the art and ideas of our time are available for generations to come. After a decade of strategic and bold investments in building the new ICA, a core audience, strong boards, and exemplary staff, the museum must now further stabilize its finances and address systemic issues of short-term volatility and cash-flow pressure. Over the past many years, staff and consultants have benchmarked the ICA endowment relative to peer



museums locally and nationally and have concluded that we are woefully below the mean or average. Increasing the size of the endowment is vital to maintaining a healthy balance of contributed and earned revenue. Equally important is increasing the base of individual, foundation, and corporate support.

This plan calls for the launch of an ICA Fund for the Future with the threefold aims of: sustaining organizational excellence, supporting artistic and educational aspirations, and attaining a sustainable financial model.

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## GOAL I

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Inspire audiences and artists in their pursuit and desire for learning, growth, and community, contributing to the body of knowledge in our field, in our city, and in our society





# Objectives

## 1.1 Produce exemplary exhibitions, performances, scholarship, and programs that serve audiences, artists, scholars, and students

The ICA will organize, produce, and commission programming that illuminates a global perspective and offers diverse experiences with contemporary art—including exhibitions, installations, performances, and educational programming—for broad audiences with different perspectives and learning styles.

## 1.2 Be a center of experimentation and discovery, community, and inclusion

The ICA was founded as a laboratory of experimentation, and we continue to champion that energy and curiosity to explore and embrace new ways of thinking and seeing the world today. We will continue to support artists at critical times in their development, champion interdisciplinary collaborations and new technologies, and develop new partnerships to build community and offer artistic experiences on-site, off-site, and online.



### 1.3 Deepen and broaden our permanent collection of art, and steward our holdings of art, media, video, and archives

The ICA began collecting ten years ago and over that time has acquired an impressive—yet nascent—cache of works from artists around the world, including a major collection of works by women. Over the course of the next five years, we will continue to grow the collection, reflecting and creating multiple narratives, perspectives, and dialogues that are inclusive and equitable; develop and plan for the care and stewardship of the collection; and develop a long-term strategy to catalogue and document the museum’s intellectual assets.

### 1.4 Build upon the museum’s commitment to develop educational programs and resources for youth, teens, educators, and adults

Recognized nationally for initiatives in teen arts education at a museum, the ICA will continue to serve teens locally and expand this model to seed a national movement by developing an unprecedented conference in the field, strengthen social-emotional learning for teen audiences, and create pipelines for teens as they become young adults through mentorship and alumni programs.



## GOAL II

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Extend a “Radical Welcome” to deeply engage and support audiences



# Objectives

## 2.1 Create a museum experience that is welcoming, relevant, and accessible to people of all backgrounds, abilities, and interests to inspire, attract and engage audiences, and catalyze civic engagement

The ICA will apply the idea of a radical welcome as a through line across artistic, educational, and social programming; experimenting with human, analog, and digital resources to expand avenues of access and build empathy and understanding; and create a vibrant marketplace of ideas and experiences.



## 2.2 Learn from current and potential visitors to ensure we embrace and respond to the needs of changing demographics to expand, retain, and understand our audiences

The ICA is actively responding to the changing demographic of the city of Boston as well as the country at large. Over the next five years we will deepen our work in two traditionally underserved Boston neighborhoods to identify barriers to visiting the ICA as well as understand visitors' previous experience with museums, performing arts, and educational programs, and find opportunities for increasing engagement.

## 2.3 Refresh the brand to focus on art and civic life through the lens of a radical welcome

The strategic plan gives us an opportunity to understand and implement changes that reflect the ideas of a radical welcome through all institutional communications. Working cross-departmentally, we will evaluate messaging in our galleries, digital platforms, signage, and publications to ensure we are offering multiple voices, different access points, and dialogue with ICA audiences.





## GOAL III

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Strengthen the institutional infrastructure—staff, facility, governance, and technology—to achieve goals, leverage opportunities, and prepare for the decade ahead



## Objectives

### 3.1 Ensure dynamic leadership and strong governance

Over the next year, we will develop a long-term strategy for the Board of Trustees, Advisory Board, and staff with a focus on leadership and succession, targeting gaps in institutional expertise, and ensuring a healthy rotation of leadership to capitalize on a broad range of voices, experience, and ideas.

### 3.2 Build an inclusive organization that reflects the values of the ICA and our changing society

We strive for excellence on our staff and boards, best achieved through a diverse and inclusive organization. We will strengthen and build new relationships with university, college, and high school partners, professional networking groups, connections at local job fairs, and intern and mentor programs to broaden the pool of candidates for positions at the museum; we will deepen our engagement with community, national, and corporate partners to diversify our boards; and conduct research in underserved Boston neighborhoods to better understand opportunities and barriers to museum entry for potential visitors. We will also continue to provide staff training to understand and embrace our diverse racial, ethnic, and gender identities as well as differences in age and abilities.



### 3.3 Invest in opportunities for innovation—from bold ideas to successful execution—as an institutional priority

Encourage and support ICA staff to present and develop new ideas through targeted innovation funds, working through cross-departmental and multi-generational teams. Senior Management will also continue to encourage and invest in professional development opportunities for mid-level and junior staff, and structured opportunities for the exchange of ideas.



### 3.4 Develop a system to understand, analyze, and iterate programming

The ICA will work cross-departmentally to develop a framework of criteria and metrics to ensure programming is meeting overall institutional goals of producing new scholarship, meeting programmatic learning outcomes, increasing audience engagement, and reflecting a global perspective. We will also analyze the impact of programming, interpretive tools, and customer service to ensure we are continuing to broaden and deepen audience appreciation for contemporary art.

### 3.5 Invest in the care and resilience of our iconic architecture and in changing museum technologies

The museum will continue to fund capital investments to ensure the proper care, management, and upkeep of our Diller, Scofidio + Renfro building, a global architectural landmark. Alongside the upkeep of the architecture is the maintenance of the museum's infrastructure. As data needs and opportunities continue to grow, we will invest in a data management system that will offer institution-wide integration, addressing the growing requirements across museum departments.



## GOAL IV

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Achieve long-term financial stability to ensure public access to contemporary art and education for future generations







## Objectives

### 4.1 Meet revenue projections needed to maintain programmatic excellence and build long-term sustainability

We have launched the ICA Fund for the Future with the focused goals of sustaining organizational excellence, supporting artistic and educational aspirations, and attaining a sustainable financial model. In conjunction with this, the museum will continue to monitor both contributed and earned revenue growth to meet institutional goals.

### 4.2 Increase contributed and earned revenue

The museum will revisit areas for growth and increased revenue annually, including testing new philanthropic opportunities, leveraging the growth and development of the neighborhood, organizing and generating touring exhibitions, and exploring growth opportunities in the ICA Store, café, and social programming.



# MISSION STATEMENT

The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston strives to share the pleasures of reflection, inspiration, provocation, and imagination that contemporary art offers through public access to art, artists, and the creative process.



## COVER

- Photo by Danita Jo.

## PAGE 3

- Jenny Holzer, *For Richard and Miguel*, 2010. Light projection, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston. Text: "Life While-You-Wait" from *Poems New and Collected: 1957–1997*, by Wisława Szymborska. English translation by Stanisław Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh, copyright © 1998 by Harcourt, Inc. Used/reprinted with permission of the publisher and the author. Photo by Collin LaFleche. © 2017 Jenny Holzer, member Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

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- Kara Walker, *The Nigger Huck Finn Pursues Happiness Beyond the Narrow Constraints of Your Overdetermined Thesis on Freedom – Drawn and Quartered by Mister Kara Walkerberry, with Condolences to the Authors*, 2010. Cut paper and paint on wall; gouache and ink on paper, approximately 48 feet (1463.4 cm), sixteen cut paper elements, dimensions variable; seven framed works on paper, each 11 1/2 x 15 inches (29.2 x 38.1 cm). The Barbara Lee Collection of Art by Women. Courtesy the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co. Installation view, *First Light: A Decade of Collecting at the ICA*, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2016–17. Photo by Charles Mayer Photography. © 2017 Kara Walker.
- A young participant in Hearts for Art in *First Light: A Decade of Collecting at the ICA* on our Community Day celebrating a decade on the waterfront. Photo by Natasha Moustache.
- Silas Riener reprises Merce Cunningham's 1957 *Changeling*. Photo by Liza Voll.

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- Installation view, *Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933–1957*, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2015–16. Photo by Charles Mayer Photography.
- Two visitors look closely at Mickalene Thomas's work in *First Light: A Decade of Collecting at the ICA*. Photo by Kristyn Ulanday.

## PAGE 6

- William Kentridge, *The Refusal of Time*, 2012. A collaboration with Philip Miller, Catherine Meyburgh, and Peter Galison. Five-channel video with sound, 30 min, with megaphones and breathing machine ("elephant"). Installation at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2014. Photo by John Kennard. © 2017 William Kentridge.

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- Cornelia Parker, *Hanging Fire (Suspected Arson)*, 1999. Charcoal, wire, pins, and nails, 144 x 60 x 72 inches (365.8 x 152.4 x 182.9 cm). Gift of Barbara Lee, The Barbara Lee Collection of Art by Women. Photo by Charles Mayer Photography. © 2017 Cornelia Parker.
- Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, *Story/Time*. Photo by Paul B Goode.

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- Geoffrey Farmer, *The Surgeon and the Photographer* (detail), 2009–ongoing. Installation view, *Geoffrey Farmer*, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2016. Photo by John Kennard. © 2017 Geoffrey Farmer.

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- Image of Matthew Ritchie with Aric Oak (an ICA Teen Arts Council member). Photo by Liza Voll.
- Nick Cave, *Soundsuit*, 2009. Mixed media, 96 x 26 x 20 inches (246.4 x 66 x 50.8 cm). Gift of Steve Corkin and Dan Maddalena. Photo by James Prinz Photography. © 2017 Nick Cave.
- Faye Driscoll, *Thank You for Coming*. Photo by Maria Baranova.

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- Installation view, *Nalini Malani: In Search of Vanished Blood*, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2016. Photo by Danita Jo. © 2017 Nalini Malani.

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- Photo by Kristyn Ulanday.

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- Photos by Kristyn Ulanday.

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- Tara Donovan, *Untitled (Styrofoam Cups)*, 2003/2008. Installation view, *Tara Donovan*, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2008–09. Photo by Charles Mayer Photography. © 2017 Tara Donovan.

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- Photo by Danita Jo.
- Os Gemeos, *The Giant of Boston*, 2012. Photo by Geoff Hargadon.

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- John Hancock Founders Gallery. Photo by Mark Manne.

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- Rashaun Mitchell, *Performance*. Photo by Liza Voll.

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- Walid Raad, *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow: Walkthrough*, 2016. Part of *Walid Raad*, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2016. Photo by John Kennard. ©2017 Walid Raad.
- Photo by Danita Jo.

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- Liz Deschenes, *Gallery 4.1.1*, 2015. Installation view, *Liz Deschenes*, The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, 2016. Photo by Charles Mayer Photography. ©2017 Liz Deschenes.