

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Board Meeting

June 13, 2017

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH FRONT EXHIBITION
COMPANY FOR 2018 CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION**

WHEREAS, FRONT Exhibition Company (“FRONT”) is a nonprofit exhibition company that is planning an exhibition of contemporary art to take place across the City of Cleveland and northeast Ohio, including such venues as the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Spaces, and the Transformer Station; and

WHEREAS, FRONT’s exhibition, titled “An American City,” will run from July 14, 2018 through September 30, 2018, and is expected to feature over 60 artists and to include public programs beginning in the fall of 2017; and

WHEREAS, Under FRONT’s proposal to the Library, the Library would host an exhibition by British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare titled “The American Library” which will consist of 6,000 fabric covered and decorated books arranged in freestanding bookcases in Brett Hall with the spine of each book bearing the name of a first or second generation American citizen who has made significant contributions to arts and culture in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The exhibition is planned to include public outreach and engagement aspects including a website component to allow the public to explore the histories of the individuals whose names appear on the decorated books; and

RESOLVED, That the Executive Director, CEO or his designee, is hereby authorized to negotiate and execute an agreement with FRONT Exhibition Company, subject to the approval of the Chief Legal Officer, for the production and commission of the exhibition titled “The American Library” for a total contract price not-to-exceed \$40,000 and to charge such funds to the Lockwood Thompson special revenue fund, which is restricted to four purposes: art books or exhibit work of contemporary artists; expense of staff travel by

EXHIBIT 15A

attending learned conferences; lectures in the field of literature or the visual arts; and staff recognition.

FRONT

The word "FRONT" is rendered in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below the letters, there are several parallel, slanted pink lines that create a shadow or depth effect, making the text appear to float or be slightly offset from the background.

Cleveland Public Library

YINKA SHONIBARE, THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

Yinka Shonibare, MBE

B. 1962 NIGERIA, RESIDES LONDON.

YINKA SHONIBARE, *NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY*

British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare, MBE will create a room-sized public art work containing 6000 batik fabric covered books arranged in freestanding bookcases in the ground floor gallery of the Cleveland Public Library. This new commission, an adaptation of the original work commissioned by the British Library in London, will focus on first or second generation Americans whose work has shaped arts and culture in the United States.

The installation includes library tables and chairs, with computers and iPads to support public participation with the work, crucial to its meaning and function. The spine of each book is stamped in gold lettering with the name of a first or second generation American citizen who has made significant contributions to arts and culture in the United States. Visitors may read the list and history of each figure represented in the website component of the project, accessible on terminals in the exhibition. An additional off site component invites all, including virtual visitors, to inscribe the visitor log with stories of their own family's migration and settling in the United States. We hope this work will be placed or gifted to a public institution.

The (New) American Library will allow viewers and non viewers alike to engage with the work by articulating their own personal stories of immigration. In addition, viewers will also experience a massive collection of exquisitely adorned material and overwhelmingly supports immigration as foundational to the American psyche.

YINKA SHONIBARE, *NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY*

The installation of the *(New) American Library* at the Cleveland Public Library will be a beacon for the city at large, a vehicle to experience the powers of art through interaction and community discussion during the summer of 2018 and beyond. The essence of the work is the interplay between the sensual decoration of the books, the ideas marked by the careers and ideas of those recognized, and the tales of movement and migration of actual and virtual visitors to the project.

The City of Cleveland has been at the forefront of supporting libraries and literature to empower and educate its citizens. The library was opened in 1869 near Public Square, and in 1935, the Saturday Review awarded the first annual Anisfield-Wolf prize (now administered by the Cleveland Foundation), recognizing literature that illuminates the subjects of racism and cultural diversity. Today, the Anisfield-Wolf book collection belongs to the Cleveland Public Library, which will support Shonibare's installation with robust and layered outreach programming that aligns with their commitment to educating an open civil society.

There is strong interest in Cleveland for finding a permanent home for this work, either at the Cleveland Public Library or at a neighboring public arts institution.

As the first American version of the great project, *The (New) American Library* will be a meaningful addition to the rich tradition of tolerance and artistic excellence in the City of Cleveland.



YINKA SHONIBARE, *NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY*



Yinka Shonibare MBE (born 1962 in London, UK) moved to Lagos, Nigeria at the age of three. He returned to London to study Fine Art first at the Byam Shaw College of Art (now Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design) and then at Goldsmiths College, where he received his MFA, graduating as part of the 'Young British Artists' generation. He gained notoriety on the international stage via his commission for Okwui Enwezor's Documenta 10, *Gallantry and Criminal Conversation* (2002), and was a Turner Prize nominee in 2004. In 2005 he was awarded the decoration of Member of the "Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

INSPIRATION: Yinka Shonibare, *The British Library*, 2014



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