



May 10, 2023  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION OF LOS ANGELES AND LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ANNOUNCE RECEIPT OF NEW GETTY GRANT FOR *NO PRIOR ART*, A MAJOR EXHIBITION AND  
SERIES OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT LOS ANGELES**

**This exhibition is made possible with support from Getty through  
*PST ART: Art & Science Collide***



BEACON by Shervone Neckles in collaboration with Beam Center,  
and Lewis Latimer House Museum, 2020- 2021  
Photo credit: Beam Center

MAY 10, 2023 (Los Angeles, CA) -- The Library Foundation of Los Angeles (LFLA) and Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) announced today that the Getty Foundation has awarded them a \$275,000 grant to develop and present *No Prior Art*, a major exhibition and public program series, launching in September 2024 and running through May 2025. This project will explore how the creative process of invention nurtures new ideas and technology across the full spectrum of arts and sciences, and can often blur the boundaries between these fields. *No Prior Art* is part of Getty's landmark PST ART: Art & Science Collide 2024, through which dozens of museums and other institutions will simultaneously explore the intersections of art and science, both past and present.

The featured exhibition at LAPL's historic Central Library will present nearly 100 historic and contemporary works of art, objects, new commissions, and site-specific installations by a range of painters, mixed media artists, sculptors, composers, scientists, collectors, and inventors. Examining broad themes surrounding the nature of creativity, under-recognized innovators, and the experimental inventive process, featured creators include artist and filmmaker **Ben Caldwell** and his KAOS Network, a community-based Afro-futuristic innovation lab in Leimert Park; the West Coast debut of **Shervone Neckles'** monumental public artwork, BEACON, a monolithic, black metal sculpture based on a patent illustration by Lewis H. Latimer (1848-1928), the son of an escaped slave, inventor, and engineer; and making its Southern California debut, The Prisoners' Inventions project, a collaboration between artist

collective Temporary Services and the late artist **Angelo**, who was incarcerated in a Los Angeles area prison, which demonstrates the creative ways inmates seek to improve their living conditions. Lending institutions and partners include **Mixografia**, with an installation about their patented 3-D printing process; **Natural History Museum of Los Angeles**, whose 1930s sound effect machines give context to early innovations in Hollywood; and the **Southern California Medical Museum**, displaying both legitimate and quack medical inventions from Los Angeles historical figures, such as Gaylord Wilshire.

“We are profoundly grateful to the Getty Foundation for their visionary support that will bring *No Prior Art* to life along with countless exhibitions and conversations throughout the region, encouraging collaboration across disciplines, communities, and cultures,” said LFLA President and CEO Stacy Lieberman. “The Los Angeles Public Library, which provides Angelenos free access to information, technology, and endless inspiration in neighborhoods across L.A., is uniquely suited to showcase this landmark exhibition and broad-scale participatory programs about the very nature of the creative process, which is at the heart of what makes us human.”

Inspired by LAPL’s patent resources, the project title, *No Prior Art*, is a play on a legal term integral to the patent application process suggesting that your invention must prove to be unique and without obvious precedent, reflecting the desire for artists as well as scientists to produce work that is novel, or that challenges us in new and unexpected ways.

“In a city that is world famous for its creative output, from the recreational to the technical and from pop culture to the most advanced engineering, this project will serve as an invitation for all Angelenos and visitors to be inspired by the stories of artists and inventors and be encouraged to recognize their own innovative potential,” says LFLA Director of Special Projects and Exhibition Curator Todd Lerew.

*No Prior Art* will venture beyond the exhibition at Central Library to celebrate invention as critical to the arts and sciences, with citywide programming scheduled at 20 neighborhood branch libraries as well as other venues, like Leimert Park Village People’s Street. Participants of all ages will enjoy pop-up installations, such as a mini-museum where visitors can become inventors; hands-on activity kits including a game based on unique and obsolete inventions of the past; an artist-led Rube Goldberg machine challenge; and dynamic public programs featuring scholars, scientists, artists, authors, and community leaders that highlight invention, ingenuity, and creating for social good.

“For well over a century, the Los Angeles Public Library has served as an invaluable resource for inventors and entrepreneurs of all ages,” said City Librarian John F. Szabo. “Today, opportunities for curiosity and creativity through the library have expanded to meet the needs of Angelenos, giving them access to cutting edge technology and a network of support—through our leadership in digital equity, engaging programming, and even free makerspaces such as the newly-expanded Octavia Lab at Central Library and the new Koreatown Media Lab at Pio Pico Koreatown Branch Library. *No Prior Art* will beautifully highlight how our libraries support innovation and invention.”

This is the LFLA and LAPL's second project produced under the Pacific Standard Time arts event. In 2018, they presented *Visualizing Language: Oaxaca in L.A.* to wide acclaim. *Visualizing Language* celebrated the rich social fabric of Los Angeles through the lens of the city's vibrant Oaxacan community.

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### **About the Library Foundation of Los Angeles**

The Library Foundation of Los Angeles supports the Los Angeles Public Library in its effort to provide all 3.8 million Angelenos with equitable access to thousands of free programs, resources, and services. Through fundraising, advocacy, and innovative programs, the Library Foundation strengthens the Library's commitment to educate and empower every individual in our city's diverse communities. At the Foundation, we are committed to

keeping the Library thriving for generations to come and to providing all Angelenos with the tools to enrich and improve their lives.

### **About the Los Angeles Public Library**

Celebrating 150 years of service, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. A recipient of the nation's highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services—its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than eight million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at [lapl.org](http://lapl.org) and thousands of public programs provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for lifelong learning.

### **About PST ART: Art & Science Collide**

Southern California's landmark arts event, Pacific Standard Time, returns in September 2024 with more than 50 exhibitions from museums and other institutions across the region, all exploring the intersections of art and science, both past and present. Dozens of cultural, scientific, and community organizations will join the latest edition, PST ART: Art & Science Collide, with exhibitions on subjects ranging from ancient cosmologies to Indigenous sci-fi, and from environmental justice to artificial intelligence. Art & Science Collide will share groundbreaking research, create indelible experiences for the public, and generate new ways of understanding our complex world. Art & Science Collide follows Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA (September 2017–January 2018), which presented a paradigm-shifting examination of Latin American and Latinx art, and Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945–1980 (October 2011–March 2012), which rewrote the history of the birth and impact of the L.A. art scene. PST ART is a Getty initiative.

For more information about PST ART: Art & Science Collide, please visit: [pst.art](http://pst.art)

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