



Conrad Egyir, *A Chapter of Love*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and Jessica Silverman, San Francisco. Installation view, ICA San José. Photo: Impart Photography.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / October 18, 2021-** ICA San José presents *Conrad Egyir: A Chapter of Love*, a large-scale commission of a new work from Detroit-based Ghanaian artist Conrad Egyir presented in partnership with Facebook Open Arts. On view from October 1st, 2021 through September 2022, this installation represents the second iteration of the recurring Facade Project series—an ongoing public art program dedicated to exploring the most critical social and political issues facing our time—and coincides with a major solo presentation, *Conrad Egyir: Chapters of Light* within the ICA San José.

This latest iteration of *The Facade Project* is the ICA's most expansive public-facing commission to date. The core of the project—a sprawling 50-foot billboard platform enveloping the front of the ICA's downtown building—has been transformed into a monumental narrative and figurative painting that expands on several recurrent motifs in Egyir's work, including references to writing and the physical form of a book as a metaphor for identity.

Evoking the adage “Don't judge a book by its cover,” a large relief rectangular bookmark and a floating postage stamp with interwoven passages by Maya Angelou represent the legacy of writing letters and books. The narrative and historical threads inherent in the characters invite the viewer to reflect on the West African traditions of communal living and child-rearing.

According to Christine Koppes, Curator of the ICA San José, “At its core, Egyir's practice is about community and identity told through a language of painterly delight, making him a powerful artist for our *Facade Project*. Egyir's bold, bright, graphic narrative paintings and portraits stylistically pull from Pop Art, political propaganda, and religious art. Because his narrative paintings often explore citizenship and migration, they lend beautifully to the spirit of the ICA *Facade Project* as a vehicle by which artists reflect on the pressing issues of the diverse neighborhood of the San José SoFA (South of First Area) District, and the many communities surrounding us.”

“Empowering creative communities, catalyzing conversations, and giving voice to untold histories are at the heart of the Open Arts program,” said Tina Vaz, Head of Facebook Open Arts. “We're pleased to partner with ICA San José to help bring Conrad Egyir's vision to life.”

Free and accessible to the public, Egyir's *Facade Project* will be used as a catalyst to spark dialogue and further investigation around critical issues facing the ICA's surrounding communities including their own relationships and systems of support and growth. To further this engagement, Egyir added an a textual component on the sidewalk in front of the ICA. By pushing the boundaries of the facade project to include the sidewalk, the artist invites us to consider how public spaces are historically a vital part of the way communities have forged bonds between neighbors.

*Conrad Egyir: A Chapter of Love* and *Conrad Egyir: Chapters of Light* are generously supported by program partner Facebook Open Arts, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Pamela and David Hornik, Tad Freese and Brook Hartzell, and Applied Materials.

### **About the ICA San José**

Established in 1980, The Institute of Contemporary Art San José (ICA) is a non-collecting contemporary art museum committed to examining the most urgent contemporary issues through the lens of artistic practice. Located in downtown San José, the ICA provides a platform for changing and broadening the art historical canon, providing visibility and critical examination for an inclusive selection of artists of the Bay Area and beyond. The ICA is equally committed to reflecting the diversity of its audiences and offering engagement with the best contemporary art practice for free.

### **About Conrad Egyir**

Conrad Egyir (b. 1989, Accra, Ghana) received his MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art. In 2020, the artist enjoyed a solo show at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD) and his work is in the permanent collections of: Pérez Art Museum, Miami; The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit; Rennie Collection, Vancouver BC; the JPMorgan Chase Art Collection, NY; Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine, Pasadena; and the Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI. Egyir has been awarded residencies by Vermont Studio Center; ACRE Residency, Wisconsin; the Ox-Bow School of Arts and Artist Residency, Saugatuck, MI; and the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP), Brooklyn. In 2021, he will enjoy solo presentations at UTA Artist Space (Beverly Hills, CA) and the Institute of Contemporary Art San José. He is represented by Jessica Silverman.

### **About Facebook Open Arts**

Facebook Open Arts empowers community through creativity. As a company dedicated to bringing people closer together, Facebook recognizes that creativity is essential to our collective well-being. Within our walls and around the globe, Facebook Open Arts cultivates creative engagements that offer new ways of thinking about ourselves, our communities and the world at large. Learn more at [fb.com/facebookopenarts](https://fb.com/facebookopenarts) and find us on Instagram at [@FacebookOpenArts](https://www.instagram.com/FacebookOpenArts).

### **ICA San José**

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### **Admission to the ICA is always free.**

The ICA is wheelchair accessible.

The ICA is currently open Thursday- Sunday, 12-5PM

