

## Art Agency, Partners

Art Agency, Partners is a bespoke art advisory firm founded in 2014, and built upon decades of combined experience, to provide counsel to many of the world's leading art collectors and institutions on collection assessment and development, estate planning, and innovative approaches to museum giving and growth.

## It Is Easy to Sling Mud at a Giant

### Why a visit to the new MoMA is more than worth the trip



Installation view of "Artist's Choice: Amy Sillman—The Shape of Shape"

By Allan Schwartzman

Published 23 October 2019 in [Allan's Intro](#)

It is so easy to sling mud at the giant. I've been reading snipes all week long. My profoundly pleasurable journey through [the new](#) Museum of Modern Art put me in too good a mood to look for warts yet.

The last reopening of MoMA was such a disheartening experience. It had been supposed to undo the "department store" that [César Pelli](#) built in 1984 and to poke holes in the labyrinth—to begin to rethink the canon as it had been written by the creators of MoMA—an institution that spawned all museums of modern art. In the end, it didn't.



Installation view of "Sur moderno: Journeys of Abstraction—The Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Gift"

But this time, with confidence and even humility, authority and curiosity, the world's greatest collection of Modern masterworks is offered up as a library for learning, a sequence of re-examinations of history and geographies, that at times looks at the past through the eyes of the present, and the present in dialogue with its forebears. Hey, the whole thing would have been worth the venture if the only jarring juxtaposition were that of [Faith Ringgold](#) with [Pablo Picasso](#). There alone is a badge of curatorial guts, wisdom—and a visual curiosity worthy of volumes of historical rethinking.

But that moment doesn't stand alone. Even while maintaining flow through the great journey of art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gallery after gallery, there are many moments of spacious splendor, surprise and re-examination. Undoubtedly many works will almost always be on view, and still, one experiences the new MoMA as if walking through a laboratory of artistic greatness that is subject to periodic review.

Decades ago, everyone thought of the Museum of Modern Art as *their* MoMA. There was a special quality to the place, an intimacy of journey and experience that enabled choice and welcomed viewers to find their special spots. Now, after decades of corporatization, spatial order, and some curatorial wobble (there were two or three decades of that), once again you can find those special places you may want to make a beeline for when you have less than an hour to kill; to take a few turns, dip down a staircase of uncommon residential intimacy for a big museum to find next morsel, and then go on with your day. The new MoMA leaves a lot of room for one to find one's own MoMA.