



NEW MOCA FLAG EXHIBIT WAVES DEMOCRACY IN

By Adrienne Alpert

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LITTLE TOKYO, LOS ANGELES (KABC) -- An American flag half the size of a football field is the centerpiece of a new exhibit at the Geffen Contemporary at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Little Tokyo.

The 50-foot long piece constantly waves by the force of four huge industrial fans under bright lights that go on and off.

But this is no ordinary oversized flag. Its field is longer and the ends are frayed. The union bears 51 stars, not 50.

It is not so much Old Glory, as much as a new glory envisioned by the artist William Pope.L.

Pope.L writes the installation is a chance for people to feel the flag "...to feel their democracy... The American flag is not a toy. It's not tame. It's bright, loud, bristling and alive."

MOCA senior curator Bennett Simpson says the flag is meant to inspire conversation.

"It may not be a comforting work, but it's an extremely patriotic work, because what is more patriotic than engaging in deep questions about the potential of the country," Simpson said.

The flag's wind is generated by 6-foot fan blades and leaves the observer breathless.

"I had envisioned a flag, but not the size that it is. Just the way it flows is actually pretty amazing," Montebello resident Alberto Cruz said.

"It's a lot to take in. I'm still processing the show," El Sereno resident Janice Gomez said.

A room filled with 3,000 real painted onions is another component of Pope.L's exhibition. The onions won't look nearly as robust by the end of the exhibit on June 28.

"They will rot. They will gather flies. They will also change over time like the flag is changing over time," Simpson said.

The flag was in peril when Francis Scott Key wrote the "Star Spangled Banner." Artist Pope.L takes that theme to express democracy.