

SFMOMA PRESENTS EXCITING ARRAY OF TIMELY EXHIBITIONS THIS WINTER

Presentations by 15 Contemporary Artists Inspire New Ways of Seeing the World



****NOTE: Dates are subject to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic****

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (October 27, 2020; updated December 21, 2020)—The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) presents a vibrant range of timely exhibitions, including work by 15 local and international contemporary artists, once the museum is permitted to safely reopen to the public in 2021. Bay Area artists are front and center in SFMOMA’s series of large-scale wall commissions titled *Bay Area Walls*—which continues with projects by Erina Alejo, Adrian L. Burrell and Liz Hernández—and *Close to Home: Creativity in Crisis* features seven Bay Area artists’ responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, *Off the Wall* engages five international contemporary artists who are challenging traditional notions of photography and the ways it is presented. These thought-provoking exhibitions underscore the museum’s commitment to living artists and the art of our time.

“Engaging with and celebrating living artists is key to our mission at SFMOMA,” said Janet Bishop, Thomas Weisel Family Chief Curator and Curator of Painting and Sculpture at SFMOMA. “These timely projects and exhibitions help us reflect on this current moment in our history, and connect us with the vital power and resilience of art.”



BAY AREA WALLS

Inspired by the long history of murals in the Bay Area and their resurgence during a period of ongoing crises, SFMOMA commissioned several large-scale wall projects by local artists for the series *Bay Area Walls*. A selection of these commissions will open at the museum this December.

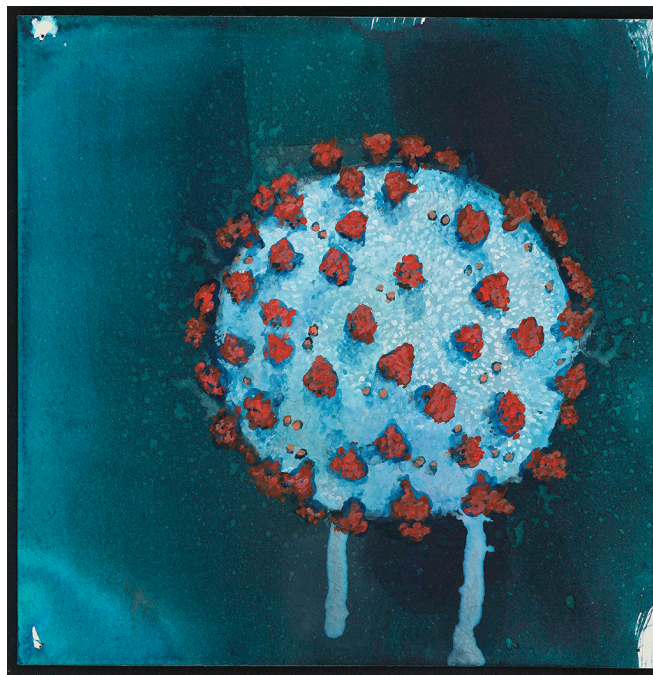
Erina Alejo's SFMOMA photo-based commission, *My Ancestors Followed Me Here*, will use the framework of before and during the COVID-19 pandemic to explore the textures, cultural landmarks, objects and people along San Francisco's Mission Street, which connects their home districts South of Market, Mission and Excelsior. In addition to capturing the vibrant murals and signage that have appeared on the boarded-up storefronts, this new series will include ethnographic interviews and portraits with shopkeepers and residents as an outgrowth of Alejo's previous work on gentrification and community resilience.

It's After the End of the World, Don't You Know That Yet, Adrian L. Burrell's commission for SFMOMA, will use murals painted on boarded-up storefronts of Downtown Oakland in the wake of recent Black Lives Matter protests to explore lineages of revolt in the face of racial oppression. Featuring Burrell's grandmother, mother and sister, the photo-based work will be a collective self-portrait that examines the normalized violence inflicted on Black lives in American society.



For her SFMOMA commission, *Conjuro para la sanación de nuestro futuro* (*A spell for the healing of our future*), Liz Hernández will paint a mural inspired by symbols and icons from *milagros*, or miracle charms, which are often informally placed in churches by Catholic devotees to request help for an ailment or in gratitude for an answered prayer. Though she attended Catholic school, Hernández rejected the rigidity and patriarchy of the church. Instead she connected to spirituality through healing rituals and traditions passed down by her grandmother and the *iglesia popular*, or popular church, they attended in Mexico, led mostly by women.

Bay Area Walls also includes *Muzae Sesay: Cut Trees and Our Ancestors' Wildest Dreams* by Elaine Chu and Marina Perez-Wong of Twin Walls Mural Company, currently on view on the museum's seventh and fifth floors. The series began with the temporary exterior project *We Need an Anti-Racist, Transfeminist and Intersectional Museum* by Marcela Pardo Ariza and Juan Carlos Rodríguez Rivera on view during Summer 2020.



CLOSE TO HOME: CREATIVITY IN CRISIS

Close to Home: Creativity in Crisis brings together deeply personal responses of seven Bay Area artists—Carolyn Drake, Rodney Ewing, Andres Gonzalez, James Gouldthorpe, Klea McKenna, Tucker Nichols and Woody De Othello—to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shelter-in-place order, expressed in a variety of media. Some projects sprang from the curtailing of daily life: disrupted routines and inaccessibility of studios or materials, uncertain employment and the delicate balancing of family and work. Others wrestle with the emotional impact of the virus, responding to overwhelming feelings of isolation, helplessness, anxiety and loss. On May 25, several months into the pandemic, George Floyd was murdered by the Minneapolis police, sparking a furious nationwide outcry against police brutality and systemic racism. The convergence of these crises prompted renewed self-inquiry about the role the artists envisioned for their own work: some looked inward to find solace, while others felt compelled to tackle the outside world head on.

Seen individually, the seven projects demonstrate a startlingly wide range of artistic, emotional and political responses, a reminder of just how differently this moment of collective crisis has affected each of us. Taken

together, the work emphasizes the experience of this period as a shared wound and a communal grieving, and issues a call for empathy and understanding as well as connecting through art.



OFF THE WALL

Off the Wall presents photography-based installations that literally move the art off the wall and into the gallery space. The featured pieces, by contemporary artists Oliver Chanarin, Liz Deschenes, Lieko Shiga, Dayanita Singh and Sarah Sze, are linked in how they challenge traditional expectations of photographic display and presentation. The results of their very different approaches and practices are contemplative, intimate and provocative works that invite viewers to experience photography in fresh and engaging ways.

This group of artists from around the world expand on earlier efforts to stretch the boundaries of the medium by transforming photographs into sculpture, including them in complex installations, projecting them onto various surfaces and creating custom furniture for their display. Engaging visitors in unconventional ways, the artists' inventive, divergent approaches speak to the incredible dynamism of the current moment in photography.

SUPPORT

Major support for *Bay Area Walls* is provided by the SFMOMA Roberta and Steve Denning Commissioning Endowed Fund. Generous support is provided by the Mary Jane Elmore West Coast Exhibition Fund, Randi and Bob Fisher, the Patricia W. Fitzpatrick Commissioning Endowed Fund, Katie Hall and Tom Knutsen, the Elaine McKeon Endowed Exhibition Fund, the Diana Nelson and John Atwater Commissioning Fund, and the Denise Littlefield Sobel Commissioning Endowed Fund. Additional support is provided by Alka and Ravin Agrawal, Oya and Bulent Eczacibasi, and Linda and Jon Gruber in memory of Gretchen Berggruen.

Generous support for *Close to Home: Creativity in Crisis* is provided by Joachim and Nancy Hellman Bechtle and Kate and Wes Mitchell. Meaningful support is provided by Wayee Chu and Ethan Beard.

Generous support for *Off the Wall* is provided by Kate and Wes Mitchell. Meaningful support is provided by Fundación Botín, Takeo Obayashi, and Eleanor and Francis Shen.

HEALTH + SAFETY

To curtail the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, SFMOMA has embraced a heightened focus on visitor and staff health and safety by implementing many new precautionary measures. In addition to limiting the number of visitors each day with timed tickets, SFMOMA requires masks for all visitors and staff, provides hourly sanitation of public areas and requires social distance throughout the museum. These measures and others ensure SFMOMA is a safe space for its community and staff. Learn more about our guidelines at sfmoma.org/visit/visitor-guidelines.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

151 Third Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art is one of the largest museums of modern and contemporary art in the United States and a thriving cultural center for the Bay Area. Our remarkable collection of painting, sculpture, photography, architecture, design and media arts is housed in an LEED Gold-certified building designed by the global architects Snøhetta and Mario Botta. In addition to our seven gallery floors, SFMOMA offers 45,000 square feet of free, art-filled public space open to all.

Visit sfmoma.org or call 415.357.4000 for more information.

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Image credits:

Adrian L. Burrell, *Regeneration* (featuring a mural by Twin Walls Mural Company), from the series *It's After the End of the World, Don't You Know That Yet?*, 2020; courtesy the artist; © Adrian L. Burrell
Erina Alejo, *Former site of Arik Surplus Co., known for carrying Ben Davis work clothes, 2650 Mission, Mission District*, from the series *My Ancestors Followed Me Here*, 2020; courtesy the artist; © Erina Alejo
Liz Hernández, sketch for *Conjuro para la sanación de nuestro futuro* (A spell for the healing of our future), 2020; courtesy the artist; © Liz Hernández
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