

PHASE GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DAVID SCHAFER

FORUM

March 29 – April 26, 2025

Opening reception: Saturday, March 29, 6:00 – 9:00pm

Gallery hours: Monday - Thursday: 10 am - 6 pm. Saturday: 12 - 5 pm

Address: 1718 Albion Street Los Angeles, CA 90031 WWW.PHASEGALLERY.COM

PHASE GALLERY is pleased to present *FORUM*, a solo exhibition by Los Angeles-based artist David Schafer. The exhibition critically examines the intersections of power, control, and symbolic representation in contemporary society. Through immersive environments that merge sound, sculpture, and visual elements, Schafer explores how social structures are shaped by coded signs, corporate spectacle, and institutional influence.

Pantheon is a sculptural installation that integrates neon, seating, and a layered soundscape, transforming viewers into active participants within its theatrical framework. Drawing from Gilles Deleuze's concept of capitalism as a "regime of decoding"—where coded flows are continually transformed into commodities—and Franco Berardi's concept of "semiocapitalism" in which signs, rather than material goods, drive economic production, Schafer deconstructs corporate logos from banking, media, military, and entertainment industries. By stripping these logos of their original identities and reducing them to abstract forms, *Pantheon* exposes the deeper mechanics by which branding operates—extending beyond mere identification into a mechanism of social conditioning and economic exchange. This coded visual language reflects the pervasive influence of corporate spectacle, as institutional power further embeds itself within everyday life through signs and symbols that shape our perception and behavior.

Colosseum addresses the role of public institutions in shaping collective life through controlled environments and amplified authority. The installation takes the form of a speaker system, evoking the settings of stadiums, parks, and civic spaces where authority asserts itself through broadcasted directives. An AI-read spoken-word soundtrack emits the names of facilities, institutions, and commercial spaces, mapping the enclosures that dictate human movement and behavior. Rooted in Michel Foucault's theories of discipline and institutional control, *Colosseum* reflects the way modern society functions as a network of regulated spaces—schools, hospitals, factories, and prisons—designed to normalize and manage behavior. Through *Colosseum*, Schafer critiques the evolution of bureaucratic control, emphasizing the transition from physical institutions to invisible systems of surveillance and social engineering. The installation probes the operation of power, not just through direct enforcement, but through the very structures that dictate our perception, participation, and agency.

The exhibition references both the visible and invisible architecture of the ancient Roman Colosseum, highlighting the enduring relationship between spectacle and power. Gladiatorial combat served not just as entertainment but as a mechanism of state dominance and propaganda, reinforcing authority through grand public displays. Schafer's installation suggests that today's mass media and digital platforms play a similar role, replacing genuine civic discourse with orchestrated spectacle. As entertainment becomes a means of social control, public engagement is increasingly shaped by commercial interests and algorithmic governance. The exhibition's two overlapping soundscapes immerse spectators, making tangible the hidden forces that shape contemporary life. *FORUM* invites reflection on the systems that enclose us, whether in the form of corporate spectacle, disciplinary institutions, or algorithmic governance, while challenging us to reconsider our own agency within them.

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David Schafer (b. 1955, Kansas City, MO) received his MFA in Sculpture from the University of Texas in Austin in 1983.

Selected one person exhibitions and projects include Phase Gallery, Los Angeles, CA., Diane Rosenstein Gallery, Los Angeles, CA., Samuel Freeman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA., Glendale College Art Gallery, Glendale, CA., Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Los Angeles, CA., Studio 10 Gallery, Brooklyn, NY., Sara Meltzer Gallery, New York, NY., and MoMA-PS1 Queens, NY. Selected group exhibitions include Royale Projects, Foyer-LA, JOAN, Los Angeles, CA., FiveCarGarage, Los Angeles, CA., Angles Gallery, Los Angeles, CA., Sarah Gavlak Gallery, Palm Beach, FL., The Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NY., Space Debris, Istanbul, Turkey, Tent Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland, De Vleeshal, Middelburg, NL., Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA., The Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, MD., Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD., Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY., Hudson River Museum, NY., Whitney Museum, NY.

Public commissions include *Reflected Terrain*, San Gabriel Valley, CA., *Separated United Forms*, a One Percent for the Arts commission at the Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena, CA., catalog published by Charta Press, Milan. Temporary public projects include locations at Foyer-LA Mandarin Plaza, Richard Telles Gallery, Los Angeles, CA., The USC campus, Los Angeles, CA., Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY, Public Art Fund of NY commission for City Hall Park, New York City, NY., Public Art Fund of NY commission for MetroTech Center, Brooklyn, NY., and Public Art Fund of NY commission for Cadman Plaza Park, Brooklyn, NY.

Schafer has performed at LaCita, Los Angeles, CA., Human Resources, Los Angeles, CA., David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles, CA., Samuel Freeman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA., Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions L.A.C.E., Los Angeles, CA., Printed Matter, New York City, NY., The Invisible Dog, Brooklyn, NY., Roulette, Brooklyn, NY., The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City, NY., Mildreds Lane, Scranton, PA. His sound works have been included in curated radio programs for RadioPhrenia, Glasgow, Scotland., Stress FM, Lisbon, Portugal, Online Radio Program-websynradio, Paris, France, Radio Village Normade, Marseille, France, United Nations Radio Network, Berlin, Germany, California State University Broadcasting, Northridge, CA., The Transmission Arts and John Cage Trust, New York City, NY., WFMU radio, East Orange, New Jersey.

David Schafer's work has appeared in *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Art Issues*, *ArtNet*, *Art Papers*, *Art Week*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Landscape Architecture*, *LA Weekly*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Metropolis*, *New Art Examiner*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Wire*, and *The Washington Post*.

Schafer is the recipient of numerous awards including the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award, the COLA Cultural Trailblazers Award Department of Cultural Affairs Los Angeles, CA., Center for Cultural Innovation Grant, Los Angeles, CA., Visions and Voices Arts Initiative USC, Los Angeles, CA., National Endowment for the Arts, New York City, NY., Sculpture Chicago Artist in Residence, Chicago, ILL., Artist in Residence Public Art Fund, New York City, NY. Schafer is a Professor of Fine Art at ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, CA. where he founded the Fine Art Sound Lab and has received numerous awards for his teaching.

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