

Left Coast: California Political Art

Exhibition & Programs

Judith F. Baca
Evan Bissell
Libby Black
Enrique Chagoya
Estudio Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman
Bruce Conner
Futurefarmers
Jennifer Moon
PERSIA and DADDIE\$PLA\$TIK
Precita Eyes Mural Collective
Lari Pittman
Rigo 23
Favianna Rodriguez
Andrew Schoultz
Martin Wong
Imin Yeh

Wed, Apr 15–Sat, May 30, 2015

The James Gallery
The Graduate Center, CUNY
365 Fifth Avenue at 35th Street
New York, NY 10016
centerforthehumanities.org/james-gallery

Free and Open to the Public
Tue to Thu, 12–7pm
Fri and Sat, 12–6pm

Introduction

Despite New York's profound locality, it is indeed a crossroads. Furthermore, the city and its public institutions are robust resources for the presentation of artwork and insight into cultural context—in this case from as far away as the West Coast—that is not known well enough here.

Made possible through a public-private partnership, Andrew W. Mellon curatorial fellow Nadiah Fellah, who is a student in the PhD program in Art History, has curated *Left Coast: California Political Art* after completing the related curatorial practicum course taught by Professor Claire Bishop and Dr. Michelle Lim in spring 2014. I was privileged to be part of this process as well, and to work throughout this year with Nadiah Fellah as she has thoughtfully and skillfully honed the project and brought it to fruition. This would not be possible without the expertise and true dedication of my colleague Jennifer Wilkinson here at the James Gallery.

Left Coast with its new commissions and artist-centered activist vision is a natural fit here at the Graduate Center as manifested in the many related public programs with the artists in conversation with Graduate Center faculty and students. These conversations and ways of working in turn resonate with the multiple art worlds active here in our hometown of New York City.

— Katherine Carl

From Radical Roots: Visionary Art/Politics in California

“Art that reflects the interests of the most advanced social class of a particular era can be a profoundly effective process of education, assisting people to learn about their society and about the intensely social character of their own individual lives. Ultimately it can propel people in the direction of social, economic and political liberation.”

—Angela Davis, *“For a People’s Culture,” Political Affairs 64 (1985)*

California has a long history of political activism. In the 1960s, California-based movements galvanized social change across the country. The decade saw the birth of the free speech movement on the UC Berkeley campus, the growth of Beat and hippie countercultures, the development of the Chicano labor movement in the San Joaquin Valley, the founding of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, as well as numerous gay liberation and feminist movements, Red Power groups, and environmental activist groups. Given this radical genealogy, it is no coincidence that the art of this period also took on an activist character, causing a sea change in socially conscious art practices on a national stage.

While the legacies of radicalism and political art are an important precedent for this exhibition, *Left Coast: California Political Art* focuses on the political landscape of California in the more recent past and the art that has been produced in response to contemporary movements and policies. These issues include the immigrant rights movement; the Silicon Valley tech boom of the early-2000s that resulted in the increasing gentrification of the Bay Area; the gay rights movement that gained momentum in 2008 in response to Proposition 8 and the subsequent anti-gay marriage law, which was later repealed in 2013; the various iterations of the Occupy movement circa 2011; as well as education reform, prison reform, protests against the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the environmental movement. Many of these struggles emerged on the West Coast and later took hold as major issues on a

national platform while others, such as the Occupy movement, emerged in New York only to take on a unique character later in California.

The exhibition of these artists’ works in New York offers a rare opportunity to introduce their views and projects to a larger audience. *Left Coast* highlights connections between progressive struggles on both coasts, demonstrating a remarkable amount of overlap. In doing so, it brings to the fore political tensions and social movements that are unfolding across the country. For this reason, the artists’ voices—though they come to us from 3,000 miles away—echo and resonate with a set of concerns that hit quite close to home.

The use of public art to communicate political messages is deeply embedded in California’s history. This tradition is represented in *Left Coast* through site-specific installations by the San Francisco-based mural collective **Precita Eyes** and the Los Angeles-based artist **Andrew Schoultz**. Schoultz’s chaotic, large-scale compositions take on issues like the global economic crisis, domestic military spending, and the current funding of warfare over American infrastructure and social programs. His immersive wall paintings grow out of his background as a street artist, as well as from the time that he spent as a muralist and educator with **Precita Eyes**. Given this experience, he envisions his installations as politically activating urban spaces, generating discourse on social issues in a creative and informal way. Schoultz’s works, shown here alongside drawings from artist **Rigo 23**’s *Drone* series, also gesture towards the American military presence in Southern California cities, as represented by the border patrol between the U.S. and Mexico, as well as the naval bases in the San Diego region.

Precita Eyes draws upon the populist medium of murals that was invigorated by the Mexican artists José Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, and David Siqueiros, popularly known in the 1920s as *Los Tres Grandes*. Their progressive tenet of producing “art for the masses” was one that emerged in the

wake of the Mexican Revolution, a time when a radical rethinking of the country’s national identity was taking place. At the height of their careers, all three artists visited California—Rivera went to San Francisco, while Orozco and Siqueiros visited Los Angeles—and created site-specific works, leaving a lasting impression on the respective cities’ artistic scenes.

In the late 1960s, with the birth of the Farmworkers Movement in the San Joaquin Valley, muralism experienced a grassroots revival and a new generation of artists adopted the medium’s connotations of social emancipation and political radicalism, but with an added component of community involvement in their making. This recent renaissance is entrenched in many of California’s cities to this day, where collectives like **Precita Eyes** and the Los Angeles-based artist **Judith Baca** and her organization **SPARC** (Social and Public Art Resource Center) transform the urban landscapes with their public artwork. Established in San Francisco’s Mission District in 1977, **Precita Eyes** has continued to inaugurate new artists through their association and center since their founding. In this way, the radical history of the medium is preserved while its artists evolve to engage with political issues that are relevant to contemporary struggles, such as the gentrification of traditionally Latino neighborhoods as a result of the Silicon Valley tech boom.

As with the muralists, many other California artists are also steeped in the legacies of a previous generation, a group that included **Bruce Conner**, **Jay DeFeo**, and **Wally Hendrick**. In the 1960s, Conner in particular created assemblages that drew materials from the junk dealers of the San Francisco Mission District, purposefully choosing to position his artwork outside the bounds of the commercial art market. Conner was also a pivotal figure in the growing Beat counterculture movement, embodying its goals of experimental art practice and a spontaneous creativity that broke down delineations between art mediums. His experimental films, like the 1981 *AMERICA*

IS WAITING projected at the exhibition’s entrance, incorporate found film footage and popular music, channeling the energy of what he deemed a “fundamentally disordered society.” A parallel can be drawn between Conner’s films and the Bay Area drag performer **PERSIA**’s 2013 music video, *Google Google Apps Apps*. A queer anthem against the gentrification of San Francisco, the video uses found imagery from Google Maps as its backdrop, resonating with Conner’s use of found footage in an updated format.

The San Francisco-based artist **Amy Franceschini** and the **Futurefarmers** collective she established in 1995 also draw on a style of community-based social practice that is a hallmark of many contemporary political and artistic modes represented in *Left Coast*. A collective that participates in cultural activism, the name “**Futurefarmers**” references an attention towards creating a better future through the cultivation of educational initiatives; it is also a play on the US government’s agricultural program aimed at American youth, and established in an era of New Deal reforms in the mid-1930s. The food projects in which the group has participated aim to make sustainable food sources available to wider populations, a task that is envisioned through creative networks of interaction and exchange. As part of a commission for *Left Coast*, the **Futurefarmers** have envisioned a voyage in which ancient grains currently being grown in Norway will be transported back to their geographic origins in Jordan. This project of reverse migration, named the *Flatbread Society Seed Journey*, is imagined as a “rescue” and falls within a larger movement to protect the rights of small farmers. The *Seed Journey* also imagines food (grains in particular) as a symbol of resistance in the wake of intellectual property rights extending to biological matter.

Similarly drawing on community engagement, international circulation, and the interactions that result is the **Estudio Teddy Cruz**’s installation created with **Fonna Forman**, *The Political Equator Meetings: The Cross-Border Citizen*. The practice of

San Diego-based artist and architect Teddy Cruz and theorist Fonna Forman have been heavily influenced by the US-Mexico border zone and its tendency to serve as a demarcation between political, economic, and social entitlements, as well as one between national territories. In their consideration of the shifting cultural demographics of border communities and immigration's effect on so-called traditional American culture and identity, Cruz and Forman exert pressure on the status quo and exerts and exemplify how experimental design practice crosses into the realm of activism. Cruz's work also falls into a larger tradition of artists who have used their work to ignite public discourse on immigration. Other artists included in this exhibition who work in a similar manner are San Francisco-based **Enrique Chagoya** and Oakland-based **Favianna Rodriguez**.

Both Chagoya and Rodriguez illustrate the print medium as a popular form for disseminating information and political messages. Prints have been an integral part of many social justice movements in the US since the 1960s; the low cost of large-scale printing and ease of public display have facilitated their use as announcements and agitations, driving activist polemics and fueling public democratic debate. In addition to the work on view in James Gallery, *Left Coast* includes a selection of political posters in the Graduate Center's Martin E. Segal Theatre corridor from the **Interference Archive**, an all-volunteer run space in Brooklyn housing materials associated with social justice movements. Touching on topics and struggles that span the last four decades, these works were created by **Dignidad Rebelde**, **Lincoln Cushing**, **Fernando Martí**, and **Doug Minkler**, among others.

In the north area of the gallery is a work that goes beyond the typical creation of printed posters. The San Francisco artist **Imin Yeh's Paper Bag Project** highlights the meticulous process of creating paper, a procedure that she observed in a factory in Sanganeer, India. Eschewing any overt references to specific political campaigns, Yeh instead transforms the paper sheets into shopping

bags, objects that occupy a place at the intersection of labor, consumerism, and global economies, commenting on the 'politics of paper' itself.

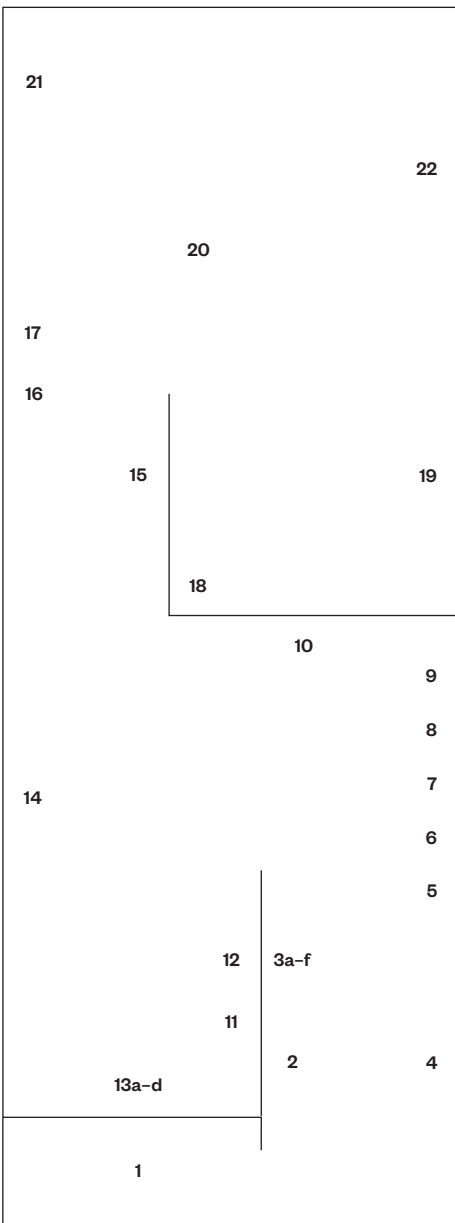
The work of **Libby Black**, **Lari Pittman**, and **Martin Wong** advocates for the rights of gay communities and often directly reference their own queer identities. Wong—who passed away in 1994 after being diagnosed with AIDS-related illnesses—was a key figure in New York's East Village art scene. He was raised in San Francisco, where he spent his formative years in the 1960s, a pivotal time for both the gay community and the emergence of street art. By incorporating everyday objects found in Chinatown's small shops and traces of zodiac signs, as well as the blank canvas of brick walls that served as the backdrop to his graffiti works, Wong made reference to his own urban environment, and his works became an important precursor to the themes of cultural identity that have arisen in the years following his death.

Exemplifying issues associated with the US system of mass incarceration and its acute effects in the state of California are the works of Oakland-based artist **Evan Bissell** and Los Angeles-based artist **Jennifer Moon**. Bissell's project is deeply influenced by his role as an educator in an Oakland high school, where he was struck by how present the California state prison system was in his classroom—either through students who had entered the system or via his students' parents. *What Cannot Be Taken Away: Families and Prisons Project* was a nine-month collaborative project that took a critical look at the overcrowded prison system and its societal effects, as well as the school-to-prison pipeline that has emerged as a prominent national issue, notably in California and New York. Moon's approach similarly takes on issues of prison overpopulation in California, but from an entirely different perspective. Incarcerated for a period of nine months in the Valley State Prison for Women, Moon emerged in 2012 with a transformed outlook, and created her series, *This is Where I Learned to Love*.

The project includes photos, letters, and publications that are both mementos of the transformative experience and fuel for a revolutionary movement, adding elements of playfulness and fantasy to the artist's own brand of political activism.

Although it is impossible to fully capture the breadth and diversity of politically progressive art from California in any single exhibition, *Left Coast* engages with a network of issues that are particularly urgent today. It also highlights the importance of viewing these issues—as vast and varied as they may be—within a common framework, as looking at any one of them in isolation is both impractical and antithetical to their underlying causes. In emphasizing that one subject cannot be understood without attending to the others, an inclusivity is foregrounded within our political consciousness which cautions viewers against a myopic focus on any single contemporary struggle. By the same token, to limit the discussion solely to the California context is to ignore its relevance to audiences in New York, as well as across the country. By exploring others' engagement with these topics, and particularly the roles that artists play in facilitating our understanding of them, it is my hope that *Left Coast* will foster bi-coastal exchange between communities of progressive artists, scholars, and thinkers.

—Nadiyah Fellah



Exhibition Checklist

1. Bruce Conner
AMERICA IS WAITING, 1981
Single-channel film
3:48 minutes
Courtesy of the Conner Family Trust and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York
2. Enrique Chagoya
Illegal Alien's Guide to the Concept of Relative Surplus Value, 2009
Color lithograph on Amate paper
15 x 80 inches
Courtesy of George Adams Gallery, New York
- 3a-f. Libby Black
All works courtesy of the artist
Left to right, top to bottom:
 - 3a. *Queers Are Dears*, 2012
Pencil on paper
8 x 9.5 inches
 - 3b. *Label My Love Lesbian*, 2010
Gouache on paper
7 x 4.5 inches
 - 3c. *Fagots Stay Out*, 2014
Pencil on paper
4.5 x 7 inches
 - 3d. *The Young and the Gay*, 2014
Gouache on paper
10.75 x 6.75 inches
 - 3e. *Homosexuality is Sin*, 2014
Pencil on paper
4 x 6 inches
 - 3f. *Protest*, 2012
Oil on canvas
6 x 8 inches
4. Lari Pittman
Animus, 2011
Acrylic, Cel-Vinyl, and aerosol lacquer on gessoed canvas over panel
54 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels

5. Andrew Schoultz
Acrylic and copper leaf on stretched American flag over panel
18 x 30 inches
Courtesy of Joshua Liner Gallery
6. Andrew Schoultz
Flags (Stars and Bars), 2011
Gold leaf on embossed paper
19 x 27 inches
Courtesy of Joshua Liner Gallery
Made in China with Liberty, 2012
7. Martin Wong
Chinese Altar Screen, 1989
Acrylic on canvas, mounted in stand
36.5 x 28.5 inches
Courtesy of the estate of Martin Wong and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York
8. Rigo 23
RQ-4 / Block 10 / Global Hawk, 2010
Ink on recycled elephant dung paper
31 x 22 inches
Courtesy of Andrew Edlin Gallery
9. Rigo 23
MQ-9 / Reaper and Yemen, 2010
Ink on recycled elephant dung paper
31 x 22 inches
Courtesy of Andrew Edlin Gallery
10. Andrew Schoultz
Illuminati Armored Horse, 2015
Site-specific mural
12 x 14 feet
Courtesy of the artist
11. Evan Bissell
Ben from What Cannot Be Taken Away: Families and Prisons Project, 2009-10
Acrylic and oil on canvas
8 x 5 feet
Courtesy of the artist
12. Evan Bissell
Vontek from What Cannot Be Taken Away: Families and Prisons Project, 2009-10
Acrylic and oil on canvas
8 x 5 feet
Courtesy of the artist

- 13a-d. Jennifer Moon
Courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth & Council, Los Angeles
 - 13a. *Prison Relic #1: CDC ID from Phoenix Rising Part 1: This Is Where I Learned Of Love*, 2012
Framed photograph, book, cardboard shelf, and chain
16 x 20 inches
 - 13b. *Prison Relic #2: Typewriter from Phoenix Rising Part 1: This Is Where I Learned Of Love*, 2012
Framed photograph, book, cardboard shelf, and chain
16 x 20 inches
 - 13c. *Prison Relic #6: Beverly Photo from Phoenix Rising Part 1: This Is Where I Learned Of Love*, 2012
Framed photograph, book, cardboard shelf, and chain
16 x 20 inches
 - 13d. *Colin Heap from Phoenix Rising Part 1: This Is Where I Learned Of Love*, 2012
Letters and knife
Dimensions variable
14. PERSIA and DADDIE\$ PLA\$TIK
Google Google Apps Apps, 2013
Single-channel video
3 minutes
Courtesy of the artists
15. Precita Eyes Muralists Association and Center
And The Earth Did Not Swallow Them, 2015
Site-specific mural
12 x 12 feet
Mural designed and executed by: Max Allbee, Fred Alvarado, Suaro Cervantes, and Marina Perez-Wong
16. Judith F. Baca
La Memoria de Nuestra Tierra: California, 1998
Color pencil on paper
25 x 46 inches

Courtesy of the artist

17. Judith F. Baca
USC Mural Commission in Progress, 1995
Digital print on paper with pencil
59 x 32 inches
Courtesy of Durón Family Collection

18. Estudio Teddy Cruz with Fonna Forman
The Political Equator Meetings: The Cross-Border Citizen, 2014
Mixed media
Courtesy of Estudio Teddy Cruz

19. Imin Yeh
Paper Bag Project, 2013
Paper bags and video on monitor
12 bags, 18 x 16 inches each
Courtesy of the artist

20. Imin Yeh
Paper Mahjong, 2010/2014
Paper
152 tiles, 1 x 1.5 x .75 inches each
Courtesy of the artist

21. Futurefarmers
Flatbread Society: Provisioning, 2014
Mixed media
Courtesy of the artists

22. Favianna Rodriguez
Defend Your Home. Defend Your City. Defend Your Planet, 2014
Monotype and collage on Japanese paper
72 x 46 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Complimentary to the James Gallery exhibition is a display of prints and posters, installed in the Graduate Center corridor by the Martin E. Segal Theatre, borrowed from the Interference Archive. This presentation will be on view April 15–May 30, 2015.

Artists represented include:
Jon-Paul Bail/ Political Gridlock
Jesus Barraza
Dignidad Rebelde
Lincoln Cushing
Exotic Dancers Alliance, San Francisco
Emory Douglass
Yolanda López
Los Angeles Peace Center Coalition
Machine Project, Los Angeles
Fernando Martí
Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies Inc. (MAPS)
Doug Minkler
Claude Moller
Su Negrin/Times Change Press Design
Favianna Rodriguez
San Francisco Print Collective
San Francisco Poster Brigade
Taller Tupac Amaru

Artists

Judith F. Baca (b. 1946) is a Los Angeles-based painter and muralist, community arts organizer, scholar and educator who has been teaching art in the University of California system for over 28 years. She was the founder of the first City of Los Angeles Mural Program in 1974, which evolved into a community arts organization known as the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC). The organization has been creating and preserving sites of public memory since 1976. She continues to serve as SPARC's artistic director and focuses her creative energy in the UCLA/SPARC Cesar Chavez Digital Mural Lab, employing digital technology to co-create collaborative mural designs. Baca's commissioned murals span the state of California, with notable projects in Texas and Colorado as well. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally; artworks are included in the collections of the San Jose Museum of Art, and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, among other public and private collections.

Libby Black (b. 1976) is a painter and sculptural installation artist currently living and working in Berkeley, CA. She has exhibited nationally, with shows at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts; Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach; Jersey City Museum; and numerous galleries in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Black has been an artist in residence at Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito and Montalvo Arts Center in Saratoga. Her work has been reviewed in Artforum, Art in America, ARTnews, Zink magazine, Flash Art, and the New York Times. She received her MFA in Painting and Drawing from the California College of the Arts, where she is also a faculty member and senior lecturer.

Evan Bissell (b. 1983) facilitates multidisciplinary, community-based art projects for public installation and the internet. Projects take varied forms: an interactive history of freedom and confinement in the United States focused on the roots of mass incar-

ceration (knottedline.com), an animated version of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech (freedoms-ring.org), and the set for Chinaka Hodge's play Chasing Mehserle. Bissell has exhibited on Alcatraz Island, at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Intersection for the Arts, and SOMArts, and facilitated projects in schools (K-12) throughout the country. Evan was the first artist-in-residence at the American Cultures Engaged Scholar Program at UC Berkeley (2013), was awarded a Headlands artist-in-residence (2013) and worked as an artist/researcher with the Morris Justice Project and the Public Science Project at the CUNY Graduate Center (2014). He is currently pursuing a joint masters degree in Public Health and City Planning at UC Berkeley, and lives in Oakland.

Drawing from his experiences living on both sides of the US-Mexico border, Enrique Chagoya (b. 1953) juxtaposes secular, popular, and religious symbols in order to address the ongoing cultural clash between the United States, Latin America and the world at large. Recently his work has addressed issues on immigration and the economic recession. He earned a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and an MA and MFA from the University of California, Berkeley. Chagoya is currently Professor of Art at Stanford University. His work has been shown internationally and is represented in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the De Young Museum, the LA County Museum of Art, the National Museum of American Art, the Des Moines Art Center, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the New York Public Library.

Bruce Conner (1933–2008) received a BFA from Nebraska University 1956. After living briefly in New York and Colorado, he settled in San Francisco with his wife, Jean Conner, also an artist. Bruce Conner was a pivotal figure in the San Francisco art scene since the late 1950s, and one whose work is associated with political protest and a radical practice. Conner's Estate is administered by the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York.

The artist and architect Teddy Cruz (b. 1962, Guatemala) has been particularly influenced in his practice by the Tijuana-San Diego border zone. As part of a research-based and community-engaged practice, the Estudio Teddy Cruz investigates the shifting cultural demographics of border communities. Cruz is currently a professor in public culture and urbanism in the Visual Arts Department at the University of California, San Diego, and the co-founder of the Center for Urban Ecologies. His studio's work has been exhibited widely, including at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the US pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennial, The Walker Art Center and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego.

DADDIE\$ PLA\$TIK is an Oakland-based group comprised of Tyler Holmes, Vain Hein and San Cha. DADDIE\$ PLA\$TIK first teamed up with drag diva PERSIA to create the anti-gentrification Bay Area anthem "Google Google Apps Apps." The video quickly went viral, gaining global notoriety from a number of renowned websites and publications, including, Buzzfeed, The San Francisco Bay Guardian, The San Francisco Chronicle, and The New York Times. DADDIE\$ PLA\$TIK have grown from the initial core trio originally focused on production into a full band with a live drummer, guitarist, synth players and vocalists, and are an ever-evolving group of visual creators, personas, and musicians.

Fonna Forman is a Professor of Political Theory at the University of California, San Diego and founding Director of the UCSD Center on Global Justice. She is best known for her revisionist work on Adam Smith, recuperating the ethical, social, spatial, and public dimensions of his political economy. Her current projects focus on theories and practices of global justice as they manifest at local and regional scales, and the place of civic engagement in strategies of equitable urbanization. She presently co-directs the UCSD Cross-Border Initiative with Teddy Cruz and consults on social and economic rights for the Commission on Global Citizenship in order to advise the United Nations on human rights policies.

Futurefarmers is Amy Franceschini (b. 1970) with Joe Riley (b. 1990) and Audrey Snyder (b. 1991). In 1995, Amy founded Futurefarmers, an international collective of artists, activists, writers, farmers and architects who work together to propose alternatives to the social, political and environmental organization of space. She received her BFA from San Francisco State University in Photography and her MFA from Stanford University. Audrey Snyder first hailed to Futurefarmers in 2006 from Ox Bow School in the Napa Valley of California. Audrey has woven in and out of Futurefarmers projects' Soil Kitchen, Soul Sermons and Tree University. Audrey's deep interest in food systems manifests in the palate through hyper local menus and work with small farms. Joe Riley is a sea worthy artist and activist involved in the long struggle for (truly) public education. This triad has assembled for CUNY with an aligned interest in the seafaring journey as a collective departure into the sea of the unknown.

Interference Archive is an all-volunteer run collection based in Brooklyn, New York. A collection consisting of objects created as part of social movements and their participants, their collection is a way of persevering and honoring histories and material culture that is often marginalized in mainstream institutions. The collectively run space maintains open stacks that are accessible for all. Interference also hosts a range of public programs, including exhibitions, talks, screenings, publications, and workshops. More information is available at interferencearchive.org.

Jennifer Moon (b. 1973) is a Los Angeles-based artist and self-described revolutionary, utilizing her interdisciplinary practice as a means towards personal, political, and artistic transformation. Moon's life and work was radically altered following her nine-month incarceration at the Valley State Prison for Women in California, an experience that prompted a body of work examining not only the United States prison system, but also the nature of human relationships. In this work, Moon draws on legacies of political radical-

ism, uniquely combining them with elements of humor and fantasy. Moon has exhibited at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, for Made in L.A. 2014 where she won the Mohn Public Recognition Award. She has had solo exhibitions at Equitable Vittrines, Los Angeles; Transmission Gallery, Glasgow, Scotland; Commonwealth & Council, Los Angeles; China Art Objects Galleries, Los Angeles; Richard Heller Gallery, Los Angeles; and Tunnel, New York. Moon also maintains a monthly radio show, *Adventures Within*, on KCHUNG and is the recipient of a 2013 CCF Fellowship for Visual Artists.

PERSIA was born from the burgeoning creative mind of a child in South Central Los Angeles. With degrees from the University of California, Santa Cruz and the San Francisco Art Institute in one hand, and a few pairs of heels in the other, she set out to conquer and revolutionize the drag community. PERSIA began performing weekly at Esta Noche, the recently closed Latino gay bar in San Francisco. Whilst performing at events around the Bay Area, in Los Angeles, and Mexico—including a few quinceañeras—PERSIA has also curated art shows, done stand-up, appeared on a few television shows, modeled, and has represented the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art by transforming into Matisse's *Woman with a Hat*.

Lari Pittman (b. 1952) is a painter based in Los Angeles, California. Influenced by commercial advertising, folk art traditions, and diverse aesthetic styles, his meticulously layered paintings transform pattern and signage into complex scenes that interrogate issues of identity and hybridity, and are deeply inspired by the landscapes of contemporary politics and American culture. Pittman received his MFA from the California Institute of Arts in 1976, and has received many awards, including a Pacific Design Center Stars of Design Award, the Skowhegan Medal, and three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has had major exhibitions at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.

The Precita Eyes Muralists Association and Center (est. 1977) was founded by Susan and Luis Cervantes, in collaboration with other artists in San Francisco's Mission District. It is a multipurpose, community-based arts organization that has played an integral role in the city's cultural heritage and arts education. One of only three community mural centers in the United States, the organization sponsors and implements ongoing mural projects throughout the Bay Area and internationally. Though they predominantly serve the Mission District with murals and programming, Precita Eyes has also collaborated on projects in other San Francisco neighborhoods, as well as international projects in Russia, Germany, Spain, and Brazil. At the Graduate Center's James Gallery, the team of artists who will paint a site-specific mural include Max Allbee, Fred Alvarado, Suaro Cervantes and Marina Perez-Wong.

Rigo 23 (b. 1966) is a muralist, painter and political artist from Portugal who lives and works in San Francisco, California. He has exhibited his work internationally for over twenty years, placing murals, paintings, sculptures, and tile work in public situations where viewers are encouraged to examine their relationship to their community, their role as unwitting advocates of public policy or their place on a planet occupied by many other living things. Rigo 23's works act as both artworks and as thoughtful public interventions. The artist holds a BFA from the San Francisco Institute of Art, and MFA from Stanford University.

Favianna Rodriguez (b. 1978) is a transnational interdisciplinary artist and cultural organizer on a mission to create profound and lasting social change in the world. Her art and collaborative projects address migration, global politics, economic injustice, patriarchy, and interdependence. Favianna's practice is grounded in the desire to humanize and empower communities who are impacted by inequality and racism. She submerges herself fully in the issues she addresses in order to produce work that is informed by the social and political conditions of the time. She spends time on the front lines with affected

communities, researches policies, and supports fellow artists of color and migrants through resources, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities. Born in Oakland, California, where she currently lives and works, Favianna's earliest mentors were artists and movement leaders in the Chicano and Black Arts Movement. When Favianna is not making art, she is directing Culture Strike, a national arts organization that engages artists, writers and performers in migrant rights.

Andrew Schoultz (b. 1975) practices a pictorial approach to social and political commentary. Through his paintings, drawings, murals, and installations, Schoultz uses symbols and iconography to illustrate the weightier issues of contemporary life in America. Although Schoultz exhibits in galleries and museums, he often works in large-scale installations and public murals with the intention of making his work available to the general public. In densely layered, chaotic, narrative imagery, Schoultz explores environmental crises like oil spills and natural disasters, political issues such as war and corruption, and the economics of globalization and capitalism. The artist currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

Graffiti artist and painter Martin Wong (1946–1999) was raised in San Francisco's Chinatown district before moving to New York in 1978, where he became known for his graffiti art in the East Village art scene. Wong returned to San Francisco in 1994 after being diagnosed with AIDS, where he lived until his death in 1999. His Estate is administered by the P.P.O.W. Gallery in New York.

Imin Yeh (b. 1983) is an interdisciplinary project-based artist, working in sculpture, installation, participatory events, and print. Yeh's practice is unified by a continual pushing at the boundaries of printmaking; a medium at the intersection of popular literacy, commercialism, and social engagement. Copying the aesthetic and process that is ubiquitous in the mass-production of

commercial industry, her projects blur the lines between imaginary and "real" businesses, people, and/or products. Through humor, satire, and participation, the artist's projects engage the viewer in a critical dialogue about the invisible labor and the stories behind the objects we consume. Yeh earned her MFA from the California College of Arts in San Francisco, where she currently lives and works. Her projects have been exhibited in San Francisco at the Museum of Modern Art, the Contemporary Jewish Museum, and the Asian Art Museum, among other venues.

Programs

Wed, Apr 15, 6–8pm
Exhibition Reception

Left Coast: California Political Art

Judith F. Baca, artist; Evan Bissell, artist; Libby Black, artist; Enrique Chagoya, artist; Estudio Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman, artists; Bruce Conner, artist; Nadiah Fella, exhibition curator, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Future farmers, artist collective; Jennifer Moon, artist; PERSIA and DADDIE\$ PL\$TIK, artists; Precita Eyes Mural Collective, artist collective; Lari Pittman, artist; Rigo 23, artist; Favianna Rodriguez, artist; Andrew Schoultz, artist; Martin Wong, artist; Imin Yeh artist.

Join exhibition curator Nadiah Fella and a number of the exhibition's artists for an opening reception of the James Gallery's presentation of *Left Coast: California Political Art*.

Thu, Apr 16, 5–7pm
Conversation

Muralism in California: Past and Present

Max Allbee, artist; Fred Alvarado, artist; Suaro Luis Cervantes, artist; Nadiyah Fellah, exhibition curator, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Anna Indych-López, Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Marina Perez-Wong, artist.

Although modern murals are often associated with post-revolutionary Mexico, muralism experienced a grassroots renaissance in 1970s California. With an added component of community involvement, a new generation of American artists adopted the medium's messages of social emancipation and political radicalism. Join scholars and artists from the Precita Eyes Muralist Association in San Francisco, whose commissioned work is currently on view in the James Gallery exhibition *Left Coast*, for a discussion of muralism as public art and a politically-engaged medium.

The James Gallery

Cosponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY.

Wed, Apr 22, 5–6pm
Workshop

Left Coast for Teachers

Hallie Scott, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY.

How can activist/political artwork be used as a teaching tool in the classroom? Join educator and PhD candidate Hallie Scott for a workshop on ways that teachers can use the works in *Left Coast: California Political Art* as catalysts for discussions of contemporary (or historic) political, social, and cultural issues and events. Although the workshop is centered on artworks currently on view, the tactics for employing political art as a pedagogical tool apply to works and situations beyond the exhibition. In this sense, the program will address how artworks can connect to contemporary events and reveal challenges to the present political and social order. The workshop is geared towards teachers at the undergraduate and high school level, but participants may be anyone interested in using political artwork as a teaching tool.

The James Gallery

Cosponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY.

Apr 27, 10am–6pm
Conference

The City is Ours, the Body is Mine: Urban Spatial Practices in Contemporary Latin America

Erin Aldana, independent curator and scholar; Joaquín Barriendos, Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University; Agnese Codebò, American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University; Nicolás Cuello, Art History, Universidad Nacional de La Plata in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Arden Decker, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Liz Donato, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Mya Dosch, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Miguel Robles-Durán, Urbanism, Design Strategies, The New School for Social Research; Sujatha Fernandes, Sociology, Queens College and The Graduate Center, CUNY; George Flaherty, Art History, University of Texas at Austin; Anna Indych-López, Art History, City College of New York and The Graduate Center, CUNY; Clara Irazábal, Latin Lab and Urban Planning Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University; Troy Kokinis, PhD Program in Latin American History, University of California, San Diego; Abigail Lapin, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Guisela Latorre, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Ohio State University; Opavivará, artist collective; Luisa Valle, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Jael Vizcarra, PhD Program in Ethnic Studies, University of California, San Diego.

Keynotes: Paola Bernstein Jaques, Architecture, Urbanism, and Visual Arts, Federal University of Bahia; Fabiana Dultra Britto, Urban Laboratory, Federal University of Bahia.

In summer 2013, a twenty-cent bus fare increase in São Paulo, Brazil sparked immense protests that brought millions to the streets across the country. Exploding into a wide range of demands, the uprisings combined demonstrations, media-activism, participatory works of art, and spontaneous convivial encounters that emphasized bodily presence in urban space.

This conference examines contemporary engagements with the city as a tool and stage for protest throughout major Latin American cities. Focusing on the potencia of the body and everyday social interactions, participants discuss the possibilities and limitations of creative urban interventions. Presentations also address the legacies of conflictive spatial politics in the region, from the rise of military dictatorships to the subsequent tensions during so-called processes of democratic transition and aggressive neoliberalism.

Throughout the day, a film by the Brazilian artist collective Opavivará will play in the James Gallery. The conference will conclude with an intervention by the group on Fifth Avenue, outside the Graduate Center.

Martin E. Segal Theatre

Cosponsored by the Rewald Endowment of the PhD Program in Art History; the Committee on Globalization & Social Change; the Doctoral Students' Council; the Center for the Humanities.

Apr 30, 6:30pm
Conversation

Political Printmaking: Favianna Rodriguez and Lincoln Cushing

Lincoln Cushing, archivist; Nadiah Fellah, exhibition curator, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Favianna Rodriguez, artist.

What role has printmaking had in political activism and revolutionary moments in U.S. history, and how have artists responded to social injustice through poster designs? Favianna Rodriguez, whose prints are featured in *Left Coast: California Political Art*, will present her work, and archivist and librarian Lincoln Cushing will speak on the history of political prints in California. Their talks will be followed by a discussion moderated by exhibition curator Nadiah Fellah.

Martin E. Segal Theatre

Cosponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; PhD Program in Art History; Public Programs, The Graduate Center, CUNY.

May 7, 6:30pm
Conversation

Participatory Research and Political Art: California to New York

Evan Bissell, artist; Brett G. Stoudt, Psychology and Gender Studies, John Jay College of Criminal, CUNY, and Environmental Psychology, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Maria Elena Torre, The Public Science Project.

For decades, the NYPD has practiced a tactic of aggressive policing known as “Broken Windows” that focuses on minor offenses and misdemeanor arrests, and employ strategies—like the controversial “stop and frisk”—that disproportionately target communities of color. The Morris Justice Project, based at The Graduate Center, CUNY, has been involved in pushing against erroneous rationalizations for Broken Windows, engaging community members from the south Bronx in data-collection and actions that contradict the perceived wisdom of the policy. In the summer of 2014, the Justice Project began working with Oakland-based artist Evan Bissell to create a series of posters that empowered community members to question the policing strategy. Join us for an open conversation about how forms of participatory research and art can give rise to social justice and political change in New York as well as California. Among the questions to be discussed are: Do artists have particular skills and knowledge that can be useful to emancipatory struggles? How can visual strategies be educational, within and beyond the characterization of so-called ‘social practice’? And, what are the benefits of using art as a methodological tool in gathering research?

The James Gallery

Cosponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; PhD Program in Art History; Public Science Project, The Graduate Center, CUNY.

May 14, 6:30pm
Conversation

Provisioning: The Flatbread Society Seed Journey

Nadiah Fellah, exhibition curator, PhD Program in Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Amy Franceschini, artist; Joe Riley, artist; Audrey Snyder, artist.

As part of a project created for the exhibition *Left Coast*, the San Francisco-based artist collective Futurefarmers has envisioned a voyage in which ancient grains currently being grown in Norway will be transported back to their geographic origins in Jordan. This reverse migration, named the Flatbread Society Seed Journey (FBSJ), is imagined as a “rescue” and falls within a larger movement to protect the rights of small farmers. The project also imagines food (grains in particular) as a symbol of resistance in the wake of intellectual property rights extending to biological matter. Join the Futurefarmers in a discussion on their Provisioning project, which maps the vessel, cargo, course, and crew of the FBSJ. Participants will make use of the journey’s ‘provisions’ that are part of the presentation, including a collection of seeds, books, objects, and a list of songs that the crew will have to learn by heart. Led by Amy Franceschini, Futurefarmer’s founder, and collaborators Audrey Snyder and Joe Riley, this triad has assembled with an aligned interest in the international exchange of ideas towards educational goals and political change.

The James Gallery

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The Amie and Tony James Gallery is located in midtown Manhattan at the nexus of the academy, contemporary art, and the city brings a range of pertinent discourses into the exhibition space through innovative formats. While some exhibitions remain on view for extended contemplation, other activities such as performances, workshops, reading groups, roundtable discussions, salons, and screenings have a short duration. As a space for artistic and discursive activities, the gallery works with scholars, students, artists and the public to explore working methods that may lie outside usual disciplinary practices.

Cosponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the PhD Program in Art History, and the Public Science Project, The Graduate Center, CUNY.

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The James Gallery

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