2020-21 Advance Exhibition Schedule

CURRENT EXHIBITION

Rooted: Trees in Contemporary Art
January 25-April 5, 2020

“Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts, they preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.”
—Herman Hesse, Bäume. Betrachtungen und Gedichte

Perhaps more than any other elements of the landscape, trees represent nature. Their greenery breaks up the hardscape of our suburban or urban environments, reminding us of the natural world. Trees remain the largest living organisms on earth. They also serve as relics of a prehistoric world, with some trees in California dating to more than 2,500 years ago. For these reasons and more, trees have continued to inspire artists, generating artwork that encourages us to consider the power of trees in our lives and communities.

Our City is named for a tree—El Palo Alto—a 110-foot-tall, 1,100 year old Coastal Redwood. In the 1890s, early tree advocates in our community planted our initial tree canopy. At that time, members of the Palo Alto Women’s Club transported milk cans filled with water in horse-drawn buggies to irrigate these early trees. Today, the City of Palo Alto grows and maintains approximately 36,000 city-owned urban trees. These trees remain a vital part of the Palo Alto landscape.

Trees provide a variety of benefits to people and our larger ecosystem. They trap dust and air pollution, shading harmful solar radiation. Trees absorb carbon dioxide as they grow, reducing the overall concentration of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere and slowing climate change. They are natural air conditioners, reducing summer temperatures. Trees help people live longer, healthier, and ultimately happier lives averted an estimated $6.8B in health care costs. Research indicates that exposure to trees reduces blood pressure, slowing heart rates and reducing stress.

The Palo Alto Art Center has its own collection of unique and wondrous trees on our property. After seeing the show, we encourage you to pick up a tree map and explore the trees around you.

Exhibiting artists include: Galen Brown, Matthew Brown, James Chronister, Katie DeGroot, Adam Donnelly and David Janesko, Charles Gaines, Stephen Galloway, Maria Elena Gonzalez, Scott Greene, Azucena Hernandez, Andy Diaz Hope and Laurel Roth Hope, Tamara Kostianovsky, David Maxim, Klea McKenna, Ann McMillan, Jason Middlebrook, Meridel Rubenstein, and Jamie Vasta.
UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

*Imagining Identity: Contemporary Textiles*
June 13-August 23, 2020

The exploration of identity in the arts, both individual and collective, is more relevant than ever and has been the driving force behind traditions of weaving, embroidery, and other textiles for centuries. The artists in this exhibition use fantastical symbols and situations to engage viewers in exploring questions about gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Featuring a broad range of contemporary textile techniques, including felting, needlepoint, beading, installation, and traditional quilting, the exhibition will encourage viewers to expand their view of what constitutes textile art. At the same time, the diversity of expression will ensure that viewers see themselves and their own identities reflected and validated.

During this exhibition we will be engaging our community in a Summer of Textiles, which includes not only an exhibition but also a series of public programs and numerous hands-on art-making opportunities, all centered on the art of textiles.

*New Americans (Working Title)*
September 12-December 13, 2020

“I am from there. I am from here. I am not there and I am not here. I have two names, which meet and part, and I have two languages. I forget which of them I dream in.”
—Mahmoud Darwish

This exhibition will feature artists who are new to the United States and whose experiences as new Americans are reflected in their art practice. There are more foreign-born residents in Santa Clara County (of which Palo Alto is a part) than in any other county in California, about 38% of the population. In a state that has more immigrants than any other (in fact, half of California children have at least one immigrant parent) and a country than has a larger immigrant population than any other in the world, this is a truly meaningful statistic and one we choose not to ignore.

For those of us who have never known what it feels like to be an “other,” the artists in this exhibition have done us a great service. By examining and expressing their experiences, they help us to be more compassionate, more knowledgeable citizens. In the midst of the confusion and outrage permeating immigration policy today, one thing is abundantly clear: these new Americans have a tremendous amount to add to the cultural and artistic prosperity of our nation.

*Palo Alto Art Center—50th Anniversary Initiative (2021)*

Created by the community, for the community five decades ago, the Art Center serves as a testament to the potential of collective action. 50 years ago, a group of Palo Altans recognized the value and potency of creativity for the city and the need to give it a home. The Palo Alto Art Center’s 50th anniversary programming will showcase the power of art to make a similarly profound impact—by promoting accessibility, social justice, community healing, and celebration. This golden anniversary will provide an
opportunity to celebrate the potent value of art to make a difference in the lives of individuals and the larger community.

_Cultural Kaleidoscope and Youth Art_
April 24–May 23, 2021

Our annual showcase of youth creativity features artwork by students of all ages in Palo Alto Unified School District as well as artwork created in the Art Center’s artist-in-the-schools program Cultural Kaleidoscope.

_The Black Index_
June 12–August 22, 2021

The artists in _The Black Index_ build upon the tradition of Black self-representation as an antidote to colonialist images. Their translations of photography challenge the medium’s long-assumed qualities of objectivity, legibility, and identification: the phenomenological premise of the photographic index. Using drawing, sculpture, and digital technology to transform the recorded image, these artists question our reliance on photography as a privileged source for documentary objectivity and historical understanding. The works included in the exhibition offer an alternative practice: a Black index. In the hands of these six artists, the index still serves as a finding aid for information about Black subjects, but it also challenges viewers’ desire for classification and, instead, redirects them toward alternative information.

Exhibiting artists include: Dennis Delgado, Alicia Henry, Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, Titus Kaphar, Whitfield Lovell, and Lava Thomas

Curated by Bridget R. Cooks, Associate Professor of African American Studies and Art History at the University of California at Irvine. Organized by Sarah Watson, Chief Curator of the Hunter College Art Galleries.

_Creative Attention: Art and Community Restoration_
September 11–December (TBC) 2021

Can art provide a source of healing for our community? Artists in the _Creative Attention_ exhibition respond affirmatively, by creating alternatives to our current sense of anxiety, fragmentation, and alienation through practices of mending, healing, restoration, belonging, sustainability, and resiliency.

We are experiencing a heightened level of overall anxiety, triggered by numerous and interrelated factors including a looming recession, acute income inequality, political instability, social discord, climate change, overconsumption, and technology saturation. A recent poll form the American Psychiatric Association found that adult Americans are 39% more anxious today than they were a year ago, based upon stress about safety, health, finances, politics, and relationships.  

1 https://www.psychiatry.org/newsroom/apa-public-opinion-poll-annual-meeting-2018
Through their ability to seamlessly operate between systems and structures, straddling different roles and negotiating between disciplines, artists are unique, offering new ways of seeing, processing, and ultimately solving the issues that surround us. *Creative Attention* collects their novel solutions, bringing together works in a broad range of media that encourage viewers to slow down, and recharge, promoting community connections and restoration. Ultimately, *Creative Attention* intends to promote the value of the arts as a force for healing and expression and as a tool for community building.

**The Art of Disability Culture:**
**Artists with disabilities dispelling myths, dissolving barriers and disrupting prejudice**
**January 16/23, 2021–April 4, 2021**

The wealth of creativity and design innovation that people with disabilities bring to the arts and design landscape rarely hits the mainstream media. And yet, thirty years after the passing of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) there is a growing and dynamic disability culture worldwide. Disability arts organizations, individual artists, and artist collectives or informal groups are challenging expectations and claiming their seats at the table, their slots in the gallery or their time at the microphone.

Every artist or designer featured in this exhibition has one or more visible or invisible disabilities. Far from presenting a single monolithic point of view, they use a wide range of techniques and approaches to share the complex, nuanced and wide range of experiences and identities that contribute to disability culture. Their work ranges from painting and photography to mixed media installations, video and sculpture, design and craft. Some works have been created through a collaborative process with art programs for adults with disabilities.

“Disability is an art – an ingenious way to live,” wrote Neil Marcus, an award-winning playwright, actor, poet and performance artist.

What new perspectives does a blind visual artist bring to our attention? How does a celebrated artist rethink her work and her painting process after a stroke? Why is this relevant or important? We must remember that the disability community is the only minority group we can all become a member of at any time in our lives. Current census data shows that around 20% of the US population has some kind of disability and indeed, many of us will acquire one or more disabilities as we age. What can we learn from the disability community about the value of collaboration, of exploring alternative paths to creativity, of being vulnerable and sharing our full selves?

In this endeavor we are delighted to partner with a wide range of local organizations, including the Rinconada Library, the Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo, the Magic Bridge Playground, Abilities United/Gatepath, the Paul K. Longmore Institute on Disability at SF State University, Creativity Explored and the Silicon Valley Independent Living Center.

We are also working hard to expand the access features of our exhibition. Gallery labels will be large print and available in Braille and as audio descriptions, as well as being accessible online. Events will have American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and be scent-free for people with multiple chemical sensitivities.

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