

SEP 07, 2018 — MAR 24, 2019

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BAY AREA NOW





**SADIE BARNETTE
DAVID BAYUS
SITA KURATOMI BHAUMIK
SOFIA CORDOVA
CALEB DUARTE
JOSH FAUGHT
DARELL W. FIELDS
NICKI GREEN
PORPENTINE CHARITY HEARTSCAPE
JAMIL HELLU
CONSTANCE HOCKADAY
RHONDA HOLBERTON
CARRIE HOTT
HYPHAE DESIGN LABORATORY
SAHAR KHOURY
CHARLIE LEESE
MODEM
NEMESTUDIO
WOODY DE OTHELLO
MARCELA PARDO ARIZA
STAMEN DESIGN
TARAVAT TALEPASAND
URBAN WORKS AGENCY
CATE WHITE
ANDREW WILSON**



WELCOME TO YBCA



DEBORAH CULLINAN

CEO OF YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts opened its doors to the public twenty-five years ago, in the fall of 1993. It was imagined as a new kind of art center—one that would prioritize diverse perspectives and experiences, and nurture the local arts ecosystem. YBCA was born with a fierce commitment to the diversity, complexity, and ingenuity of its home community.

To launch YBCA's twenty-fifth-anniversary celebration, we introduce the eighth edition of the organization's signature triennial exhibition, *Bay Area Now*. As we reflect on YBCA's first twenty-five years, it is fitting to mark this organizational and civic milestone by looking to artists, designers, and architects to help us understand the here and now as the ground from which we grow forward. All of the featured artists, in unique ways, emphasize nuance; they suggest that although our context has changed, the Bay Area continues to be a place that cultivates new meaning and understanding between what is known and what is not known, what is seen and what is not seen.

For us, it is more essential than ever that you, the visitor, are part of the process of making meaning and making progress. Just as the artists in *BAN8* remind us of the immense creativity and resiliency that exists in our region, YBCA's twenty-fifth anniversary reminds us of our founding commitment to be present as an organization—to powerfully champion the diversity, complexity, and ingenuity of our home community, and to passionately advocate for an artist's role in the city's life and vitality.

THIS TIME NOW

LUCÍA SANROMÁN

DIRECTOR OF VISUAL ARTS

Bay Area Now 8 presents existing and newly commissioned works by nineteen Bay Area contemporary artists and six architects and designers—the latter included in YBCA’s signature triennial for the first time. Today, YBCA’s mandate is to be a citizen institution taking an inquiry-based approach to issues of public concern, with a focus on the city as a nexus of social change. The inclusion of architects and designers responds to this, but also to a need to present a broader view of practices around the Bay Area that draw out the potentials of *in-between* thinking—a kind of thinking that is more necessary than ever in the face of gentrification, growing inequities and xenophobia, global climate change, and other dire conditions.

Selected with no overarching thematic agenda other than the quality and persistence of their work, *BAN8* participants represent a broad range of practices, and include emerging and mid-career practitioners. Remarkably, despite our troubled times, their work offers a picture of an enormously buoyant and resilient Bay Area, where humor and care come together with intimate reflections on individual and personal histories, and where bodies and geographies propose a fluid understanding of race, gender, and nature. These artists, architects, and designers use materials as surrogates for body and environmental politics, pointing to a hybrid space where rigid dichotomies are rejected, and that suggests a delicate optimism.

The works in *BAN8* recover and cultivate the generative space of the in-between, articulating its contours in a period marked by extremism, fearmongering, opposition(alism), and loss of institutional trust. Unpredictable and ephemeral, the in-between is a site of mediation, of intersubjective encounter, of resilience and adaptation. *BAN8* artists, architects, and designers move away from the exhaustion of polarization, from quick gestures and relentless reactions to a triggering news cycle. They show us instead where and how meaningful dialogue and negotiation can take place—between cultures and national identities, between genders and sexualities, between personal memory and social forgetting, between humans and nature.

WHAT SURVIVES AFTER DISASTER

SUSIE KANTOR

ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF VISUAL ARTS

In the liminal spaces between menace and protection, survival and precarity, visibility and invisibility, public and private, the visual artists of *Bay Area Now 8* look for ways to navigate a murky “now,” using past and future to articulate the present. They emphasize their temporal moment as much as their physical location. Many are asking what survives after disaster—past, current, future. What is left amid the debris of various forms of institutional violence—slavery, colonialism, forced migration, detention camps, queer-phobia—and what begins to take shape? What healing processes can be constructed, and through them, how might current systems of power begin to be—if not dismantled, at least critically questioned? Many start from the most personal place, the body. The body is a shell, a form to be constructed, nurtured, and cared for, even when exploited and divested of its humanity. The body becomes a stand-in for labor, or for cultural or familial memory, a private entity often made deeply public. It also becomes a contested site of power. Who wields the body, and in what ways?

WHAT HEALING PROCESSES CAN BE CONSTRUCTED, AND THROUGH THEM, HOW MIGHT CURRENT SYSTEMS OF POWER BEGIN TO BE—IF NOT DISMANTLED, AT LEAST CRITICALLY QUESTIONED?

The exhibition begins with three artists adeptly navigating interstitial territories, calling attention to the in-between. Jamil Hellu’s ongoing photographic series *Hues* represents stories and people who are often un-represented. Each

image features a friend, colleague, or acquaintance from the Bay Area LGBTQ community navigating their identity, which is cued in ways both obvious and subtle using clothing, props, personal attributes. Familial and social heritages abound, aided by Hellu, who inserts himself into the portraits, acting as a double in a dual portrait that unites rather than divides.

Sahar Khoury incorporates familiar items (pennies) and familiar subjects (dogs and cats) into her sculptures made of found and industrial materials, yet the works convey a sense of the uncanny. Khoury uses the nontraditional spaces within and around the gallery—an interior courtyard, the height of the walls—to shift perspective and introduce a subtle threat. A slightly larger-than-normal cat keeps watch; a pyramid of fifteen tiny dogs floats in a pond; a bronze stool is just slightly too small to use.

Taravat Talepasand explores the seeming dichotomy of East and West, which becomes in her hands a site of similarity rather than difference. Two portraits, *Andarooni Birooni* (Insider, Outsider, 2015) and *Westoxicated* (2015–18), paint a picture of modesty and taboo, respectively, that together invite a conversation about the middle ground, and how seemingly dissimilar entities can share uncomfortable truths. These paintings and the other works on view brush up against the overtly political, forcing viewers to confront their own prejudices regarding the other.

Nicki Green uses the wild, generative space of the liminal, the in-between, as opposed to binaries, to understand and explore historically othered identities that include queer, trans, and Jewish people. Two bodies of ceramic work come together in the exhibition, one drawing on the alchemy and transformative nature of fungi and the other on the tradition of fermentation crocks and tubs as ritual vessels,

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using both as stand-ins for queerness. Mushrooms in particular, with their mycelial networks that spread underground to nourish those around them, become an apt metaphor for how othered communities function.

Queer identity also finds form in Marcela Pardo Ariza’s site-specific photographic installation. The artist draws on Bay Area queer histories uncovered from local archives and links them to people currently living here through fragmented yet intimate portraits of the body, creating a kind of kinship through the images. Pardo Ariza uses the portraits to think through the ways that photography invites performativity—of the body, of gender, of power, of ethics—while also thinking about alternatives to the norms for all of the above. Their cropped photographs invite us to think of the bodies they contain not as objects of desire but as visual manifestations of principles we hold for ourselves and others.

If Pardo Ariza is moving away from the body as merely a site of consumption, Andrew Wilson reminds us of the ongoing legacy of treating the body, particularly the black, male body, as such. His research into the eighteenth-century slave vessel *Brookes* points to the black body as a commodity—an object of consumption and desire—and how the legacy of slavery in the United States still upholds these distorted views. In the galleries, Wilson will be sewing caftans printed with cyanotype images of slavery and plans to complete a projected 454 textiles (one for every slave on the *Brookes*) to represent the invisible labor that still runs this country. As with Green, Wilson’s work, a stand-in for the othered body, functions as a site of ritual, a symbolic memorial. These caftans, Pardo Ariza’s photographs, and Green’s sculptures force us to think about what the body leaves behind, and the kind of memorial we can construct in that space.

Josh Faught’s work also speaks to the past, and those who have been othered or shamed, in order to confront the now. Using hand-dyed and crocheted hemp, lamé, nail polish, laminated advertisements, sequins, giant clothespins, mugs, and other everyday ephemera, the artist creates textiles that explore the ways in which social, particularly queer, histories speak of urgent political matters through coded languages and slow looking. Mixing high and low, pop culture and the deeply personal, craft and kitsch, Faught’s works operate between politics and activism, menace and protection—a space that allows for urgent messages if you look closely enough.

Sita Kuratomi Bhaumik takes cues from both her family history and that of her Japanese-Colombian heritage in an installation that explores how she came to be an artist. Through her own photographs and others taken by her mother from the late 1960s and this past summer in 2018, Bhaumik uses family experiences—in this case her mother’s migration from Colombia to the United States, and her broader family narrative of being of Japanese heritage during World War II—to connect their story to larger, ongoing cultural and political narratives.

Sadie Barnette’s installation in the Glass Passageway, a liminal space that connects two larger galleries, plays with personal perspective in a more literal sense. Thanks to a 1960s couch reupholstered with glitter vinyl and the Glass Passageway’s wrapping in vibrant pink film, the space functions as a transportive, almost galactic realm. It projects from inside the building out onto the street, serving as a voyeuristic site from which to view what Barnette calls “the theater of Mission Street.” The oversize glitter vinyl words “FROM HERE” forefront this focus on perspective, reminding those who take a seat to check in with their own viewpoints and how they may be an extension of privilege.



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Cate White's paintings regularly probe visibility, invisibility, identity, and power, straddling the line between public—the street, and by extension the city—and private—her own image and that of her muse, Rory, who is featured in the paintings on view. In *Self-Portrait* (2018), White evokes both Alice Neel's 1980 *Self-Portrait*, which features an honest look at the artist's aging body, and Diego Velázquez's painting *Las Meninas* (1656), to call attention to and shift power through a different kind of gaze—one where she becomes both the person looking and the person looked at.

Woody De Othello's anthropomorphized ceramic sculptures of everyday items also work within the realm of the domestic, humanizing household objects as a way to observe and obliquely comment on the current moment. The materials themselves carry marks of the artist's hand, evoking the labor that goes into their making. The installation, consisting of an urn with hands and partially burned candles in ceramic holders on a tile floor, functions as a memorial both general—speaking to our world at large—and specific—thinking of those in the Bay Area who have recently and unjustly lost their lives.

Sofía Córdova's video and sculptural installation *Mira esto que lo vas a extrañar* (Look at This Because You're Going to Miss It, 2018) takes a melancholic look at Puerto Rico post-Hurricane Maria through the lens of her family, the legacy of colonial violence, and alternative survival mechanisms. Featuring a nonlinear narrative that moves in and out of lush vegetation, aerial views of the island, dance, and music, Córdova imagines a future that goes beyond the binaries and violence of the present to one that holds space for those outside current structures of political, racial, geographical, and institutional power.

Caleb Duarte's practice likewise interrogates the lasting residues of colonialism, and his twenty-by-ten-by-eighteen-foot structure made of packed earth, wood, and a drywall painting questions the institutions—governments, museums and art spaces, so-called sanctuaries—that impact who is actually seen by society. Duarte's collaborators include students from Fremont High School, all of whom are recent arrivals from Guatemala seeking asylum in the United States, and who represent bodies made vulnerable through forced migration. During a performance at the opening of the exhibition, Duarte and the students will evoke rituals of burial and labor, while also highlighting the effects of colonization through the architecture of the sanctuary space.

**ALL OF THESE PROJECTS POINT
TO THE WAYS IN WHICH ARTISTS
ARE SEARCHING FOR MEANS TO HEAL
IN A FRAUGHT TIME.**

Visitors can experience a reiki session via virtual reality in Rhonda Holberton's installation *Again for the First Time* (2018), which combines high tech and the alternative healing practice. Through this amalgamation, Holberton hopes to remediate the trauma that technology can create in the body, continuing a line of inquiry where she looks at the ways in which non-Western healing practices intersect with technology.

Charlie Leese also explores the ways in which physical and social architectures affect the body and one's sense of

place in the world. Here, he creates tension through a bare-bones structure that emphasizes the absence of the body within, asking us to think about how our bodies are shaped, nurtured, or harmed by the surrounding environment.

If many of the artists thus far use the future as a form of survival in the now, Porpentine Charity Heartscape and David Bayus both push the limits of that thinking. Heartscape's work frequently intertwines the digital and the analog; the artist is particularly interested in messy transitions between the two, imagining a future that exists somewhere between purely digital and completely off the grid. To *BAN8* Heartscape contributes a video game accompanied by an explanatory almanac, which relies on a gentle, soothing aesthetic that—like Rhonda Holberton's reiki intervention—is meant to be therapeutic, in opposition to most violent, hypermasculine video games today. Bayus's installation includes the film *Psyman's Acres* (2018) and sculptures used in its making. The film looks to a very distant future—the end of the universe as we know it—where a single planet orbiting a red dwarf star is held together by a singularity and tended by a farmer whose purpose is to keep the singularity, and thus life, going. It alludes to how state management systems affect and shape our current lives, asks us to ponder the survival mechanisms we need moving forward, and questions how far our traditions—religious or technological—may stretch as we become more advanced.

Shifting from the furthest future to the most immediate now, Constance Hockaday's social sculpture, to be performed off-site in the San Francisco Bay at a future date, uses President Franklin D. Roosevelt's fireside chats as a jumping-off point to acknowledge the latent, ambient grief felt throughout society today, and leverage it toward

healing. The performance uses FDR's presidential yacht, the USS *Potomac* (permanently docked near Jack London Square in Oakland), to “acknowledge the power that is built through social circumstances and perform inclusivity on a political stage.”

Finally, Carrie Hott thinks of the city as a structure of various disparate points and moments, and her installations frequently focus on light as a way to understand labor and power, both seen and unseen. *Sunset on the Polygon* (2018) takes as its starting point the US-Japan internet cable that lands at Point Arena, California, and the ways in which infrastructure—for instance the internet—can be both visible and invisible. A grouping of models on a table that gets wider and more chaotic as it approaches the wall prompts us to rethink regulative technologies (like the internet) that both pull us closer and push us further apart.

All of these projects point to the ways in which artists are searching for means to heal in a fraught time. Their varied methods—from reiki to ritual, video games, music, memorials, or investigations into familial and cultural heritages, the calling out of entrenched structural violence or a relishing of the everyday—show that we can still shape our future in positive ways by being present in the now.



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Sofía Córdova, *dawn_chorus ii: El Niagara en bicicleta* (video still), 2018. Courtesy the artist.

02
Taravat Talepasand, *Andarooni Birooni* (Insider Outsider), 2015. Courtesy the artist.

03
David Bayus, *Psyman's Acres* (film still), 2018. Courtesy the artist.



ARCHITECTURE FOR AN UNWRITTEN FUTURE

MARTIN STRICKLAND

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

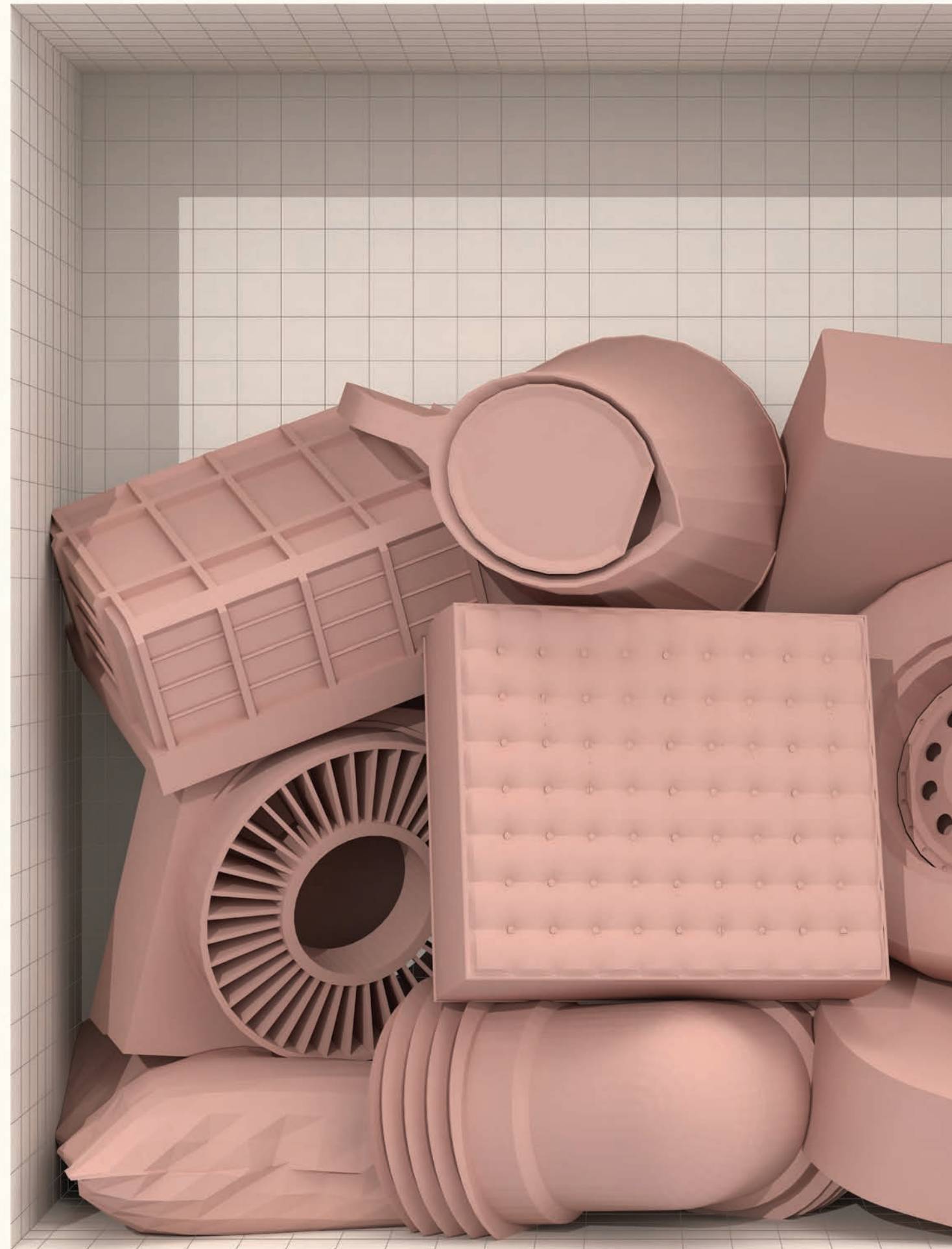
For the first time in *Bay Area Now*'s history, practitioners of architecture and design are featured alongside visual artists. *Bay Area Now* historically has encompassed a number of disciplines, including performing arts, film, and community engagement, reflecting YBCA's multidisciplinary scope. But why include architecture and design? And why now? In 2017 YBCA launched The City Initiative program, an ongoing series of case studies by architects, designers, planners, and artists creating provocative works in the urban environment. The exhibitions and public programs are meant to expand YBCA's commitment to model the art institution as a public resource in the context of our city—to pledge the organization to practitioners and constituencies who understand art and culture as forms of knowledge and experience that support civic inquiry and public culture. In order to continue YBCA's focus on urban issues, we saw an opportunity with *BAN8* to tap into a diverse and rigorous community that had not seen itself consistently represented in our galleries. The architects and designers selected for *BAN8* are individuals and collectives exploring place, identity, climate change, and the future through their practices.

Exhibitions of architects and designers can be mundane to experience. Plans, models, drawings, and renderings, hung flat on the wall or in display cases, may not engage the audience, and, more importantly, they do not invite the audience to dream alongside the practitioners. This latter issue is what drives the experimental nature of The City Initiative program—we are far more interested in uncertainty, the possibility that exists within the unfinished, and the untested than we are in a finished product. This is reflected in the speculative nature of the works presented.

The architects and designers in *BAN8* do not represent a survey of Bay Area architecture and design. They are, rather, a sampling of studios and individuals who we feel are doing important and invigorating work to drive their fields forward in our region. Their ideas are ambitious and the research is ongoing. In some cases, we have asked them to expand on projects they have been working on for years. Others present new ideas still under development, which may only exist in prototype form. We exhibit them alongside visual artists to create new dialogues between creators of varied backgrounds, intentions, practices, and physical work.

**WE ARE FAR MORE INTERESTED IN
UNCERTAINTY, THE POSSIBILITY THAT
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AND THE UNTESTED THAN WE ARE
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Taking a cue from the exhibition's title, modern mused on the question "What is the Bay Area, now?" For them, the region is a mixture of risk and reward—from finicky weather and infinite connection with technology to vast income gaps, long commute times, and an astronomical cost of living. Using the first computer mapping system (Howard Fisher's SYMAP) as their inspiration, they have created a system to reverse technological time, collecting quotidian data about Bay Area life throughout the summer. The result is 263 pages of flat and folded paper, marked with layers of text mechanically imprinted using a 1982 IBM Wheelwriter typewriter. The markings convey the geology,



bay fill, groundwater, and other physical markers of the Bay Area, helping us to understand what makes this area function on a day-to-day basis—and where the mundane aspects of life and the myth-creating, high-tech world of Silicon Valley might meet.

Every densely populated city in the world struggles with public sanitation—how to serve a growing population of residents and tourists and how to dispose of waste. Building upon past projects, Hyphae presents *PProphet* (2018), an interactive work that invites participants to contribute and examine their own urine to better understand how human by-products could be filtered and put back into the urban environment. They have built a prototype for cities that addresses gender, the body, human health, nutrient scarcity, and personal health data security. Seeking to tackle the socioeconomic aspect of sanitation accessibility, Hyphae invites us to explore uncomfortable realities and how these issues can be rethought to incorporate fertilizer production, water technology, and new forms of immediate health metrics.

THE WORK IMPLICITLY CRITIQUES POWER STRUCTURES BY SEEKING THE GRAY AREA, THE SPACE LITERALLY BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE.

Looking more specifically at the effects of material waste accumulation within the city, Nemestudio envisions “a post-natural Anthropocene where waste is more abundant than resources, an era in which our techno-fossils (our waste) are appreciated as ruins and specimens to be kept in a museum-like setting, and are the only

inspiration for the architectural imagination of future generations.” This manifests in an installation inspired by a cabinet of curiosities, holding the vestiges of today’s world for a future audience.

In his architecture practice, Darell W. Fields seeks to understand and define black architecture—an effort the discipline of architecture has to date resisted. Aiming to formalize blackness architecturally, his installation *King Alphonso Is Dead; Long Live the King* (2018) uses a flattening of perspective to find substance in the shadows. The work implicitly critiques power structures by seeking the gray area, the space literally between black and white. For Fields, this project is an ongoing investigation into how personal stylings might find their way into his overall pedagogy. The notion of how to detach oneself from black icons and begin to take various reference points through architectural concepts, and then depositing those concepts as something completely different, as the other, is on display in the exhibited work. Fields takes inspiration from the Afro hairstyle as a way to continue this transition. He says, “The notion of style might be less about a particular person and more about an artistic or cultural activity. I think in the end the work is about me conceptualizing blackness using an architectural framework, an architectural styling, and coming up with something that is distinct from the origins, although the origins are on the wall as well.”

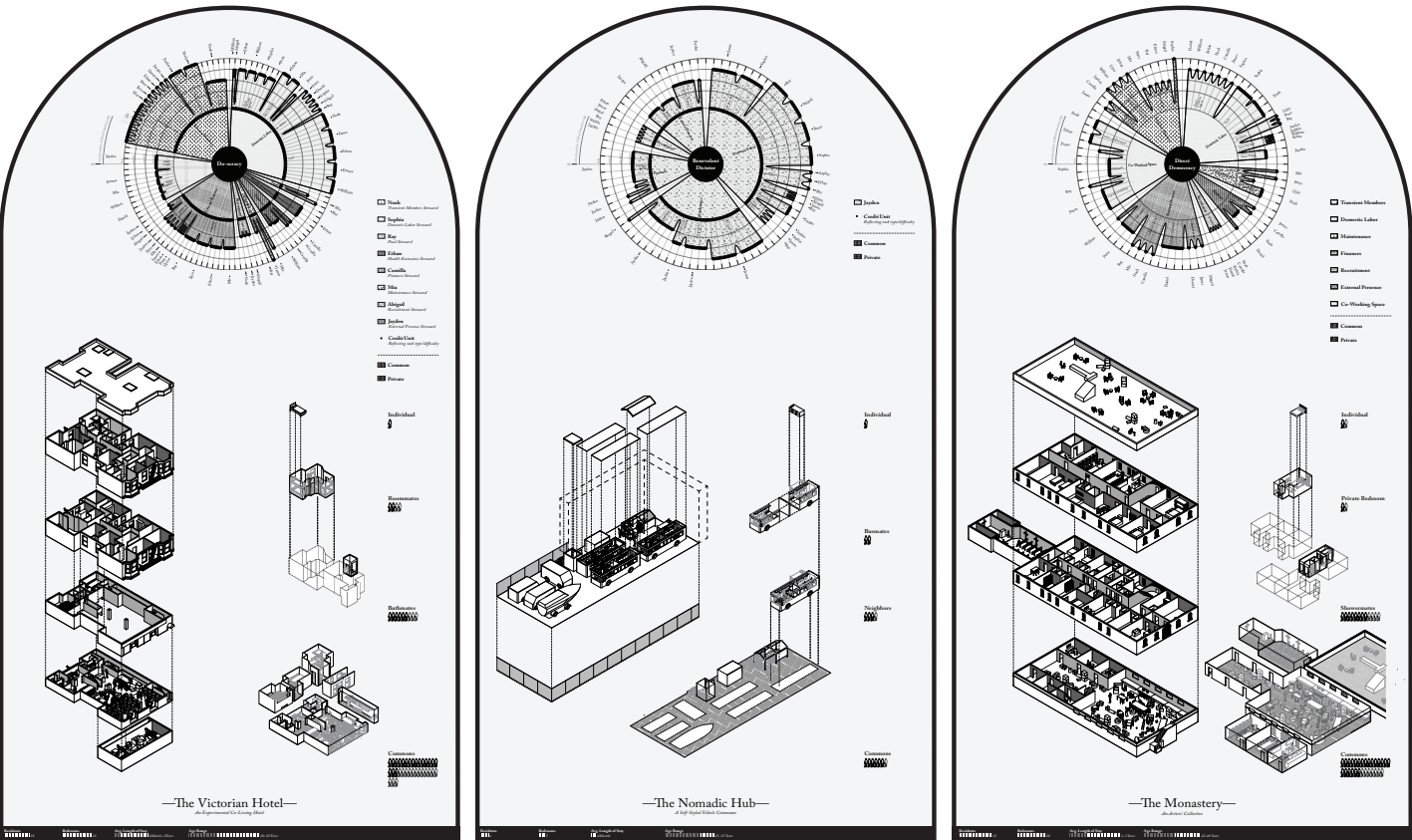
Urban Works Agency likewise contemplates structures of power, and their installation re-creates various tables from influential moments and places—the Paris Peace Accords, the United Nations Security Council—to ruminate on who has access to power, and how we might begin to shift existing paradigms. *A Seat at the Table* (2018) presents a series of design research projects that examine tools for decision making over two realms—the domestic household

and the city. At the home scale, they meditate on the functions, benefits, and drawbacks of communal living in the Bay Area. At the city scale, they present board games where users play out effects of climate change and city building, from the more earnest public-facing desires to the behind-the-curtain bureaucratic core. The games serve as a new kind of decision-making tool for a society facing an ever-changing array of risks and consequences.

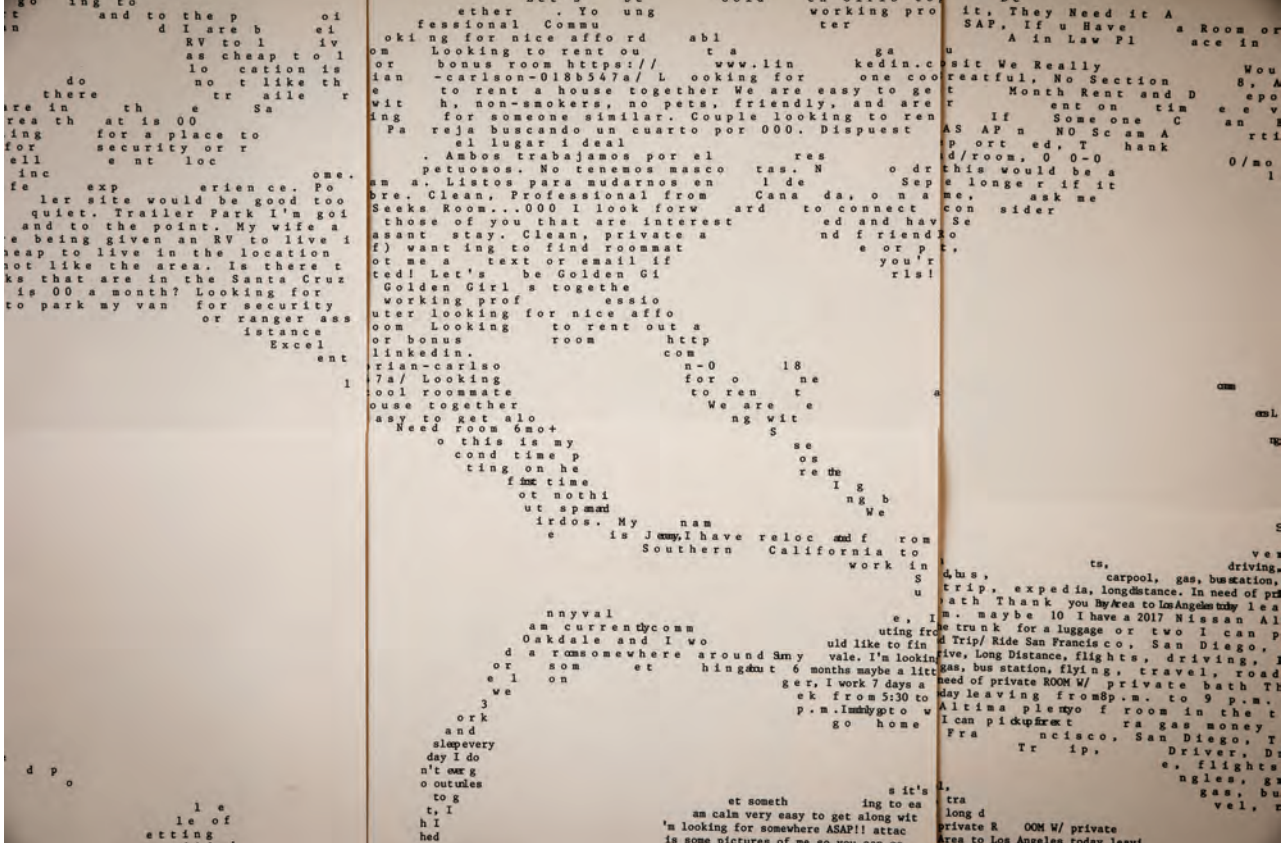
Data visualization also plays a crucial role in how we understand and accept issues surrounding climate change. Stamen Design partnered with the National Audubon Society and Mule Design to visualize how rising temperatures in North America are affecting migratory ranges of birds. *Bay Area Soon* (2018) uses images and collected data to describe a rapidly changing ecosystem where national parks play an increasingly significant role as sanctuaries for birds.

Each architect and designer featured in *BAN8* pushes us toward a better understanding of ourselves, the decisions we make, and how we situate ourselves in the urban and rural environment. The Bay Area is a mythic creation in the history of the modern world. From the glorious promise of the first gold rush in the nineteenth century to the wild chase of the present-day tech economy, this region is complex, contradictory, enticing, and at times utterly frustrating. From rising rents to surging sea levels, from boundless urban growth to real risks of an irreversible depletion of natural resources, we are living in a precarious moment—that is certain. Using architecture and design to help shift focus from the lush history of this place to its as-yet-unwritten future, will, hopefully, help us situate ourselves in the present and rigorously envision a more equitable and sustainable next chapter.

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TWENTY YEARS OF BAY AREA NOW-LEGACY OF THE LOCALS

QIANJIN MONTOKA

CURATORIAL RESEARCHER

Named after the original Spanish settlement Yerba Buena (meaning “good herb”) that would become San Francisco in 1847, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts was one of the last structures built at Yerba Buena Gardens in 1993. Fraught with thirty years of politics of urban renewal, the flat land south of Market Street had been described as blighted by developers, but it was a bustling quarter for the workers, merchant marines, and low-income families who once lived there. Histories of displacement, renewal, and the effects of “progress” in the hands of urban developers inform us, today’s visitors, of the stakes of YBCA’s original mandate to champion diversity and build and support local community. These dynamic weavings of history, intention, and action also trace through the history of YBCA’s longest-running exhibition, a regional survey of local artists given the evergreen title of *Bay Area Now*.

This edition, *Bay Area Now 8*, began as a look into the present and future of artists living and working in this stimulus-rich geography and culture. But artists today also live in response, and sometimes resistance, to histories and legacies—of other artists, of art spaces come and gone, of institutions’ shifting sites and focus—all in a region that continuously expands and implodes around its inhabitants. As YBCA celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary, it felt important to jog our own institutional memory, and looking to the past indeed became a major part of preparing for *BAN8*. Invited by the curatorial team, I researched the printed matter (exhibition catalogues, internal notes, press clippings) and conducted interviews with past curators, critics, and participating artists to create an infographic—on view in the exhibition—a kind of historical matrix to enhance the experience of *BAN8*, and help visitors understand the history of the exhibition.

In the first iteration in 1997, curators Renny Pritikin, René de Guzman, and Arnold J. Kemp felt, as de Guzman said later, that “YBCA was about building and offering support to this vibrant community. *Bay Area Now* was designed to build cultural capital to benefit artists featured in the space.” The cultural capital of artists was a hotly debated topic during the first tech boom, as the National Endowment for the Arts was under attack and the value of technological literacy was growing. Still, Kemp remembers the importance of building an art-based support system with *Bay Area Now* through the lens of YBCA’s mission: “It wasn’t just about what was happening in the moment. It was about building relationships. *Bay Area Now* brought together many artists who might not have otherwise shown together. We saw multiculturalism as a strength in the local art scene.” Thus, *BAN2* opened in November 1999, just before Y2K; amid fears of the internet’s reach and power, YBCA continued its commitment to local artist networks and ecosystems.

As time went on, YBCA and *Bay Area Now* became more visible and established as the participating artists began launching successful mainstream careers. The Mission School, including Barry McGee, Ruby Neri, Margaret Kilgallen, and Alicia McCarthy, was prominent from early on. John Bankston, Larry Sultan, and Hank Willis Thomas were featured in the second, third, and fourth turns of *Bay Area Now*, respectively. And YBCA and *Bay Area Now* became steady presences as the world became more unstable. The 9/11 attacks occurred the year before *BAN3*, and *BAN4* opened during the second year of the Iraq War and a month before Hurricane Katrina. These events catapulted issues of race, religion, ethnicity, security, patriotism, faith, and community even deeper into personal and political expression. *BAN4* associate visual arts curator Berin Golonu describes a participatory work, *Mundane Journeys* (2001,

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Cate White, *Self-Portrait*, 2018. Courtesy the artist.

performed 2005–6) by Kate Pocrass, as highlighting an unspoken need for “normal” human interaction, “Kate organized bus tours to take us to sites around the city where we could have encounters with the ‘mundane.’ It was a nice way for a group of people to spend an afternoon getting to know each other and exploring details of the city that they might not have noticed in their day-to-day lives. It was another way to celebrate the everyday.”

BAN5 in 2008 was the first iteration in which none of the three founding curators were involved, and by this time YBCA was one of four major cultural institutions (alongside the Contemporary Jewish Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of the African Diaspora) in and around the Yerba Buena district. Institutional critique had played a large role in the previous cycle, and *BAN5* followed up by questioning the relevance of a regional survey. Golonu, who also co-curated *BAN5* with acting director of visual arts Kate Eilertsen, turned the focus away from “discovering the next big artist” and invited local guest curators to participate. The idea was to expand the curatorial approach and attract new audiences to the now fifteen-year-old institution. By *BAN6* in 2011, many local artist-run spaces, including New Langton Arts, had closed, and the Bay Area (along with the rest of the country) was feeling the effects of disproportionate wealth distribution, here combined with a housing price surge that would leave less and less space for artists and arts institutions.

IT IS CLEAR IN RETROSPECT THAT THE PREMISE OF BAY AREA NOW, AS AN EXTENSION OF YBCA’S MANDATE, HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO GIVE SPACE TO THE MANY VOICES OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

In response to the rapid pricing-out of local art spaces, and with that resources and support for Bay Area artists overall, *BAN7* adapted to the issues and questions pertinent to those who remained in the network of working art spaces. Assistant curator of visual arts Ceci Moss describes the ways in which YBCA, through *BAN7*, transformed itself: “I think historically *Bay Area Now* was organized in a way where the curators said, ‘These are some of the top folks, pay attention to these people,’ and that was the show. By the time of *BAN7*, that model was no longer relevant to where the institution was going.”

It is clear in retrospect that the premise of *Bay Area Now*, as an extension of YBCA’s mandate, has always been to give space to the many voices of the local community—it is a platform for Bay Area artists to express through their practices their diverse backgrounds and cultural experiences. Each edition of *Bay Area Now* reflects its particular context—whether global fears of Y2K, national issues of gun violence, local conflicts over housing, or institutional shifts in community engagement—and the artworks, performances, and films presented in each edition are a multi-voice, ethnographic view of a moment in time. The exhibition has evolved through shifts both subtle and radical. But over the last twenty years it has maintained its vital premise: to support the role of art and its capacity to sustain and empower a community through any social, political, or environmental climate.

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SADIE BARNETTE

Whether she is working in drawing, photography, or large-scale installation, Sadie Barnette relishes the abstraction of city space and the transcendence of the mundane to the imaginative. She creates visual compositions that engage a hybrid aesthetic of minimalism and density, using text, drawing, glitter, family Polaroids, subcultural codes, and found objects.

DAVID BAYUS

David Bayus lives and works in San Francisco. His cross-disciplinary practice centers on experimental filmmaking with a focus on the dualistic relationship between science and spirituality. He is a cofounder of BASEMENT art collective, based in San Francisco's Mission District. He received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2010.

SITA KURATOMI BHAUMIK

Sita Kuratomi Bhaumik is an artist and educator with a community-based practice. Her work has been called a "joyous political critique." She is also a cofounder of the People's Kitchen Collective.

SOFÍA CÓRDOVA

Born in 1985 in Carolina, Puerto Rico, and currently based in Oakland, Sofía Córdova considers sci-fi, dance and music culture(s), the internet, mystical things, mutation and extinction, migration, and climate change under the conditions of late capitalism and its technologies.

CALEB DUARTE

Caleb Duarte is best known for creating temporary installations using construction-type frameworks such as beds of dirt, cement, and objects suggesting basic shelter. His installations become sites for performative interpretations of his sculptural community collaborations.

JOSH FAUGHT

Josh Faught's practice combines textiles, popcultural detritus, and archival materials to address the relationships between language, community, and constructions of identity.

DARELL W. FIELDS

Darell W. Fields is the founding principal of Maxine Studio. He teaches visual studies and advanced design research at the University of California at Berkeley and is the author of the seminal work on architecture and race, *Architecture in Black: Theory, Space and Appearance*.

NICKI GREEN

Nicki Green is a transdisciplinary artist whose sculptures, ritual objects, and various flat works explore history preservation, conceptual ornamentation, and aesthetics of religiosity.

PORPENTINE CHARITY HEARTSCAPE

Porpentine Charity Heartscape is a writer, new media artist, game designer, and dead swamp milf in Oakland. She makes xenofemme scifi/fantasy and cursed video games.

JAMIL HELLU

Jamil Hellu is a visual artist based in San Francisco, working primarily with photography and video installations. His work is a hybrid of self-portraiture and queer narrative, expressing connections between people beyond political borders while pushing boundaries to address the construction and multiplicity of cultural identities.

CONSTANCE HOCKADAY

Constance Hockaday is a Chilean American who grew up on the Gulf of Mexico. She has created outsider maritime projects since 2006. Her work is about creating portals that get people closer to that feeling of belonging in a place (preferably the place where they live).

RHONDA HOLBERTON

Rhonda Holberton is an Oakland-based interdisciplinary artist. Her multimedia installations make use of digital and interactive technologies integrated into traditional methods of art production.

CARRIE HOTT

Through her interdisciplinary art practice, Carrie Hott seeks nonlinear narratives and unexpected tangents. Her work is informed by a roving research practice that explores the current and historic infrastructural systems that mediate our collective experiences and perceptions.

HYPHAE DESIGN LABORATORY

Hyphae Design Laboratory is a multidisciplinary practice focused on innovation in our built environment. Through collaboration, design thinking, applied ecology, and social change, it discovers, researches, and implements novel projects.

SAHAR KHOURY

Sahar Khoury is an artist based in Oakland. She works mostly with found or rejected materials to produce sculptures and installations.

CHARLIE LEESE

Charlie Leese's artistic practice embodies caustic remainders of a world where solutions of an alternate type of elegance are arrived at from brutish gestures. Interiors of left-behind structures are rendered as exteriors, offering new formal possibilities and ever-recombinant content.

MODEM

modem is an interdisciplinary practice with experience in software, architecture, urban design, and digital fabrication. It uses radical and traditional architectural tools to transform objects, environments, and urban situations in order to strengthen and improve connections between buildings, cities, and ecologies.

NEMESTUDIO

NEMESTUDIO is an architectural practice based in the San Francisco Bay Area that produces work ranging from buildings and installations to speculative projects at

various scales. Founded by Neyran Turan and Mete Sonmez, it has been recognized with several awards, most recently the 2016 Architectural League of New York Prize for Young Architects.

WOODY DE OTHELLO

Beginning by sketching with a particular object in mind, one that is domestic and very familiar, Woody De Othello creates large, anthropomorphic ceramic sculptures. He completed his MFA at California College of Arts in 2017, and holds a BFA from Florida Atlantic University with a concentration in ceramics.

MARCELA PARDO ARIZA

Marcela Pardo Ariza explores the potential of constructed photography, handmade bending frames, and set building while celebrating the erroneous, dealing with issues of representation and questioning arbitrary hegemonies through prop-like objects and wry humor.

STAMEN DESIGN

Eric Rodenbeck is the CEO of Stamen Design, which builds beautiful, playful, technically sophisticated projects for clients from Digital Globe to the Dalai Lama to scientists around the country. His uniquely interdisciplinary work also intersects with the world of fine art, and has been exhibited worldwide and is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

TARAVAT TALEPASAND

Via paintings, drawings, sculptures, and installations, Taravat Talepasand reconsiders the ideological assumptions that index Iranian identity, state power, and gender in order to consider how body and image come to signify and rebel against normative notions of Iranian subjectivity. Her interest, however, is in painting a present, which is of and intrinsically linked to the past, making it easily understood by the Iranian and indicative of assumption for the Westerner.

URBAN WORKS AGENCY

Urban Works Agency (UWA) is a research lab at California College of the Arts that leverages architectural design to affect social justice, ecological vitality, and economic resilience at an urban scale.

CATE WHITE

Cate White lives and works in Oakland and works primarily in painting. She is concerned with how underrepresented perspectives made visible can complicate normalized beliefs surrounding gender, race, class, morality, value, beauty, and power. White uses the democratic language of comedy, narrative, and self-exposure to communicate and represent across social strata.

ANDREW WILSON

Andrew Wilson is a multimedia artist working at the intersections of the consumption of the black body and queerness. His work is at once beautiful, with an attention to craftsmanship, and repulsive in its graphic subject matter.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, we would like to thank the artists, architects, and designers participating in this exhibition. Their vibrant work reminds us of the importance of supporting Bay Area arts and culture, particularly at a time when we are told that the arts ecosystem of the Bay Area is dying out. Our studio visits throughout the fall, winter, and spring proved that there is a thriving arts scene in the Bay Area, despite what seems, at times, impossible odds.

Participants in the previous editions of *Bay Area Now* gave interviews and recollections about the exhibition over the years, many of which are featured in this publication. Very special thanks go to the past curators Renny Pritikin, René de Guzman, Arnold J. Kemp, Berin Golonu, Kate Eilertsen, Ceci Moss, Thien Lam, and Betti-Sue Hertz. We would also like to thank Ana Teresa Fernández, Glen Helfand, Desirée Holman, Sarah Hotchkiss, Tony Labat, Ranu Mukherjee, Stephanie Syjuco, Weston Teruya, Edie Tsong, and Hank Willis Thomas for their insights.

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Lucía Sanromán, Director of Visual Arts
Susie Kantor, Associate Curator of Visual Arts
Martin Strickland, Associate Director of Public Programs

ABOUT YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is one of the nation’s most innovative contemporary arts centers. Founded in 1993, YBCA’s mission is to generate culture that moves people. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, YBCA is committed to creating an inclusive culture that awakens personal and societal transformation. YBCA presents a wide variety of programming year-round, including performing arts, visual arts, film/video and civic engagement. YBCA venues include the Forum, Screening Room, Galleries and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater. For tickets and information, call 415.978.ARTS (2787).

CREDITS

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